

Talking Politics and Watching the Border in Northern
Burundi, c. 1960–1972

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St Cross College, Oxford University

Submitted in requirement for the DPhil in History

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This is the history of a turbulent borderland in a time of transition. Colonialism redefined the meaning of borders in Burundi, and in the traumatic shift from colonial rule to Independence it became dangerous to live on the frontier. Responding to Newbury's plea to 'bring the peasant back in' to the written history of the Great Lakes region, the thesis takes a micro-history approach, viewing the tumultuous events of the 1960s and 1970s from the perspective of the hills and the homestead. The border with Rwanda, as experienced in the two communes of Kabarore and Busiga, is tested as the point of encounter between society and state in this crucial time. It reveals the function and dysfunction of political linkage, and the tensions of being a citizen and a subject in the margins of a political community ruled by suspicion and paranoia. The themes - dissent, collaboration, elimination, repression - link this local history to the flow of national politics and the making of a new African state.

Taking as its scope the pivotal period from decolonisation to the military state's 'selective genocide', enacted against its Hutu population, the thesis identifies 'vigilance' as the most productive concept by which to study concepts of governance, political community and political linkage in the Great Lakes at the vital point of transformation. A communicative act that blends the stance of the citizen and the subject to shape a means of cautious cooperation and mutual recognition between people and state, vigilance also proved the destructive weapon that violently distilled the population into a subjugated peasantry beneath a bloodied state. The interaction on the border reveals these vital issues in acute contrast, opening the door to their examination elsewhere. This thesis studies the border; its conclusions may be chased far beyond it.

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The dominant mode of interaction between the borderland population and successive governments that sought to rule them is encapsulated in the trope of vigilance. Under threat from a hostile state, internal dissidents and an aggressive neighbour in Rwanda, the people of the border engaged in border-making acts of vigilance to protect themselves against immediate dangers and to communicate their inclusion in the political orthodoxy of the reborn nation. Rather than attempt to escape the state or to shift their allegiance to the neighbouring power, borderlanders exhibited their belonging in the political community of Burundi by displaying their willingness to defend it. Showing themselves necessary to protect the physical, economic and political interests of the state, the borderlanders acquired the means by which to bend state power to their interests. This act required an integration of the stance of both citizen and subject; conforming to the state's demands of orthodoxy, subjecting themselves to its pressures and demands, the inhabitants of the border claimed the belonging of citizenship and the mediation of power that it entailed. In 1972 the state reversed this integrative performance

through genocidal violence against its population, and through its own direct invocation of ‘Vigilance’ violently separated itself from the mass, subject peasantry. In the transformational and contested performance of vigilance in the margins, we see the construction of new political communities in the Great Lakes.

Historical research on Burundi has been dominated by the pioneering work of Jean-Pierre Chrétien and others of the ‘Burundo-French school’ of scholars such as Emile Mworoha and Joseph Gahama, whose investigations of pre- and early colonial periods are exceptionally rich. The country and indeed the Great Lakes region as a whole, however, are startlingly lacking in robust consideration of the traumatic transition into the post-colonial era. The historians back away, vacating the field for the rare political scientist to describe. Beyond René Lemarchand’s classic account of national politics in the 1960s and Christine Deslaurier’s comprehensive survey of the political competition at the end of the colonial period, almost no professional research has been undertaken, and even these important works are dedicated to a national story dominated by elites. As Newbury notes, the peasants of the Great Lakes have been absent from their own written history. The thesis therefore provides unique consideration of an extraordinary and significant time through the integration of rural politics and state transformations.

The microhistorical approach encourages a fine grain of analysis, the example and the criticisms of classic works such as Le Roy Ladurie’s *Montaillou* inspiring a deep and detailed study that must be brought to the wider fields of experience in Burundi and the region. It also permits an appreciation for complexity that is often sublimated in studies of a more abstract level of politics. The personal, individual relationships of politicians and inhabitants of the borderland reveal the passions and mixed motivations of local politics, both deriving from and fuelling the greater cleavages of the time. The encounter on the border permits the pursuit of links, contestations and ruptures between higher politics and this popular experience. It thus may act as the key to opening up Burundi to the more sensitive and detailed approaches that scholars of neighbouring Tanzania, such as John Iliffe, have proved to be invaluable; studying the construction of the border sees the connection of both the high with the low, and the

political with the social, to produce coherent and comprehensive views of complex societies. In turn, the frontier of Rwanda and Burundi stands in startlingly contrastive evidence to the burgeoning African borderland studies as a whole, as pioneered by Paul Nugent and Anthony Asiwaju. Where scholars across Africa have come to study how borderlanders give meaning to the ‘arbitrary’ lines bequeathed by colonialism, here we have an ancient border that predates the European presence, reinterpreted and invested with new significance by the trials of decolonisation.

This history combines vital insights and concepts from the fields of anthropology and political science, providing an invaluable historical perspective to these disciplines in return. The issue of political linkage is borrowed from the political science of democracy; conceptualising the bonds between politicians and citizens, the idea has been extended into the study of patronage systems by Kitschelt, Wilkinson, and others. The Burundi border in the 1960s expands upon and disrupts the conception. On the border we see how linkage functions between the lines of democracy, autocracy and tyranny, how institutional linkage in the form of elected officials and appointed administrators may be dismantled and destroyed by an active, vigilant citizenry, and how the improvised patrimonial link of petition and response can prove more robust and powerful than the systematised orders of incomplete democracies. Similarly, the variegated conceptions of citizenship constructed within political science have recently come under revitalising inspection by anthropologists around the world. Robins, Cornwall and van Lieres especially have called for attention to be given not to normative statements of rights, but to the everyday practices that reveals citizens’ own conceptions of citizenship. The thesis thus provides an historical reconsideration of this productive intersection of politics and anthropology, in so doing testing the implications of Mahmood Mamdani’s distinction of citizen and subject in African history. Borderlanders are seen consciously to have displayed their subjecthood before a domineering state, paradoxically deploying this performance to pursue claims of citizenship, reorienting the power of state to their own needs.

Speaking to these issues is a wealth of documentary material drawn from the Belgian *Archives africaines* in Brussels and the *Archives nationales* in Bujumbura. The Belgian mate-

rial covering the end of the UN Trusteeship has been opened to researchers only in the last few years, and the National Archives of Burundi have been largely inaccessible over the past two decades of civil war and turmoil, so that they are still almost entirely untapped by historians. Yet within both, weekly, monthly and annual reports from local administrators and political leaders provide exceptional detail on official perspectives on *l'état d'esprit* of the local populations, rumours and debates circulating in the region and the activities of state or party in attempting to manage relations with the people. Incident reports, interrogations and special investigations appear in great numbers, concerning many otherwise undocumented events on the border. A plethora of letters and other communication, both internal to the state and by sections of the population, carry expressive commentary on the passions and controversies current from day to day. The Belgian archives preserve a substantial number of the political tracts that appeared immediately prior to independence, which are supplemented by further papers from the post-colonial period in the Bujumbura collections and a continuous dialogue of surveillance on such matters within each administration. Finally, newspapers and other journals produced by the state and, most notably, by the Catholic Church, collected in a local archive near the field site, provide an abundance of institutional propaganda and commentary on the issues of the day.

These documentary sources are integrated with accounts gathered from oral history interviews conducted across the area of concern. Whether contradicting or confirming particular aspects of the picture drawn from the state archives, these accounts provide indispensable perspectives on the persons and events remembered in the region. This oral material further includes matters otherwise entirely absent from the documents, and is most remarkable in the proverbs, parables and incisive nicknames that circulated amongst the population apparently beyond the surveillance of the state. Finally, interviews with the last Belgian administrator of the region prove extremely informative, similarly disrupting and confirming various aspects of the documentary sources while providing many further details and perspectives that otherwise would not be accessible, and this administrator's personal papers provide an excellent supplement to the official preservations of state.

Following an introduction to the people, landscape and historiographical themes, the thesis begins with an historical overview of Burundi's political development from the traditions of its earliest kingdoms to the cataclysm of the 1970s. This narrative provides the necessary context for the subsequent discussion, as well as the trajectory of the national story against which the local experience stands at once at odds and in agreement. From this beginning, the thesis follows a broadly chronological course constructed on four discrete themes that each encapsulate a mode of interaction between people and state on the border. Dissent is the point of departure. In 1961, the borderland rose up in the only anti-colonial peasant rebellion of the late Belgian period. The rural community pre-empted Independence with a fleeting new order more radical than the nationalist politicians desired. While the border itself functioned only as an administrative divide between the two halves of Belgian Ruanda-Urundi, it was rediscovered by the state as a dangerous and deviant frontier, believed to be infected by Rwandan tropes of violence and division. In this contest, the political discourse of the rural population is vibrantly illuminated, the conversation of 'rumour' in the hills revealing the acuity and sensitivity with which the people engaged in political debate, despite the doubts of their European and African leaders.

As the Belgians departed, collaboration followed. Chapter Four explores this interaction as the paranoid independent state leaned on the brink of war with Rwanda, and the frontier community took on the role of patriotic border guards as and when it suited them. Internal dissidents exploited the borderland in the pursuit of conflict, striking against a local population unprotected by its state. Rwandan aggression saw repeated incursions against Rwanda's own exiled enemies, incursions that frequently caused harm to the citizens of Burundi. The borderlanders therefore both protected the border and stayed vigilant against the politically deviant in their midst, exploiting this position of loyal border guard to invoke support and endorsement from the state, even when they were not under any direct threat. But this collaboration could become a weapon. Chapter Five details how, through the incisive performance of political loyalty in the boiling atmosphere of the frontier, individuals in the community discovered they could turn the state against itself, and call down retribution against their per-

sonal enemies in the local administration. One by one, the local politicians were eliminated, imprisoned by the hierarchy of state they represented. A relic of the end of colonialism and mostly belonging to the political opposition, these politicians stood exposed against a hostile government, but could only be destroyed when frontier constituents displayed their loyalty, invoked the danger of the border, and demanded the elimination of their local representative.

Finally, a calamitous reversal of such politics from below saw the government turn to totalitarian repression, bringing genocidal violence to the borderland in 1972. This is the concluding crisis of Chapter Six. In response to an uprising in the south of the country that killed thousands of Tutsi, the Tutsi-dominated government embarked on a 'selective genocide' across the nation that targeted, removed and murdered Hutu of any educational achievement or marginal exceptionalism. Achieved through the manipulation and deployment of the state party's youth league, the process of the genocide itself became a tool of repression, a terrible display of the state's power to know, sort and destroy its people, creating subjects of the cowed population it permitted to live. The traumatic decade had seen indirect rule change to ethnic dictatorship, passing blithely through a doomed democracy; both the nature of society and state, and the order of relations between them were utterly transformed, and the stage was set for the regional disasters that would follow in the 1990s.

In these close studies, each illuminating a contrasting manner of interaction that stood available to the politically active in this time of transition, a remarkable level of detail is proved both possible and valuable, rewarding the approach of micro-history. Both methodological and theoretical, this approach permits a dual conclusion to the thesis. The dynamics of political interaction on the edge are set in their rightful place of transformational significance for Burundi, before the challenge of reconciling local, national and regional histories provides an historiographical denouement. Vigilance emerges as the trope that crystallises the multifarious dynamics of the border, political linkage, and the conception of political community in this small area on just one side of a narrow border; simultaneously, this act of vigilance opens the door to the consideration of state, nation and transnational dynamics across the region. The thesis studies the border; its conclusions may be chased far beyond it.

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Abbreviations

AAB	<i>Archives africaines</i> , Brussels
Admicom	<i>Administrateur de commune</i>
ANB	<i>Archives nationales du Burundi</i>
AP	<i>Administrateur de Province</i>
Aprosuma	<i>Association pour la promotion sociale de la masse</i> (Rwanda)
Commarro	<i>Commissaire d'arrondissement</i>
JNR	<i>Jeunesse nationale Rwagasore</i>
JRR	<i>Jeunesse révolutionnaire Rwagasore</i>
Parmehutu	<i>Parti du mouvement de l'émancipation Hutu</i> (Rwanda)
PDC	<i>Parti démocrate chrétien</i>
PDR	<i>Parti démocratique rural</i>
PP	<i>Parti du Peuple</i>
Unar	<i>Union nationale rwandais</i> (Rwanda)
Unaru	<i>Union national africaine du Ruanda-Urundi</i>
Uprona	<i>Unité et progrès national</i>
VDB	Personal archives of Valère Vandembulcke

List of Terms

<i>Abadasigana</i>	Members of Uprona, lit. 'The Faithful Ones'; originally the name of the retinue of Mwami Mwezi Gisabo
<i>amoko</i>	'Category', ethnicity; sg. <i>ubwoko</i>
<i>Astrida</i>	Colonial name of Butare, Rwanda
<i>autorités indigènes</i>	'Native authorities'; largely chiefs and <i>sous-chefs</i> within the colonial system of indirect rule
<i>banyagihugu</i>	'People of the land' or 'country', 'peasants', 'common people'; sg. <i>munyagihugu</i>
<i>Barundi</i>	People of Burundi, sg. Murundi
<i>bashingantahe</i>	Elders by common assent, communal arbitrators, 'notables'; sg. <i>mushingantahe</i>

<i>Batare</i>	Members of a princely lineage descended from Mwami Ntare
<i>batware</i>	<i>Sous-chefs</i> under Belgian rule; also generic term for political leaders; sg. <i>mutware</i>
<i>Bezi</i>	Members of a princely lineage descended from Mwami Mwezi
bourgmestre	Elected administrator of a commune; later termed <i>Administrateur de commune</i>
Casablanca	Aisle of Uprona associated with pro-Communist and pro-Tutsi policies
<i>colline</i>	Hill community
<i>Député</i>	Elected member of the national legislative assembly
<i>Front commun</i>	Coalition of parties opposed to Uprona, led by the PDC
<i>Groupe de Bururi</i>	Tutsi-supremacist cabal of military officers from the southern Bururi Province who consolidated power in 1972
<i>ibihuha</i>	False rumours, sg. <i>igihuha</i>
<i>Ikiza</i>	‘Catastrophe’, ‘scourge’; the genocidal violence of the year 1972
<i>inyenzi</i>	Rwandan Tutsi exiles who launched attacks back across the border in the 1960s; lit. ‘cockroaches’. Now a term of extreme hate speech against Tutsi in general
Kanyaru	Border river between Rwanda and Burundi
Kitega	Colonial name of Gitega
<i>Mandat</i>	Belgian colonial administration under the terms of the League of Nations Mandate, 1919–1945

Monrovia	Aisle of Uprona associated with pro-West and pro-Hutu policies
mwami	King
<i>Ndongozi y'Uburundi</i>	'Guide of Burundi', fortnightly Catholic newspaper
<i>Territorial</i>	Belgian colonial officer
<i>Tutelle</i>	Belgian colonial administration under the terms of UN Trusteeship, 1946–1962
Usumbura	Colonial name of Bujumbura

Linguistic Note

While Kirundi is a tonal language, it is not usually marked outside of linguistic writing. Accent is generally on the penultimate syllable. Pronunciation of consonants is broadly as in English, except for the special sound *nt*, which is partially exhaled through the nose, and the letter *c*, which is pronounced as *ch*.

Particular terms are retained for certain issues from either French or Kirundi, listed in the glossary of terms. These are retained for clarity's sake or for simple lexical variation, as in the alternation of 'mwami' and 'king'. As a Bantu language, plural nouns in Kirundi are formed by changing the initial element of the word. For words related to humans, the singular usually begins with *mu-*, the plural with *ba-*. The population of Burundi are referred to as 'Barundi', sg. 'Murundi', partly to reflect the polyvalent connotations of nationality, citizenship and group identity inherent in the terms as commonly used, and partly for aesthetic reasons in opposition to the clumsy English construction of 'Burundians'.

Placenames are largely given according to their contemporary usage (hence Usumbura for Bujumbura during the colonial period), as are most spellings for other words, such as *akasozi* where *agasozi* is preferred today. Personal names in Burundi conventionally consist of two given names, one Kirundi and one a baptismal name usually derived from French or Italian. In some cases, particularly in more educated circles, the Kirundi name has become a family name, inherited by one's children, but this is largely not the case among the rural population mostly discussed here. The sequential order of the two names is frequently flexible, reflecting personal habit. I have endeavoured to follow the individuals' normal usage where possible; alphabetisation in the bibliography is always by the Kirundi name.

Quotations from documents are my own translations, with substantial assistance and direction in the case of many Kirundi documents. Quotations from interviews are through immediate translation, further mediated through my own translations from French in some cases. Records of these interviews remain in my keeping.

Introduction

This is the history of a turbulent borderland in a time of transition. The artificiality of Africa's colonial borders has long been widely acknowledged, but only more recently have historians of Africa begun to consider the effect of these apparently haphazard borders upon peoples and communities. Borders, whatever their origin, come to define politics, to shape social interactions, and thus mediate life within and alongside them. They are not just about the definition and delimitation of states, but also about the making of local political communities. This local construction and consequence of borders is the issue of this thesis, taking the frontier between Burundi and Rwanda, marked by the Kanyaru river, as its geographical centre, the community of Busiga and Kabarore communes in northern Burundi as its case. From 1960 to 1972 this borderland experienced a contested transformation as colonialism unravelled to give way to a new political disposition. In this moment of transition the life of the borderland was tested by new and fraught tensions. Communities and politicians struggled for stability and ascendancy in troubled times. As it divided the new nations on either side, the border brought people and states together in mutual suspicion, antagonism, and careful cooperation.

The thesis therefore seeks three essential themes within its vital period of decolonisation and political complexity. Firstly, the border: how was it conceived, created, and invoked in a decade of transformation? Secondly, the dynamics of political relations: what were the means and modes of political linkage between people and state as they encountered each other along this border? Thirdly, the wider connotations of political community: what did these interactions suggest about the conceptions and practices of power, duty and authority, the

parameters and performances of citizenship and subjecthood? The study begins as colonial rule was beginning to be dismantled, citizenship questions raised for the first time and the border rediscovered as a political and legal reality; it ends as staggering state violence cast the border as a barrier and a refuge, the people as subjects to a violent totalitarian power. But in between there was complexity and possibility. The goal is not to trace a line of development in these themes, but to glimpse their contrastive incarnations in moments of exemplary crisis and opportunity. In this pivot of colonial and postcolonial rule, on this changing border, a mosaic of complementary strategy is revealed, and the richness of political conceptions and practices at the turn of Independence may begin to be understood.

Before exploring this history and these vital issues in greater detail, however, we must first orientate ourselves in the landscape and the people through which the border runs.

1.1 The Border and the Borderlanders

On the northern edge of Burundi, the Kanyaru river curls between the western mountains and the eastern plains. This is the heart of the Great Lakes region, the nucleus of a cultural continuum and political complex. Here the legendary density of the population reaches its peak, and the historical core of powerful kingdoms built their strength and tested it against one another. Now marked by the communes of Busiga and Kabarore, some thirty five kilometres across, this stretch of mountains, hills and river has stood at once as the centre and the margin of Burundi, a point of contest and exchange, internal tension and external friction. The life of the border is a window on the stories and contradictions of the peoples and states that meet in its shadow.

The border between Burundi and Rwanda is largely defined by the river, the region by its eponymous Lakes, but it is the hills that will always stand out as the most defining aspect of the landscape. They remain the classic image of both Rwanda and Burundi, sold with equal romance to colonial audiences and modern tourists.¹ In the east, in Busiga, the hills are large

¹ cf. Jean-Pierre Chrétien, *L'invention de l'Afrique des Grands Lacs: une histoire du XXe siècle* (Paris: Karthala, 2010), p. 6.

and valleys shallow, the land a gently undulating profile as it descends slowly towards the lakes of Kirundo province, and eventually down across the north west corner of Tanzania towards Lake Victoria. Through the westwards rise to Kabarore the hills increase in steepness, creating sharp valleys and precipitous slopes that severely restrict the possibility of movement to a few accessible routes to settlements around their summit. The western edges of Kabarore are crowned by the mountains of the Congo-Nile Ridge, itself draped with the Kibira rainforest; a barrier and a refuge, home of the outcast, the mysterious and the dangerous, the forest marks a sharp juncture between the world of human civilisation and *ishamba*, the wild.²

The gradual rise in elevation from east to west sees a corresponding shift in agriculture; the comparatively lowland areas of Busiga were the sites of the largest and earliest projects of coffee cultivation in the country, and still sport considerable fields of the cash crop, while in the western ridges of Kabarore the cultivation of choice shifts to tea, covering the steep valleys in vivid green bushes right up to the shadows of the trees of Kibira. The climate in these higher slopes is notably more difficult than in the rest of the region, so much so that the local bourgmestre in 1963, Buzubona Julien,³ went so far as to label it ‘infertile’.⁴ He blamed the comparative poverty and movement away from his territory on the inability to grow coffee for income and the total dependence on potatoes and peas for subsistence, lacking the bananas, sweet potatoes, beans and even rice of his eastern neighbours. Cattle and other livestock, on the other hand, see greater potential on the slopes of the mountains where agriculture and settlement are less intensive, and the herders of the lower hills were known to drive their beasts up to the higher ground for better grazing.

Society is as varied as the land. The local student Emmanuel Mukama considered there

² Literally ‘savannah’, *ishamba* is used to denote all landscapes beyond human control, including the forest. See Jean-Pierre Chrétien and François-Xavier Nkurunziza, “La géographie en Kirundi,” *Culture et société* 2 (1979): 70–76; Michele Wagner, “Whose History is History? A History of the Baragane People of Buragane, Southern Burundi, 1850–1932” (PhD Thesis in History, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1991), p. 55.

³ See Appendix C for biographical notes on recurring actors in this history.

⁴ *Archives nationales du Burundi*, Bujumbura (ANB), BI 6 (197), Buzubona Julien and Nayabagabo Jean-Bonaventure, *Rapport annuel* (RA) *Kabarore*, 19 January 1963.

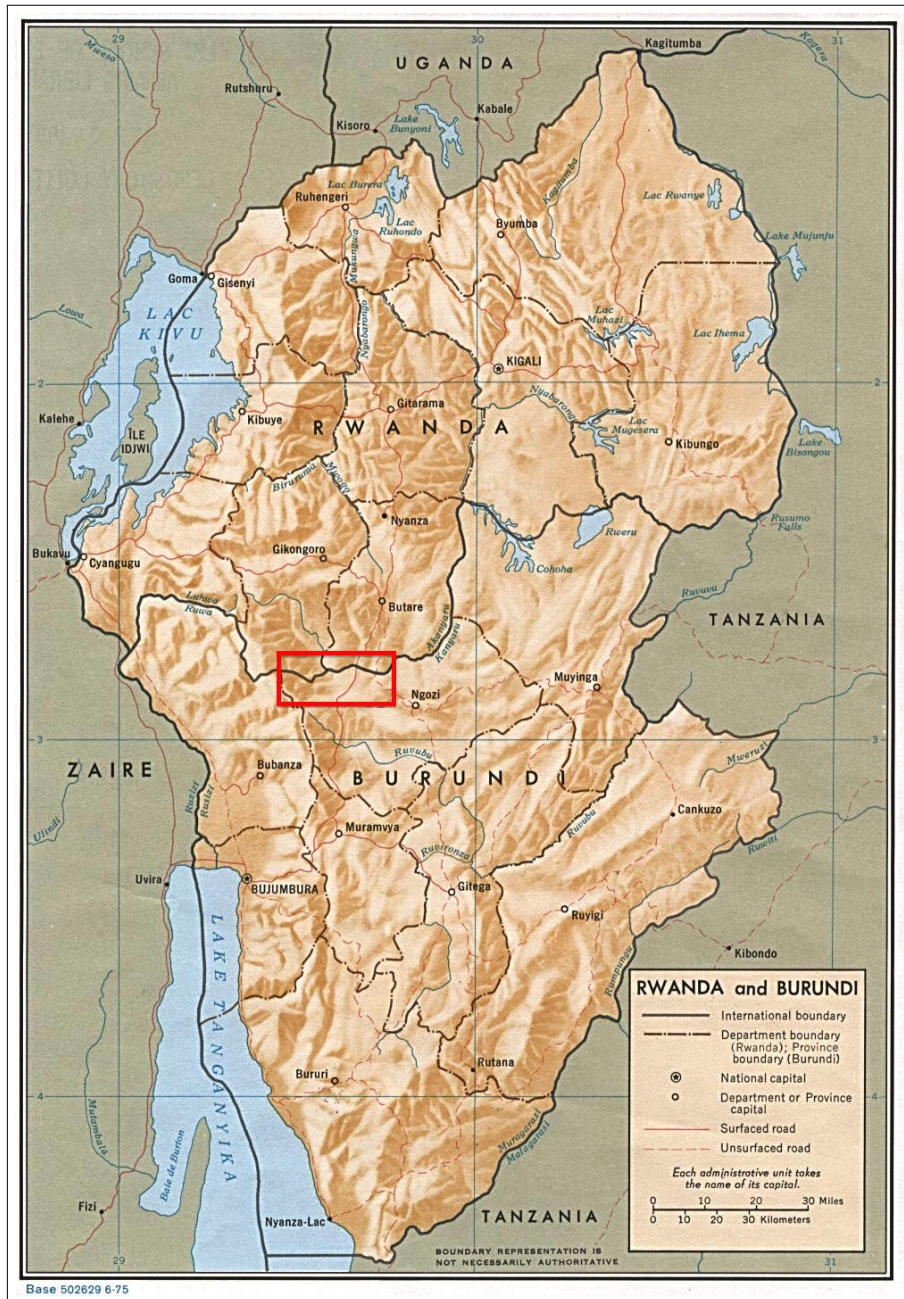


Figure 1.1: Rwanda and Burundi, with the border region marked in red (see Figure 1.2).

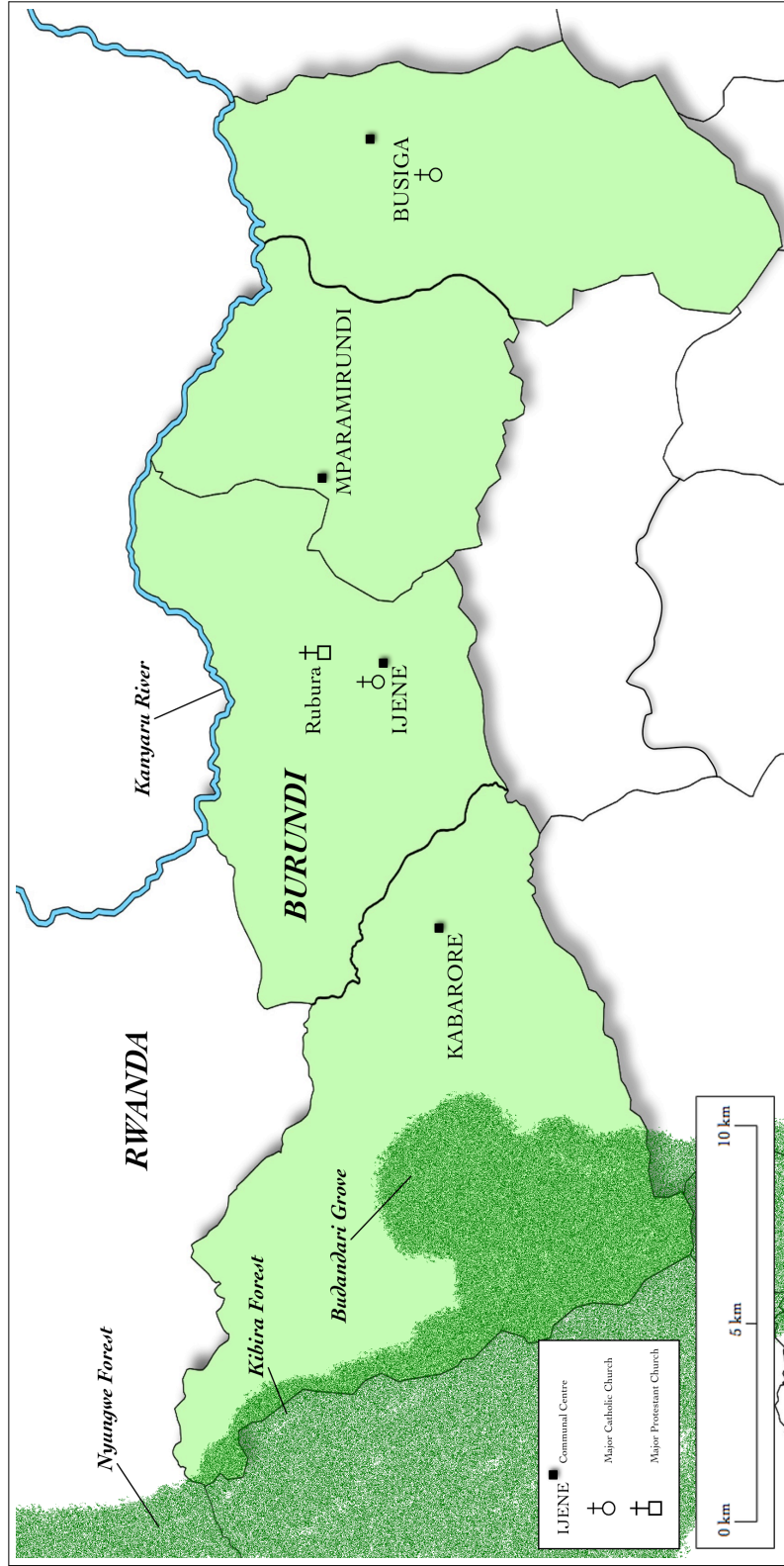


Figure 1.2: The border region in 1962. Kabarore and Ijene communes have today merged, as have Mparamirundi and Busiga. See Appendix A for further maps.

existed ‘two communities’ even within the single commune of Kabarore, each defined by their own mentality.⁵ Speaking of the people of the mountains, the same view is swiftly expressed in the hills today. ‘The people are different, they think differently, they have different mentalities,’ I was told in the eastern hills. ‘The same commune, but a different life.’⁶ A different life, but one shared reality. Whether in the hills or the mountains, the people are borderlanders. They visit markets in Rwanda every week, they receive their neighbours in return. They invest deeply in their identity as Barundi, distinct from their neighbouring Rwandans, but were long viewed with suspicion and caution by a state anxious of a threat from the north. The border was a resource for economic and political gain, a refuge, a barrier and a battleline in times of crisis. It was, above all, the ground on which the people of the hills encountered the state, the stage and the terms and the stake of political interaction with power.

Yet this border is most exceptional in many respects. In contrast to many international borders in Africa, the line between Rwanda and Burundi has a substantial heritage in pre-colonial practice. Along the Kanyaru river, long years of war, stalemate and peace treaties established a line of consensus well before the European arrival, and the roots of national identities grew up in centuries of contest. During six decades of colonial rule, first by Germany and then by Belgium, the border was suppressed, merely an administrative line between the two constituent parts of the single territory of Ruanda-Urundi. In the colonial description of the borders of Ruanda-Urundi, no mention of the Kanyaru frontier was considered relevant, a white space left in its place on the map.⁷

Even without legal recognition, the border continued to be practised to a certain extent. Local people found they could evade taxation, or gather easy money out of sight to pay an unpaid debt, by slipping into Rwandan territory for a little while.⁸ Cross-border trade contin-

⁵ Emmanuel Mukama, “Histoire sociale et mission catholique de la région de Kabarore (1954–1994)” (Mémoire de licencié en histoire, Université du Burundi, 1994), p. 9.

⁶ Abbé Macaire, conversation in Jene (Kabarore), 7 March 2011.

⁷ P. Jentgen, *Les frontières du Ruanda-Urundi et le régime international de tutelle* (Brussels: J. Duculot, 1957).

⁸ Majombora, interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 18 April 2011, *et al.*

ued along much the same terms as it does today, with largely food-related goods exported to the north, and technical materials traded southwards; where once bicycles and parts for repair dominated imports in the 1960s, now cars, petrol, refrigerators and kerosene are brought in.⁹ Even in Belgian practice the border persisted, the last administrator of the region explaining that he had no contact whatsoever with his counterpart in southern Rwanda; it was an administrative divide, but harder in reality than in theory.¹⁰ And above all, the social and cultural self-conception of the two nations was as strong, or even stronger, at Independence in 1962 as it had been sixty years earlier. Burundi and Rwanda imagined themselves as their own communities, albeit with fatal flaws within them, and at the end of Belgian rule the Kanyaru river was fundamental to the conception and expression of this distinction.

Thus the border gained its second element of exceptionality. Where independent African states largely accepted their legal colonial boundaries, the line between Rwanda and Burundi was reconstituted to its ancient status. Living their lives as border communities for decades, the people of Busiga and Kabarore suddenly found themselves once more to be borderlanders in the eyes of the independent state, and a new tension in their relationship to power would emerge along this reborn frontier.

The course of the history of the border will be told in more detail in the following chapter, but these remarkable characteristics are the essential premise for all that follows. With strong cultural recognition, consistent local practice, a lurching legal status and perpetual political significance, the border was more exceptional even than its long historical basis suggests. It was not unlike the modern Somaliland-Puntland frontier; once an international division, then formally dissolved, only to be reconstituted through the perceptions and actions of the people, states and state-like entities on either side.¹¹ The comparison is partially inverted,

⁹ Gahungu François (pseud.), interview in Nyanza-Tubiri (Busiga), 20 April 2011; Sylvana Inamahoro, “Les relations économiques entre Butare et Ngozi: contribution à la géographie des frontières” (Mémoire de licencié en géographie, Université du Burundi, 2011).

¹⁰ Valère Vandenbulcke, interview in Westrozebeke (Belgium), 21 July 2011.

¹¹ cf. Markus Virgil Hoehne, “People and Politics along and across the Somaliland-Puntland Border,” in *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa* (London: James Currey, 2010), 97–121.

Somaliland's border a colonial invention suppressed at Independence, Burundi's a pre-colonial reality derogated by colonialism, but the similarities are nevertheless pertinent. In northern Burundi, however, neither the strength of Somali identity nor the pressures of one-state Somali politics had their equivalent. The political endorsement of the border was mutual and emphatic, a 'Somaliland' attitude on both sides that desired and practised the international frontier regardless of international recognition. Alternatively, therefore, the better comparison might be the long line of Canada and the USA; on either side live closely related, eternally interacting populations, but the border between them stands clearly and universally accepted as a substantive distinction.¹² Social stereotypes of one another contribute considerably to self-perception, and the attitudes of others who conflate them are deeply resented.

The borderlanders were and remain a rural people, yet so tightly settled that almost urban dynamics of communication and interaction rule in the hills. They were and remain a marginalised people, home to no great power base, yet so populous and so central to the nation's politics, paranoias and potentials that their encounters with power were and are deeply significant for the understanding of people and state, their nature and their ever-changing relationship. Their concerns were local, but were weighted with national and transnational connotations and implications. In the centre, on the edge, the history of the people of the border lives through contradictions, and is all the more vital for its heart of paradox. Within this time of turmoil, within the hills of the borderland, the dynamics of power and authority between people and state were starkly exposed; the communication of political discourse, the linkages and contests within a resilient, metamorphosing hierarchy of authority, both give substance to the border itself, and are performed most expressively on this edge. Talking politics, watching the border, the people of Kabarore and Busiga have a history with much to tell.

¹² I owe thanks to Paul Nugent for suggesting this comparison.

Community, Ethnicity and Rule

Their names serve as simple reference, but the communes are relatively recent inventions. In the late 1950s the area was marked by nine *sous-chefferies*, all within the same *chefferie* of Nkiko-Mugamba, the nominal elements of which signify the union of the border (*nkiko*) and the mountainous ridge (*mugamba*). When reconstructions came hurriedly prior to Independence, the *sous-chefferies* were collapsed into four communes, known from east to west as Kabarore, Ijene¹³ Mparamirundi and Busiga, with between ten and fifteen thousand inhabitants in each.¹⁴ By 1965 things had changed again, and the four communes fused into two; named Busiga and Ijene, they now stood in the *Arrondissement* of Kayanza, Province of Ngozi. Names and boundaries have changed yet again since, Ijene switching names to Kabarore, and the two split between new provinces. The bewildering shifts must only indicate that the territory is somewhat imprecisely delineated; while effort was made to respect social and economic links and flows in the 1965 delineation,¹⁵ the communes are administrative constructs, grouping together the people for purposes of state. They remain the administrative collection of a population whose social lives revolved rather around the hill community, the *colline*, *umusozi*.¹⁶ In this most densely populated part of the world, settlement was dotted around the slopes of the hills, homesteads separated from one another by cultivation, and the shifting shape of the hill defined by human habitation. The *colline*, the basis of society, stood as a ‘more or less arbitrary administrative unit, a coherent geographic landscape, a complex human space’.¹⁷

¹³ Modern ‘Jene’; the standard older form is employed here.

¹⁴ Three-year population statistics collected in *ANB*, BI 6 (197), Buzubona Julien and Nayabagabo Jean-Bonaventure, *RA Kabarore*, 19 January 1963; *ANB*, BI 6 (197), Kaburazosi Zacharie, *RA Ijene*, 19 January 1963; *ANB*, BI 6 (197), Ntahorwamiye Joseph, *RA Mparamirundi*, 19 January 1963; *ANB*, BI 6 (197), Budumo Onésime, *RA Busiga*, 19 January 1963.

¹⁵ e.g., *ANB*, BI 6 (197), *Commentaire sur le RA Ngozi*, 1965.

¹⁶ The French *colline* is used here to indicate the social unit, English ‘hill’ restricted to geographical description.

¹⁷ Cyprien Kayondi, “Murunga, colline du Burundi: étude géographique.” *Les cahiers d’outre-mer: revue de géographie de Bordeaux et de l’Atlantique* 25, no. 98 (1972): 164–204, p. 171. The most powerful insight into

But who were the people who lived in this borderland? In many respects, they might be considered peasants. The definition of the term is a ‘barren’ exercise, and familiarly conflictual in practice.¹⁸ But given the disastrous heritage of the inadvisable use of European terminology to denote social dynamics in the Great Lakes,¹⁹ the old argument requires consideration. To some extents the term is loosely appropriate; the borderlanders were agriculturalists (*birim-izi*), pastoralists (*borozi*) and craftsmen (*banyamyuga*), all living and working in the same hills, exchanging their small surplus in local markets.²⁰ But further assumptions of cultural, social, political or economic distinction from a more powerful class of rulers are more problematic, particularly at the eve of Independence where this thesis begins. Older practices of formal clientage, binding economic and social obligations between the powerful and the poor, had largely been abolished or simply faded away;²¹ their legacies might still be felt, but the population of the hills was entering a world of new political discourses and conceptions. The nature of subordination, the dynamics of power relations that functioned in this time is a primary point of inquiry, and thus the use of the term ‘peasant’ risks anticipating the analysis. Rather, the practice here adopted is to employ the Kirundi term ‘*banyagihugu*’, sg. ‘*munyagihugu*’, where a specific label is necessary. This itself is inevitably filled with contradictions; literally ‘the people of the land’ or ‘country’, it does indeed have connotations of the dominated subject in its semantic range, and may on occasion be heard employed in a partially derogatory fashion by more educated, urban individuals today. Nevertheless, it is a useful compromise; within an Anglophone analysis it serves as a neutral designator, while retaining pertinence

life in a *colline* remains a Rwandan study, Danielle de Lame, *A Hill among a Thousand: Transformations and Ruptures in Rural Rwanda* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005).

¹⁸ Martin A. Klein, *Peasants in Africa: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1980), p. 9; cf. A. Isaacman, “Peasants and Rural Social Protest in Africa,” *African Studies Review* 33, no. 2 (1990): 1–120.

¹⁹ See below, p. 15.

²⁰ Emile Mworoha, *Peuples et rois de l’Afrique des lacs: le Burundi et les royaumes voisins au XIXe siècle* (Dakar-Abidjan: Les nouvelles éditions africaines, 1977), pp. 183–186.

²¹ See *ibid.*, pp. 186–209; Roger Botte, “Burundi: la relation ubugabire dans la tête de ceux qui la décrivent,” *Cahiers d’études africaines* 9, no. 35 (1969): 363–371.

to the cultural context. In the text that follows, the word ‘peasant’ is employed rarely and advisedly, either for comparison’s sake or for particular analytic purpose.

The *banyagihugu* comprised three ‘categories’, *amoko*: Hutu, Tutsi and Twa.²² The word *amoko*, sg. *ubwoko*, is also used to denote categories of other genres, but with the human population of Burundi it is conventionally translated as ‘ethnicity’. This is a word even further stretched by its application in the Great Lakes than the term ‘peasant’, but one it seems fruitless to reject, given its dominance in the literature; we must only note, as is customary in such introductions, that these ethnicities were divided neither by language, faith, culture, geography or society. The association of the majority Hutu with agriculture, Tutsi with cattle-rearing, and Twa with hunting and pottery is justified, but far from absolute; similarly the physical stereotypes of tall Tutsi, short Hutu and squat Twa are scarcely sufficiently distinct to deserve substantial attention. The ethnic proportions in the north were calculated by the Belgians as marginally deviant from the regional average, with 88.88% Hutu, 9.79% Tutsi and 1.33% Twa against the standard reference of around 85%, 14% and 1%.²³ Yet the nature of these ethnicities, their relationship to politics and power, and the particular specificity of Burundi that carries the greatest contrast with the better-known case of Rwanda, is perhaps best explored through the fourth ‘category’, the Ganwa.²⁴

The Ganwa were not *banyagihugu*, by definition. They were the ruling class, descended within four generations from a mwami, ‘king’. In Burundi, therefore, the association of power with Tutsi that flowed so easily from colonial presumptions in Rwanda, where all the powerful were Tutsi even if not all the Tutsi were powerful,²⁵ carried less cultural potential. Ganwa defined the pinnacle of society and political hierarchy. Each mwami became the head of his own lineage of Ganwa nobles, ‘princes of the blood’; the children of Mwami Ntare would

²² Properly *bahutu*, *batutsi*, *batwa*; common Anglophone usage is followed here.

²³ Office de l’information, *Ruanda-Urundi: Geography and History* (Brussels: Belgian Congo / Ruanda-Urundi Information / Public Relations Office, 1960), p. 37.

²⁴ *Baganwa*; while less familiar in English, the lexical model of Hutu and Tutsi is accepted without argument.

²⁵ Catherine Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda, 1860–1960* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1993).

be known as the *Batare*, Mwezi would found the *Bezi*, Mutaga the *Bataga* and Mwambutsa the *Bambutsa*. In this manner the son who became the new mwami on his father's death would take formal central power as the head of a new 'dynasty', while his siblings would be consoled with a strong power-base of their own, a form of princely clan with entitlements to chieftaincy, judicial authority, even their own armies within their territory, and a degree of potential for corporate solidarity. The mwami was thus framed as somewhat 'first among equals', acknowledged with a sovereignty of mystical significance but of limited means of command over a strong class of nobility.²⁶ The succession was not bound to the firstborn son, but to the child marked out from birth as the future king; the ordained child was said to be born with a handful of seeds clasped in his fist. His rule and power, and the nation as a whole, were symbolised by the sacred drum, Karyenda; the word '*ingoma*' meant both 'drum' and 'royalty', 'reign', 'epoch', the government being *Nyen'ingoma*, those that control the drum.

The sacral nature of the mwami prior to European domination has been much discussed; before the colonial deconstruction of 'hierocratic representations of power',²⁷ Mwami Mwezi Gisabo in the nineteenth century 'personified the law and the life of the country. He was the pillar of the nation, against which chiefs and subjects leant. Still further, he was the guarantee of the natural order in which this society was rooted.'²⁸ Yet he ruled through a nucleus of sacred persons around him, and through the delegations of fractious chiefs. Investment of authority and legitimacy was in the mystical power at the summit of society, while 'vertical' lines of control passed through socio-economic bonds of hierarchy and derived authority in between. 'Society undertook to master royalty',²⁹ and power was exercised by elites through

²⁶ Roger Botte, "La guerre interne au Burundi," in *Guerres de lignages et guerres d'états en Afrique*, ed. Jean Bazin and Emmanuel Terray (Paris: Editions des archives contemporaines, 1982), 269–318; René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, Library of African Affairs (London: Pall Mall Press, 1970), pp. 301–323.

²⁷ Julien Nimubona, "Analyse des représentations du pouvoir politique: le cas du Burundi" (Thèse du doctorat en science politique, Université de Pau et des pays de l'Adour, 1998), pp. 288–341.

²⁸ Mworoha, *Peuples et rois*, p. 129.

²⁹ Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "Roi, religion et lignages dans l'Afrique des Grands Lacs," in *L'Histoire retrouvée: 25 ans de métier d'historien en Afrique*, ed. Jean-Pierre Chrétien (Paris: Karthala, 1993), 59–78, p. 67, adapting David Newbury, *Kings and Clans: Ijwi Island and the Lake Kivu Rift, 1780–1840* (Madison, WI: University

deference to sacral kingship. Authority derived from above permitted the immediate claim of power in the community.

The kingship operated in a cycle, the sequence of Ntare, Mwezi, Mutaga and Mwambutsa completing one full turn before beginning again with a second Ntare. At the completion of a cycle, Ganwa of the oldest lineage would be reduced in standing, the ‘degradation’, ‘*gutahiriza*’, entailing a change in socio-political identity to a ‘simple Tutsi’.³⁰ By the mid-nineteenth century, Ganwa chiefs showed strong resistance to being ‘downgraded’; some attempted to fix their identity in popular recognition as a permanent ‘genetic’ category by force.³¹ Ganwa might thus be viewed as a more conventional ethnicity in formation. By the mid-twentieth century, the four-lineage system had largely been derogated, and Ganwa of all descent found themselves affiliated or treated as affiliated with either the *Batare* or *Bezi* groups.

‘Ganwa’ as a title came to double as a generic word for ‘chief’, but it must be recognised that the mwami maintained a core of non-Ganwa chieftaincies whose direct loyalty to his person provided him with a power-base of his own. Various the *nkebe* in peripheral regions, and the *bishikira* in the central spine of the country, these chiefs were all Hutu and Tutsi.³² Thus the ethnic complexion at the summit of control requires a maxim somewhat inverted from that of Rwanda; all the Ganwa were powerful, but not all the powerful were Ganwa.

To probe further the issues of ethnicity and power, the peculiarities of Ganwa identity prove a useful lens. Ganwa were perceived as neither Hutu nor Tutsi, yet their ethnic identity was, in the *longue durée*, temporary, and contingent on social position. On degradation they became Tutsi, yet stories abounded of a Hutu origin for the princely class. An illustrious Ganwa chief in the first half of the twentieth century, Nduwumwe Louis, identified his forebears as Hutu;³³

of Wisconsin Press, 1991).

³⁰ Mworoha, *Peuples et rois*, pp. 141–143.

³¹ *ibid.*

³² See *ibid.*, pp. 163–166; Emile Mworoha, *Histoire du Burundi: des origines à la fin du XIXe siècle* (Paris: Hatier, 1987), pp. 217–218; Hans Meyer, *Les Barundi. Une étude ethnologique en Afrique orientale*, ed. Jean-Pierre Chrétien, Translated by Françoise Willman (Paris: Société française d’histoire d’outre-mer, 1984 [1916]), p. 120.

³³ Joseph Gahama, *Le Burundi sous administration belge: la période du mandat 1919–1939* (Paris: Karthala,

some royal origin legends claimed the kings derived from the *Abahanza* clan of noble Hutu,³⁴ and rumours were heard in the borderland as late as 1964 that the *Abahanza* would once more bring forth a mwami to renew the monarchy.³⁵ ‘Ganwa’, while a category of its own, seemed at times to carry undertones of either Tutsi or Hutu identity, a complexity that today elicits strong opinions on whether it was an ‘ethnicity’.³⁶ It could be a matter of debate even in 1960, one reader writing in to ask the Catholic newspaper *Ndongozi y’Uburundi* to which of three ethnicities, phrased as *imiryango*, usually ‘families’ or ‘clans’, the mwami belonged, to which the editors could only reply that the king was above all.³⁷

The Ganwa identity, therefore, reflects the degree to which the terms of definition and conception of each of the *amoko* were inconsistent, drawing on many aspects of culture, lineage, social standing and power, and changeable to the extent of total reimagination dependent on the individual and circumstance. Beyond its ideally temporary character, ‘Ganwa’ differed from ‘Hutu’ and ‘Tutsi’ by its discrete socio-political distinction. Separation and power were in its definition. At the opposite end of the hierarchy, Twa were similarly delineated by an inverse socio-political distinction; as the Ganwa held the summit of power, Twa were at its base, subject to pervasive discrimination and social prejudice. Yet while bearing this political aspect of categorisation, they lacked the temporary aspect and expectation to change category assumed in Ganwa identity. Hutu and Tutsi formed the body of the nation, but their own definitions did not operate in the same terms as their superiors or subordinates. For Ganwa and Twa, their ethnicity defined their socio-political status; for Hutu and Tutsi, political and social hierarchy depended more on clan systems, of extreme complexity, than on the meta-

2001), pp. 282–283.

³⁴ Claude Guillet and Pascal Ndayishunguje, *Légendes historiques du Burundi* (Paris: Karthala, 1987), pp. 48–63.

³⁵ See Chapter 4.

³⁶ See, for example, the comments left online on an interview with Chrétien that includes this issue, Roland Rugero, “Jean-Pierre Chrétien: “L’histoire serait différente si le Burundi et le Rwanda n’étaient pas voisins,”” 15 December 2011, <http://www.iwacu-burundi.org/spip.php?article1566>.

³⁷ Nivyumva Laurenti and Nduwumwami Petro, “Ibibazo n’inyishu ku vyerekeye itora n’itorwa,” 15 April 1960, p. 2.

categories of ethnicity.

The reduction of Ganwa to Tutsi status reflects the relative hierarchical associations of the latter, but this must be further deconstructed. ‘Degraded’ Ganwa joined noble Tutsi clans;³⁸ there were many other lesser lineages, and noble Hutu clans took precedence over socially inferior Tutsi groups. The *amoko* were thus coherent neither between each other in their terms of definition, nor within themselves, nor should any such complex of social imagining, political power, personal identity and group distinction be expected to submit to universal terms of simple description. This is the complexity that fuels the ferocious academic argument over the understanding of ethnicity in Burundi as in Rwanda; it is also the complexity that permits the invocation and application of differing, not developing, senses of ethnicity by those who self-identify within these terms across locations, times and circumstances.

However, as has been deeply and eloquently explored elsewhere, the colonial ‘imagination’ of tradition, ethnicity and race had substantial consequences on the shared conceptions of these categories and the power associated with them.³⁹ The amorphous definitions and numerous influences on the conception of each ethnicity continued their permanent flux through the political and cultural pressure of the colonial system, both in administration and in the church. In Chrétien’s terms, the colonial experience in Burundi was one of ‘feudalisation’, forming the quasi-European medieval system of rigid power structures perceived.⁴⁰ The Bel-

³⁸ Albert Trouwborst, “Les Barundi,” in *Les anciens royaumes de la zone interlacustre méridionale (Rwanda, Burundi, Buha)*, ed. Daryll Forde (London: International African Institute, 1962), 93–170, p. 134.

³⁹ Jean-Pierre Chrétien, “Hutu et Tutsi au Rwanda et au Burundi,” in *Au cœur de l’ethnie: ethnies, tribalisme et l’état en Afrique*, ed. Jean-Loup Amselle and Elikia M’Bokolo (Paris: La Découverte, 1985), 129–165; Joseph. Gahama and Augustin Mvuyekure, “Jeu ethnique, idéologie missionnaire et politique coloniale,” in *Les ethnies ont une histoire*, ed. Jean-Pierre Chrétien (Paris: Karthala, 2003), 303–324; cf. Terence O Ranger and Eric Hobsbawm, “The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa,” in *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 211–262; Terence O Ranger, “The Invention of Tradition Revisited: the Case of Colonial Africa,” in *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth-Century Africa: Essays in Honour of A.H.M. Kirk-Greene*, ed. Terence O Ranger and Olufemi Vaughan (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993).

⁴⁰ Jean-Pierre Chrétien, “Féodalité ou féodalisation sous le Mandat belge,” in *L’Histoire retrouvée: 25 ans de métier d’historien en Afrique*, ed. Jean-Pierre Chrétien (Paris: Karthala, 1993), 189–218.

gian administration, bolstered by academic analysis, considered the peculiar political and ethnic complexion of Burundi to be a malfunctioning, corrupted version of a supposed ideal Rwandan model of Tutsi power, Hutu service and Twa exclusion. Indirect rule therefore restricted power not simply to Ganwa, but to Ganwa and Tutsi, with the princely class considered simply a particularly privileged branch of the latter. In a notorious phrase, the first Vice-Governor General of Ruanda-Urundi, Pierre Ryckmans, wrote that ‘the Tutsi are destined to rule’.⁴¹ The shared imagination of this by many, though certainly not all, of both Tutsi and Ganwa was equally appreciable. Hutu chiefs, counting for some 20% of the cadre of *autorités coutumières*, ‘customary authorities’ in 1929, were reduced to zero by 1945.⁴²

Nevertheless, the political dimension of ethnicity had not reached prominent popular awareness by the end of the colonial period. Few political parties spoke of ethnic distinction in the decolonisation process, and those that achieved any substantial support spoke volubly against it. Burundi had not formed a ‘counter-elite’ among Hutu as in Rwanda,⁴³ although there were now Hutu among the governmental elite. Ethnicity had an ambiguous role in conceptions of power and social hierarchy in the country at large. The *banyagihugu*, the ‘peasantry’, had the least experience of or investment in the conflation of ethnicity and political authority, beyond the distinction of Ganwa aristocracy. Ethnicity stood as a social reality, on the verge of political utility. This thesis covers the period from potential to reality, from a period of minimal ethnic saliency in political debate to a genocide enacted along ethnic lines. But this is not simply the story of this descent. There were other modes and terms of power, authority, order in the borderland. In the encounter between people and state, thrown into light by a changing frontier, a tangle of political potentialities emerged. In exceptional moments of contest and performance they were tested, derogated and elevated. These are the moments that will tell the story of the borderland across the tumultuous decade of decolonisation and Independence.

⁴¹ Pierre Ryckmans, *Dominer pour servir* (Brussels: Universelle, 1948), p. 26.

⁴² Gahama and Mvuyekure, “Jeu ethnique,” p. 310.

⁴³ Newbury, *Cohesion of Oppression*; Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*.

1.2 Historiography and Themes

This history draws on several bodies of thought. For its national setting, the rich yet limited historiography of Burundi provides essential context; in one of many gaps of scholarship, and perhaps the only prominent controversy in historical writing on the country, the basis for this work may be situated. The location and frame of the study, on the other hand, builds on the burgeoning field of border studies, the historiography of which provides inspiration and argument. Finally, the political encounter at the heart of the work is enriched by attention to wider disciplines, from political science to anthropology, and a clear orientation in the pertinent concepts of these approaches is invaluable. Through the exploration of these three strands of literature, the particular concerns and questions of the thesis may finally be crystallised.

Historians and Political Scientists

It might be said that the history of Burundi has remained a specialist pursuit. Nevertheless, within a relatively small circle of scholars there has been remarkable productivity. A review of the relevant literature is incorporated in the historical overview in the following chapter, but the broad courses of interest are usefully sketched here. The pre-colonial history of Burundi and the Great Lakes is extraordinarily deeply explored in comparison to most other areas of Africa, with contributions from the study of oral tradition,⁴⁴ architecture and archaeology⁴⁵ and linguistics⁴⁶ enriching detailed and sensitive accounts of the power structures, social relations

⁴⁴ Jan Vansina, *La légende du passé: traditions orales du Burundi* (Brussels: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1972); Léonidas Nduricimpa and Claude Guillet, *L'Arbre-mémoire* (Paris: Karthala, 1984); Guillet and Ndayishunguje, *Légendes historiques*.

⁴⁵ Jean-Louis Acquier, *Le Burundi*, Collection Architectures traditionnelles 3 (Marseille: Parenthèses, 1986); Francis van Noten, "The Early Iron Age in the Interlacustrine Region: The Diffusion of Iron Technology," *Azania: Journal of the British Institute in Eastern Africa* 14 (1979): 61–80.

⁴⁶ David L. Schoenbrun, *A Green Place, a Good Place: Agrarian Change, Gender, and Social Identity in the Great Lakes Region to the 15th Century* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1998).

and expansions of the ancient kingdoms.⁴⁷ Excellent work has similarly been produced on the early colonial period,⁴⁸ and, more recently, on the last years of Belgian rule,⁴⁹ although by and large it remains true that definitive works on national political concerns are supplemented by a relatively sparse collection of articles on related concerns, and little approaching disagreement or debate. The field is in good health considering the lack of wider interest, but must still be regarded as nascent, even in comparison to historical fields elsewhere in Africa.

The extent of the work to date has largely been characterised as the product of a ‘Burundo-French school’ of historians,⁵⁰ symbolised by the hugely influential and productive figure of Jean-Pierre Chrétien. Researching and teaching in Burundi from the 1960s, Chrétien trained many of the other scholars, both French and Barundi, who comprise the working body of historians of the country. He welcomed the identification of the ‘school’ as a compliment, but resisted it as a definition; he preferred to describe his own work and that of his students and colleagues as ‘the emergence of the discipline of history’ in central Africa, built on a set of core activities: ‘the methodology of the use of oral sources ... the critical reevaluation of ethnographic literature⁵¹ ... discussion of chronologies ... analysis of the effects of colonial contact ... enlargement of the historian’s territory (demography, economy, technologies, visions of the world); opening of the horizons of ‘national’ history to the whole of eastern and central Africa.’⁵²

⁴⁷ Jean-Pierre Chrétien, *The Great Lakes of Africa: Two Thousand Years of History* (New York: Zone Books, 2006); Mworoha, *Peuples et rois*; Mworoha, *Histoire du Burundi*.

⁴⁸ e.g. Gahama, *Le Burundi*.

⁴⁹ Christine Deslaurier, “Un monde politique en mutation: le Burundi à la veille de l’indépendance (circa 1956–1961)” (Thèse de doctorat en histoire, Université Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2002).

⁵⁰ Jean Stengers, “Note bibliographique,” *Bulletin de la classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques, Académie royale de Belgique* 10–11 (1988): 347–350.

⁵¹ Of which the most significant early texts are J. M. M. van der Burgt, *Un grand peuple de l’Afrique équatoriale: éléments d’une monographie sur l’Urundi et les Warundi* (Bois-le-Duc: Société l’Illustration catholique, 1903); Meyer, *Les Barundi*; René Bourgeois, *Banyarwanda et Barundi* (Brussels: Académie royale des sciences coloniales, 1957); Trouwborst, “Les Barundi.”

⁵² Jean-Pierre Chrétien, “Burundi: le métier d’historien: querelle d’école?” *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des études Africaines* 25, no. 3 (1991): 450–467, p. 452.

Yet historical work has largely, although not completely, been limited to matters prior to Independence. For the postcolonial years, the thin field is dominated by the contemporary studies of political scientists, principally René Lemarchand and Filip Reyntjens, whose work approaches the aspirations of *l'histoire immédiate*. For the vital decades of the 1960s and 1970s, Lemarchand's analysis of both Rwanda and Burundi combined privileged information from personal contacts among key actors of the time with analysis that defined the way in which the political transformations around Independence have been seen since.⁵³ He analyses the course of national politics as a 'framework' of elite conflicts, from a dynastic feud between Ganwa nobility, to internal party schisms post-Independence, finally displaced into terms of ethnicity. His book, now out of print, remains the only coherent account of the decade primarily under consideration here, and acts as a historical source in itself. Yet it is concerned wholly with the story of the elite; a history of this period in popular experience is sorely lacking.

While there are few productive debates in the literature that require attention, a significant split must be acknowledged. Despite giving generous praise for each other's principal works, Chrétien and Lemarchand have represented a fractious break between the 'Burundo-French' school of history and the political scientists. The dispute was notably public and intense as it unfolded in the wake of ethnic massacres in northern Burundi in 1988.⁵⁴ The

⁵³ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*.

⁵⁴ The trigger work was the contemporary report on these massacres, Jean-Pierre Chrétien, André Guichaoua, and Gabriel Le Jeune, *La crise d'août 1988 au Burundi* (Paris: AFERA, 1989). For the fallout and published debate, see René Lemarchand, "Burundi: The Killing Fields Revisited," *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 18, no. 1 (1989): 22–28; René Lemarchand, "The Report of the National Commission to Study the Question of National Unity in Burundi: a Critical Comment," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 27, no. 4 (1989): 685–690; Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "Burundi: Social Sciences Facing Ethnic Violence," *Issue* 19, no. 1 (1990): 38–40; René Lemarchand, "L'école historique burundo-française: une école pas comme les autres," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 24, no. 2 (1990): 235–248; Chrétien, "Le métier d'historien"; René Lemarchand, "Réponse à Jean-Pierre Chrétien," *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 25, no. 3 (1991): 468–470. A similar earlier dispute may be found in Jean-Pierre Chrétien and Gabriel Le Jeune, "Développement rural et démocratie paysanne, un dilemme? L'exemple du Burundi," *Politique africaine*, no. 11 (1983): 45–76; Roger Botte, "Quand l'essentiel n'est pas ce que l'on dit, mais ce que l'on tait," *Politique africaine* 12 (1983): 99–104.

polemics published on each side raise some valid criticisms while frequently misrepresenting the other position, but fundamental differences may be perceived in the consideration of ethnicity; Chrétien and his colleagues were charged with attributing too much attention to the colonial distortions of ethnicity, while failing to account for continuing ethnic manipulation and political domination in the post-colonial period, especially during the Second Republic of 1976–1987. The ‘school’ was portrayed as dangerously close to the government, writing a history, and then a contemporary analysis, that towed an official line. In response, Chrétien denounced what he considered to be the atavistic obsession with ethnicity of the political scientists, pointing out many mistaken details in the accusations against him both regarding his own work and regarding knowledge of Burundi in general; his accusers had not been able to conduct research in the country for decades, while he continued to receive research clearance and assistance from the government.

The focus of this dispute was on the issues of the day. For the 1960s and early 1970s, both sides of the argument were largely in agreement, and respectful of the contributions of each other’s work. Nevertheless, the unfortunately acrimonious dispute identifies issues and approaches that are worthy of acknowledgement. Firstly, Lemarchand’s position on the need for further consideration of power and ethnicity in the post-colonial world is valid; at the same time, Chrétien is right to approach historical issues without presaging the political role of ethnicity in all circumstances. Charting the ‘rise’ of ethnicity alone conceals a plethora of other significant aspects of society and politics. This thesis seeks to address the issue of ethnicity within its context, and within the limits of the time. Secondly, an undercurrent of this academic dispute identifies the conceptual basis of this thesis. The first signs of controversy were truly appreciable in the response to a conference in Bujumbura in 1985 entitled ‘Questions on the peasantry of Burundi’, in which issues of development and rural life were tackled from a number of disciplinary perspectives.⁵⁵ An unusual and intriguing collection, it nevertheless triggered the rather disappointed criticism of David Newbury. He observed that in the welcome

⁵⁵ Université du Burundi (ed.), *Questions sur la paysannerie au Burundi* (Bujumbura: Université du Burundi, 1987).

attempt to pay more attention to the rural population, a world largely overlooked in the accounts of national politics from across the century, the peasants were absent; ‘This is very much ‘la paysannerie’ seen from the outside,’ he wrote. ‘The substructures of poverty are exclusively those of climate, soils, illness, and ‘la mentalité paysanne’; the solutions to poverty are technical ones.’⁵⁶ Most critically, Newbury objected that ‘there is barely an allusion to confrontation, conflict, or struggle in the countryside; the exercise of power (in any form) is almost entirely absent.’

This thesis is not guided by the same concerns or issues addressed by the 1985 conference, nor does it seek to prove or test the criticisms Newbury raised. Rather, the spirit of his complaints uncovered the essential gap in the post-colonial history of Burundi. A decade later he and Catherine Newbury would make a call for this gap to be filled in the case of Rwanda, a desire to ‘bring the peasants back in’ to its written history.⁵⁷ In Burundi’s case, it was the link between the peasant world and the world of national politics that has been insufficiently explored. This study seeks the link, the call and response, the conversation of power and politics that existed between rulers and ruled. This need not be a question of resistance against oppression, nor of the guidance or manipulation of gullible peasantry by wise or malevolent leaders; certainly, it need not only be a question of ethnicity. It is a question of politics, within and without the formal political structures of the day, of communication and action with regards to the expression and exercise of power within society. For the most crucial period of Burundi’s twentieth-century history this question remains unanswered; historians have addressed the decade too little, political scientists have studied only the politicians who ran and divided the nation. It is time to begin to explore how politics and power was experienced, shaped and perceived between society and state as Burundi stumbled on its way from colony

⁵⁶ David Newbury, “Burundi Without Peasants: ‘Questions Sur La Paysannerie Au Burundi.’” Bujumbura: Université du Burundi and Paris: Centre De Recherches Africaines (Paris I), 1987. Pp. 452. No Price Given.” *The Journal of African History* 31, no. 3 (1990): 509–510.

⁵⁷ David Newbury and Catharine Newbury, “Bringing the Peasants Back In: Agrarian Themes in the Construction and Corrosion of Statist Historiography in Rwanda,” *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 3 (2000): 832–877.

to Independence.

Borders and Microhistory

The setting of this inquiry ties it into a prolific new body of research. The discovery of the border in African history has opened the field to new opportunities and insights. While 'border studies' first grew to prominence in the interdisciplinary analysis of the USA-Mexico frontier and Western Europe,⁵⁸ African borders were early and consistently noted for their arbitrariness, artificiality and acrimony. The creation of borders as 'lines on a map' drawn thousands of miles away (mostly in Berlin), with little knowledge of and no consideration for the people who lived on the land, borders then enshrined in law, policed by states, and sprouting conflict, was a truism of historiography and other disciplinary studies in Africa.⁵⁹ Borders kept people in, kept them apart, and caused conflict by their illegitimacy in the social and political reality of African societies.

The discovery of the border as a more nuanced issue of study in Africa occurred in the 1980s, although Barth's anthropological analysis of ethnic group identification through mutual contrast, leading to the social construction of boundaries quite aside from the actions of state power, is a notable early precedent.⁶⁰ Kopytoff's theories of pre-colonial border-construction opened the field beyond the obsession with European imposition, and simultaneously raised questions of the social and political meaning of borders.⁶¹ His analysis focussed on a socio-

⁵⁸ e.g. O.J. Martínez, *Border Boom Town: Ciudad Juárez since 1848* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1978); Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: the making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991); for good overviews on related theory, see Robert R. Alvarez, "The Mexican-US Border: the Making of an Anthropology of Borderlands," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 447-479; Klaus Eder, "Europe's Borders: the Narrative Construction of the Boundaries of Europe," *European Journal of Social Theory* 9, no. 2 (2006): 255-271.

⁵⁹ cf. the surveys Ian Brownlie, *African Boundaries : A Legal and Diplomatic Encyclopaedia* (London: Hurst, 1979); Carl Gosta Widstrand, *African Boundary Problems* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1969).

⁶⁰ Frederik Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organisation of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969).

⁶¹ Igor Kopytoff, *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies* (Bloomington:

political pattern by which societies in Africa ‘reproduced’ themselves by the constant movement of political exiles, escapees and other marginalised ‘bands’ to the edge. The concept of the frontier, explicitly borrowed from the American West, typified a stimulating line of thought on the productivity of political edges and border zones in general.

Around the same time as this growing pre-colonial awareness emerged, Anthony Asiwaju’s work focussed more critical and careful appreciation of colonial borders in Africa, reflecting on the use made by Africans of borders between French and British rule,⁶² and studying the nature of ethnic relations across these borders, rather than simply noting their enforced division.⁶³ Herbst argued against the fallacy of ‘arbitrary’ boundaries, considering them a rational function of state formation,⁶⁴ while special attention to the real economic dynamics on the borders of African states raised new questions about the true nature of restriction or control that they represented.⁶⁵

The critical text that coalesced these new thoughts and set the agenda for the following decade of critical historical analysis of African borders was a volume edited by Paul Nugent and Asiwaju in 1996, in which the acknowledgement of borders as ‘barriers’ was powerfully coupled with questions of how they could act as ‘conduits’ and ‘opportunities’, linking people as much as dividing them, creating identity as much as cutting across it.⁶⁶ Notably, Katzenellenbogen’s contribution to this volume dedicated particular effort to deconstructing

Indiana University Press, 1987).

⁶² Anthony I. Asiwaju, *Western Yorubaland under European Rule, 1889–1945: a Comparative Analysis of French and British Colonialism* (London: Longman, 1976), especially pp. 57–65, 185–206.

⁶³ Anthony I. Asiwaju, *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations across Africa’s International Boundaries, 1884–1984* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1985).

⁶⁴ Jeffrey Herbst, “The Creation and Maintenance of National Boundaries in Africa,” *International Organization* 43, no. 4 (1989): 673–692; cf. Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

⁶⁵ Janet MacGaffey, *The Real Economy of Zaire: the Contribution of Smuggling & Other Unofficial Activities to National Wealth* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991).

⁶⁶ Paul Nugent and Anthony I. Asiwaju, eds., *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities* (London: Pinter, 1996).

the historical myth of the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 as the event which ‘created’ Africa’s international borders.⁶⁷ He observed how European powers rather negotiated and improvised their territorial delineations over the following decades, quite often in response to their growing understanding of the landscape and, occasionally, of the people they attempted to rule.

Rwanda and Burundi, almost entirely unknown to Europeans in 1885, were therefore both typical and exceptional case studies of this border creation. The eastern frontiers of the Congo Free State, which were agreed in conflictual terms in Berlin, cut across them, and both kingdoms stood from a European perspective as themselves the disputed border between the ‘spheres of influence’ of Germany, Britain and King Leopold’s Congo. Their late encounter with colonial power therefore encouraged the desire of the three European powers to ‘maintain’ their territory whole as a path of least resistance to control, while the squabbles and negotiations between these three powers proved perhaps the clearest and most eloquent example of the tactical compromise between European interests and local realities.⁶⁸ It is an irony of history that the Kanyaru border between Rwanda and Burundi had the clearest claim of all their frontiers to a strong historical heritage, but was the one that was demoted in legal significance.

Certain essential themes of the new school of African border studies that has developed since 1996 deserve particular acknowledgement. Borders themselves as economic, political or identity ‘resources’ is a dominant trend. This has been most recently conceptualised in the context of the Horn of Africa in a stimulating book edited by Feyissa and Hoehne, but is representative of a great many studies across the continent.⁶⁹ Nugent in particular has demonstrated the ways in which borderlanders themselves create the border through their various exploitations of state restrictions in smuggling and other trade, and come to invest

⁶⁷ Simon Katzenellenbogen, “It Didn’t Happen at Berlin: Politics, Economics and Ignorance in the Setting of Africa’s Colonial Boundaries,” in *African Boundaries, Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*, ed. Paul Nugent and Anthony I. Asiwaju (London: Pinter, 1996), 21–31.

⁶⁸ William Roger Louis, *Ruanda-Urundi, 1884–1919* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

⁶⁹ Dereje Feyissa and Markus Virgil Hoehne, *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 2010).

deeply in a boundary, however ‘arbitrary’ it may have been in its origin.⁷⁰ In related anthropological studies, attention has been devoted to instances in which communities come to define themselves, to form themselves around their border location, drawing aspects of their identity from the border itself rather than simply being split by an ‘illegitimate’ state line.⁷¹ And of particular relevance to the following study, the border as an indicative and productive point of encounter between people and state is an effervescent field, whether in the area of health,⁷² economic strategies,⁷³ or violence and forced migration.⁷⁴ With greater state presence on borders than most other areas, seeking directly to control popular movement, bodies and goods, direct contact, conflict and cooperation is more frequent and more expressive than in many other areas of territory and life. Conversely, even the greatest state presence on a border cannot hope to control the entire length of a frontier, and borderlanders regularly achieve a significant level of power and freedom through their subversion of state border regimes.⁷⁵

Borders in the Great Lakes have received some attention largely in the case of Eastern

⁷⁰ Paul Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Toga Frontier: the Life of the Borderlands since 1914* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2002).

⁷¹ Donna K. Flynn, “‘We are the Border’: Identity, Exchange, and the State along the Bénin-Nigeria Border,” *American Ethnologist* 24, no. 2 (1997): 311–330; Chiara Brambilla, “Borders and Identities/Border Identities: The Angola-Namibia Border and the Plurivocality of the Kwanyama Identity,” *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 22, no. 2 (2007): 21–38.

⁷² Maryinez Lyons, “Foreign bodies: the history of labour migration as a threat to public health in Uganda,” in *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits, and Opportunities*, ed. Paul Nugent and Anthony I. Asiwaju (London: Pinter, 1996), 131–144

⁷³ Karine Bennafla, *Le commerce frontalier en Afrique centrale: acteurs, espaces, pratiques* (Paris: Karthala, 2002); Janet Roitman, “Productivity in the Margins: The Reconstitution of State Power in the Chad Basin,” in *Anthropology in the Margins of the State* (Oxford: James Currey, 2004), 191–224.

⁷⁴ A. Essuman-Johnson, “Liberian and Sahel Refugees in Ghana: The Politics of Providing Assistance to Refugees,” in *African Boundaries. Barriers, Conduits and Opportunities*, ed. Paul Nugent I. and Anthony (London: Pinter, 1996), 222–236; Mark Leopold, *Inside West Nile: Violence, History and Representation on an African Frontier* (Oxford: James Currey, 2005).

⁷⁵ Ieuan Griffiths, “Permeable Boundaries in Africa,” in *African Boundaries. Barriers, Conduits, and Opportunities*, ed. Paul Nugent and Anthony I. Asiwaju (London: Pinter, 1996), 68–84.

Congo, notably in the pre-colonial period by David Newbury,⁷⁶ and in contemporary conflicts by a number of Belgian anthropologists and political scientists.⁷⁷ Francophone scholars have been less prolific in pursuing new approaches to borders in Africa, the old narrative of arbitrary borders still the fundamental issue under question in many treatments.⁷⁸ Yet in recent years this has begun to change, the Francophone contribution in the Great Lakes in particular characterised by an openness to wider conceptualisations of ‘frontiers’, particularly in terms of identity and ethnicity.⁷⁹ Within the narrow borders of Burundi local studies must frequently edge onto frontiers, and the west,⁸⁰ south,⁸¹ and east⁸² of the country have received some attention. But the most peculiar northern border, in light of the insights pressed by recent reflections on border identities and the interaction of state and people on the frontier, remains a field with much to offer both to the study of the Great Lakes, and to borderlands in general.

However, one particular aspect of the general trend in border histories requires special attention: a marked characteristic to adopt a closely-detailed local lens, an approach entirely

⁷⁶ David Newbury, “‘Bunyabungo’: The Western Rwandan frontier, c. 1750–1850,” in *The African Frontier*, ed. Igor Kopytoff (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 164–173; Newbury, *Kings and Clans*; David Newbury, “Irredentist Rwanda: Ethnic and Territorial Frontiers in Central Africa,” *Africa Today* 44, no. 2 (1997): 211–221.

⁷⁷ e.g. Timothy Raeymaekers, “The Silent Encroachment of the Frontier: a Politics of Transborder Trade in the Semliki Valley (Congo–Uganda),” *Political Geography* 28, no. 1 (2009): 55–65; Kristof Titeca, “The ‘Masai’ and Miraa: Public Authority, Vigilance and Criminality in a Ugandan Border Town,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 47 (2009): 291–317.

⁷⁸ e.g., Christian Bouquet, “L’artificialité des frontières en Afrique subsaharienne,” *Les cahiers d’outre-mer* 222 (2003): 1–10.

⁷⁹ Camille Lefebvre, “Mobilités, traces et frontières dans l’Afrique des Grands Lacs,” *Africa: Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell’Istituto italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente* 62, no. 4 (2007): 598–605; Léon Saur, “La frontière ethnique comme outil de conquête du pouvoir: le cas du Parmehutu,” *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 3, no. 2 (2009): 303–316.

⁸⁰ Jean-Pierre Chrétien, “La crise écologique de la plaine du lac Tanganyika entre 1890 et 1916,” in *L’Histoire retrouvée: 25 ans de métier d’historien en Afrique*, ed. Jean-Pierre Chrétien (Paris: Karthala, 1993), 121–162.

⁸¹ Wagner, “Whose History is History?”

⁸² Joseph Gahama and Christian Thibon, *Les régions orientales du Burundi: une périphérie à l’épreuve du développement* (Paris: Karthala, 1994).

followed here. This is in many ways essential to discover the quotidian practices and peculiarities that create and evoke the border in the lives of those living it, a microhistorical approach that recalls certain strands of the *Annales* school of French historiography, particularly the classic works of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie.⁸³ Such influences have been productive in African historiography, notably in Landeg White's study of a Malawian village,⁸⁴ and Francophone writing on the continent developed faithfully within the wider strictures of *la nouvelle histoire*.⁸⁵ The 'Burundo-French' school reflects this influence, the microhistorical approach in particular a recognised trait. Students at the University of Burundi have produced many valuable studies for their *mémoires* since, as one noted, 'We always have a tendency to study our home region.'⁸⁶ Yet there is a danger in this fruitful tendency. The hazy line between microhistory, which aspires to greater representation and significance than its geographical boundaries suggest, and local history, which devotes itself to the location alone, can be threatened if the micro perspective is too uncritically adopted; it is a criticism made even of Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou*.⁸⁷

The same problem arises in the new border studies. As Nugent notes, the level of focus can lead to the sundering of the border from the hinterland; by decentering the analysis of state and society, new blindnesses arise as the influence of the edge on the centre threatens to omit all the land and life in between.⁸⁸ Patchworks of local histories, of great rigour

⁸³ Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Peasants of Languedoc* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1977 [1966]); Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French Village 1294–1324* (London: Penguin, 2002 [1975]).

⁸⁴ Landeg White, *Magomero: Portrait of an African village* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

⁸⁵ cf. Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and Bogumil Jewsiewicki, "Africanist Historiography in France and Belgium: Tradition and Trends," in *African Historiography: What History for Which Africa?* Ed. Bogumil Jewsiewicki and David Newbury (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1986), 139–150.

⁸⁶ Charles Ndayiziga, "Baranyanka et le chefferie Kunkiko-Mugamba" (Mémoire de licencié en histoire, Université du Burundi, 1987), p. 2.

⁸⁷ e.g. Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: the Annales School, 1929–1989* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p. 83.

⁸⁸ Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists*, p. 6.

and value in themselves, can leave gaps in between, and struggle to speak to each other to illuminate significances and processes beyond their bounds. While the great possibilities of microhistorical border research is pursued here, this is a caution that must be borne in mind. The richness of detail, the personal stories it is possible to tell on the margin of a marginal country is in many regards extraordinary, and essential for the comprehension of power and the border. The tension it poses with wider circles of experience, to which the border and its people are continuously and fractiously linked, however, will be a final question with which the thesis will end.

Linkage, Citizenship and Politique par la bas

Both the microhistorical approach to the borderland, and Lemarchand's specific challenge to the historiography of Burundi, raise the question of *politique par la bas*. Lemarchand made his call twenty years ago, as Bayart, Mbembe, the Subaltern Studies group and James C. Scott produced classic works that invoked Gramscian themes, along with liberal sprinklings of Foucault and de Certeau, in seeking the political power of the formally powerless in Africa and Asia.⁸⁹ Today there is persistent inspiration and acknowledged conceptual difficulty in the attempts to study politics from below. The romance of 'resistance' revealed fields of unappreciated expression and political action, but soon became considered almost academically hegemonic in itself. Its broad terms threatened to swamp more complex negotiations of power, just as the historiography of nationalist struggle in Africa had once displaced appreciation of collaboration and bargaining under Empire.⁹⁰ When seeking politics from below, excitement

⁸⁹ Jean-François Bayart, Achille Mbembe, and Comi M Toulabor, *La politique par le bas en Afrique noire* (Paris: Karthala, 2008), 217; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Ranajit Guha, *Selected Subaltern Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 414; James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 272; cf. Lemarchand, "Réponse."

⁹⁰ e.g. Lila Abu-Lughod, "The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power Through Bedouin Women," *American Ethnologist* 17, no. 1 (1990): 41–55; Shelly Ortner, "Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, no. 1 (1995): 173–193; cf. R. E. Robinson,

and enthusiasm came mixed with hesitation over the binary opposition of *dominants* and *dominés*.⁹¹ Bayart's own formulations of 'popular modes of political action' gave way to the 'politics of the belly' and the 'rhizome state', studies that depended upon the interpenetration of state and society but returned much focus to the view from 'above'.⁹² *La politique par la bas* still holds great appeal, especially as it stands as a call to attention rather than a methodological approach. Focus on the border functions eloquently within its terms as a 'site of political analysis', since it is simultaneously a 'site of political action', the topic of expression, a political question and political stake in itself.⁹³ Yet the border appeals precisely because it forms the basis of interaction and, particularly, of confusion between politics from below and from above. Distinction between 'below' and 'above' is difficult to maintain; the call to study the popular experiences and expressions of power, within the manifestly blurred boundaries of society and state, remains a guiding principal.

The bare and base issue of concern in this thesis, to be tested against the rediscovery of the border, is the question of political linkage, the institutions and practices that form the connection between people and government. Built on the study of political parties 'as agencies forging links between citizens and policy makers', various typologies have been theorised. These range from 'directive linkage' that derives from the hegemonic power of a single-party state to shape the population, to 'participatory linkage' suggesting somewhat equal cooperation, with policy-based programmatic linkage and clientelistic reward relationships forming complex systems in between.⁹⁴ As a concept it may thus incorporate accountability systems that deviate from an

"Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration," in *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, ed. Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe (London: Longman, 1972), 117–142.

⁹¹ Geschiere has been a particularly cogent critic of Bayart's work, for example Peter Geschiere, "Hegemonic Regimes and Popular Protest: Bayart, Gramsci and the State in Cameroon," *Les Cahiers du CEDAF* 333 (1986): 334; Peter Geschiere, "Le politique par le bas: les vicissitudes d'une approche," in *Trajectoires de libération en Afrique contemporaine: hommage à Robert Buijtenhuijs*, ed. Piet Konings, Wim van Binsbergen, and Gerti Hesseling (Paris: Karthala, 2000), 93–107.

⁹² Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London: Longman, 1993).

⁹³ cf. Bayart, Mbembe, and Toulabor, *Le politique par le bas*, pp. 49–51.

⁹⁴ Peter H. Merkl, "Linkage, or What Else? The Place of Linkage Theory in the Study of Political Parties,"

ideal model of Western multiparty democracy, including patronage relations as a common and explicit form of reciprocity, elite-accommodation or reward distribution.⁹⁵ Political linkage may therefore be employed as one aspect of the more nuanced approach to the encounter of powerful and powerless desired in response to studies of resistance and *politique par la bas*. Seeking a link, rather than a conflict or even ‘mediation’,⁹⁶ allows an analysis to reflect the blurred boundaries of state and society while illuminating the interaction and function of each.

In this historical analysis of political relations in northern Burundi, the normative party-bound terms of political linkage may be both invoked and set aside. Informal ‘propagandists’ of political parties and their formal elected officials provided the most explicit link between population and these parties in the early years, while the structures of single-party rule, in youth leagues, local committees and women’s organisations, stood as theoretical participatory linkage institutions in later years, even while they manifested the ‘directive’ power of the state. Local notables, politicians and delegates of power held the potential to act as a link whether or not through the parties to which they nominally adhered, from *sous-chefs* and chiefs before Independence, to bourgmestres and Administrators afterwards. Communal *bashingantahe*, sg. *mushingantahe*, chosen by popular acclaim for their probity and wisdom, acted as arbitrators in disputes but also as a functional link to power throughout the period.⁹⁷

in *Political Parties And Political Systems: The Concept Of Linkage Revisited*, ed. Andrea Römmele, David M. Farrell, and Piero Ignazi (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005), 3–16; cf. Kay Lawson, *Political Parties and Linkage: a Comparative Perspective* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980).

⁹⁵ Herbert Kitschelt and Steven I. Wilkinson, *Patrons, Clients and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); see also other chapters in that volume, especially Nicolas van de Walle, “Meet the New Boss, Same as the Old Boss? The Evolution of Political Clientelism in Africa,” in *Patrons, Clients and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*, ed. Herbert Kitschelt and Steven I. Wilkinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 50–67.

⁹⁶ cf. Bayart, *The State in Africa*, p. 12.

⁹⁷ Gahama, *Le Burundi*, pp. 299–302; Mworoha, *Peuples et rois*, pp. 170–171. See also the intriguing, albeit largely pessimistic debates over their potential role in modern peace-building, Christine Deslaurier, “Le Bushingantahe peut-il réconcilier le Burundi?: Justice et réconciliation: ambiguïtés et impensés,” *Politique africaine* 92 (2003): 76–96; Dominik Kohlhagen, “Le bushingantahe au Burundi. Transformations et réminiscences d’un

Often formal representatives of the state system, sometimes just falling within the ‘idea of the state’ in their temporary assumption or individual exertion of governmental authority,⁹⁸ and sometimes simply ‘intellectuals’ in Feierman or Geschiere’s usage,⁹⁹ these notables and local leaders stood as the institutional and personal incarnation of political linkage. It is therefore frequently on the shoulders of such notables that the narratives and analyses that follow rest. As modes of expression, however, political linkage could be found not only shaped through them but also around them, passing them by completely to link the *banyagihugu* to the higher state, and reveal possibility and dynamism in the relationship of political power, authority, accountability and reciprocity.

This relationship shapes and redefines both people and government. The exercise of power by means of this link, whatever form it takes, and the conversation or expression of politics that takes place within and around it, have consequences for the individuals and groups so engaged. One of the most influential works on the relationship of people and state in Africa, especially with regards to the period of decolonisation, establishes a productively dichotomous model by which to conceptualise the product and function of this linkage. Mahmood Mamdani distinguishes how the forms of colonial administration created populations of citizens and of subjects according to bifurcated legal regimes and governmental practices.¹⁰⁰ Where the link between colonial state and African population was through the ‘decentralised despots’ of indirect rule, African chieftaincies justified by colonial conceptions of tradition and imbued with authoritarian power, people were shaped into subjects, devoid of political rights. Where

concept judiciaire ancien,” in *Cahiers d’anthropologie du droit* (Paris: Karthala, 2009), 113–128; Bert Inge-laere and Dominik Kohlhagen, “Situating Social Imaginaries in Transitional Justice: The Bushingantahe in Burundi,” *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 6, no. 1 (2012): 40–59.

⁹⁸ cf. Philip Abrams, “Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1, no. 1 (1988): 58–89.

⁹⁹ Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); Peter Geschiere, *Village Communities and the State: Changing Relations among the Maka of South-Eastern Cameroon since the Colonial Conquest* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1982).

¹⁰⁰ Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary African and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

the link was through legal structures of settler economies, urban areas directly administered by the ‘centralised despotism’ of colonial government, control in the language of civil society and civil rights produced citizens, demanding these rights that they were denied. The reproduction of these dynamics as African states emerged independent is the legacy, in Mamdani’s terms, of bifurcated colonial rule; African citizens took central power, and perpetuated the domination of rural subjects.

Mamdani’s incisive model has found much support and value in its coherent account of colonial authority and control in Africa, particularly its argument against South African exceptionalism. But particularly cogent criticisms were raised by Cooper, for whom Mamdani’s conceptualisation of ‘legacy’ discards vital chunks of history to link distant events, while the issue of citizenship remains curiously unexamined, ‘a foil for Mamdani’s probing of the making of subjects’.¹⁰¹ Once they have been made by colonial practices, in his case studies of resistance to the despotisms of rural power, Mamdani finds peasant subjects engaged in a ‘democratic moment’ of alliance and change, within an inevitable dynamic of civil war.¹⁰² It may be limited, but this moment is raised as an example of subjects belying their subjecthood and seeking to engage in the political shaping of their governance and community. The instance ought to disrupt the polarity of citizen and subject, and the potential interaction, alternation or complementarity of such concepts be itself considered.

Such issues of citizenship are rich sources of potential in the borderland especially. As a matter of inclusion and exclusion, mediating triangular relations between ‘citizen’, however one is conceived, state and foreigner, it has become a central issue of modern politics, most crucially and clearly performed on the frontier.¹⁰³ Citizenship has been imagined in terms of

¹⁰¹ Fred Cooper, “Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of late Colonialism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996. xii+ 353pp.,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* (Cambridge) 52, no. 1 (1997): 156–160, p. 159; cf. Leander Schneider, “Colonial Legacies and Postcolonial Authoritarianism in Tanzania: Connects and Disconnects,” *African Studies Review* 49, no. 1 (2006): 93–118, who similarly takes issue with the term ‘legacy’ in a productive manner.

¹⁰² Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, pp. 183–217.

¹⁰³ Peter Geschiere and Bambi Ceuppens, “Autochthony: Local or Global? New Modes in the Struggle over

a legal identity, a matter of rights and obligations, or of practices that define engagement in a political community, and frequently a combination of all three.¹⁰⁴ Yet it is equally a concept dependent on time, place, culture and law, available to be shaped by any of the parties to it, whether individual, community or state; in a directive mode of political linkage citizens may be made or educated,¹⁰⁵ formed by experience of a legal system as Mamdani analyses, or claim their status and rights for themselves.¹⁰⁶ ‘Citizenship has not ceased to be redefined in the function of societies and of their evolution,’ notes one reconciliation of the many European conceptions to an African context.¹⁰⁷ It is a moving target. Just as an awareness of the approaches and ideas of political science can give clarity to the search for political linkages, it is to anthropology that we may especially turn for a clarifying voice on the approach to the study of citizenship. The discovery of what may be constituted citizenship in the relation of individuals, communities and states through their own daily practices may be the goal, rather than the premise, of such a study.¹⁰⁸ The loosest ad-hoc definition will suffice to begin; citizenship may incorporate belonging to a political community, the practices that reproduce that community, and that mediate power within it.

Mutual influence and distributed, if unequal, agency between people and state must therefore be a consideration throughout this history. In his extensive overview of political represen-

Citizenship and Belonging in Africa and Europe,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34 (2005): 385–407; Daniel Patrick Hammett, Paul Nugent, and Sara Rich Dorman, *Making Nations, Creating Strangers: States and Citizenship in Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

¹⁰⁴ TH Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class* (London: Pluto Press, 1992); Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998 [1958]); Dominique Schnapper and Christian Bachelier, *Qu’est-ce que la citoyenneté?* (Paris: Gallimard, 2000).

¹⁰⁵ cf. Mamadou Bella Baldé, *Démocratie et éducation à la citoyenneté en Afrique* (Paris: Harmattan, 2008).

¹⁰⁶ James Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

¹⁰⁷ Pamphile Sebahara and Flore Sindogo, “Décentralisation et citoyenneté communale. Réflexions sur la construction de l’espace public municipal,” in *Décentralisation et citoyenneté au Burkina Faso: le cas de Ziniaré*, ed. Pierre-Joseph Laurent (Paris: Harmattan, 2004), p. 375.

¹⁰⁸ Steven Robins, Andrea Cornwall, and Bettina von Lieres, “Rethinking ‘Citizenship’ in the Postcolony,” *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 6 (2008): 1069–1086.

tations in Burundi, Nimubona suggested that ‘Burundi offers an example where the models of the construction of the nation by the State (the Jacobin model) and of the State by the nation (the Westminster model) overlap, complete and reinforce each other’.¹⁰⁹ No such grand political theory will be attempted here, where the microhistorical detail of border interactions reveals rather the quotidian accommodations and practices of communal power. But sensitivity to the integration and mutual construction of relationships within the political community on the borderland must be acute; the scope is limited to the border, but the horizon must be far wider.

1.3 Methodology and Sources

Interviews and Fieldwork: Context affects Content

Before these questions may be explored, it is necessary to reflect on the process by which material was gathered to answer them. Fieldwork in Burundi was conducted from September 2010 to June 2011. With the help of two successive research assistants I travelled extensively in the hills of Busiga and Kabarore communes, mostly by motorbike and on foot, to conduct oral history interviews with those old enough to be able to recount personal memories of the 1960s. While I frequently opened my interviews with questions in Kirundi, and in some cases was able to talk directly in French with my informants, interviews were largely conducted through the mediation of my assistants as translators; my first assistant translated to French, my second to English. Comparison between the experiences and answers gathered between the two was invaluable for evaluating the quality of my various interviews. Most conversations were recorded, except in rare occasions where the individual concerned preferred that I simply take notes. Informant selection was restricted by the age required and the difficulty of access; no more than a handful of elderly men and women still live in each *colline* who can remember the times of concern, and interviews were conducted with all who were willing to talk in each *colline* visited. A broad geographical range was attempted, with particular attention paid

¹⁰⁹ Nimubona, “Analyse des représentations,” p. 408.

to hills directly on the border and in population centres. Yet many *collines* could become inaccessible after a few hours' rain, and interviews were frequently improvised in unexpected locations, with any people available, when best laid plans were thwarted.

The interview approach might best be characterised as 'semi-structured', seeking personal memories. While, like Wagner,¹¹⁰ I experienced no difficulty in immediately communicating my interest in history, people were frequently resistant to any personalisation of their history. Very few spoke of their individual actions or experiences, but preferred to speak in general terms or about others. Given the sensitivity of some of the issues discussed, I was content with this direction. Interviews would often take the path noted by anthropologists such as Fernandez and Herzfeld, in which I was treated substantially as an apprentice at the start, instructed in the history of Burundi with very little assumed knowledge.¹¹¹ This was a beneficial opening, as common concerns and recurrent tropes and individuals named were swiftly apparent with a minimum of my own direction. On the other hand, my awareness of local individuals and politicians whose names and stories I gathered in archive research was greeted with surprise, amusement and delight. An appreciably different atmosphere followed specific questions about local politicians and notables, and I was frequently treated with the revelation that the randomly-encountered individual with whom I was speaking was the brother, cousin or sister-in-law of these men.

Interviews ranged from individual conversations in the informant's own home, to group discussions with several old friends, to communal inquiries in which much of the surrounding population attended to hear the stories told. The latter format was mostly presumed and often preferred by the informants themselves, a bench set down under the eaves of a hut on my arrival and the community gathering as the conversation went on. This element of public performance had an appreciable effect on the course of the interview, frequently in a positive manner as debate broke out and broader opinions and memories shared; however, more secluded circumstances were often plainly desirable. Most notably, one interview in

¹¹⁰ Wagner, "Whose History is History?" p. 1.

¹¹¹ cf. James Fernandez and Michael Herzfeld, "In Search of Meaningful Methods," in *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1998), 89–129, pp. 107–108.

Mparamirundi was suddenly cut short when the informant fell silent and barely responded to further questions. A senior member of the community, a former leader of the party youth league deeply involved in the violence of 1972, had joined the large audience, and the informant would say no more. The youth league man, on the other hand, proved remarkably frank and informative in a later interview conducted indoors, with only a friend of his for company.

The social act of the interview was of considerable significance in its undertaking. A mistake provides the best illustration of this social dimension. An early morning interview with one exceptionally elderly man came to an unexpected halt part way through. With no new arrivals in the audience, and nothing apparently sensitive that I could detect in the matters we had so far discussed, I was at a loss. My research assistant, however, made no move, and we sat in silence for a while. After a brief conversation with the interviewee, my assistant leant across and explained my fault. I had, to my shame, neglected to provide something to drink, usually a standard and automatic consideration where available. Sending quickly for a bottle of Primus beer, I was fortunate to be able to restore myself swiftly to my interviewee's favour with an apposite proverb: *Nta jambo ry'urubanza ntagira inzoga*, there is no important word shared without the presence of beer.¹¹² This social practice of conversation and debate over shared drink is of considerable cultural significance and importance,¹¹³ and recognising that my interviews, even if they were on the whole being digitally recorded and conducted through an interpreter, fell or ought to fall within this field of discourse was a vital issue.

Gender balance was a matter of particular difficulty during the interview process. Very few people, men or women, refused an interview, but in a number of cases women were exceptionally terse and limited in their responses. In groups it was common for men to take control, regardless of how questions were directed or managed, while even in individual and female-only interviews many expressed a complete lack of memory of any event, person or issue from their lives. Questions on issues from the community to politics to home life to

¹¹² Pascal Butoyi, "La communication sociale et les circonstances de commensalité: cas du partage de la bière de sorgho en commune Mugaamba" (Mémoire de licencié des langues et littératures Africaines, Université du Burundi, 1998), p. 98.

¹¹³ cf. de Lame, *A Hill Among a Thousand*.

the officially-sanctioned female organisations and projects of the time were met with similar responses. Several women explained that they had not been allowed out of the house in those days, and knew nothing of what was going on in the community. ‘Women forget quickly,’ one of my (male) research assistants commented after one such experience; that both of us were young male outsiders was a more significant explanation. While frustrating, these experiences and attitudes were not the only story; although limited in numbers compared to male interviewees, several of my most informative, interesting and expressive interviews were with women who made no such claims to ignorance. Despite the propensity for men to take command of group interviews, it was nevertheless notable when women responded, corrected or disdainfully dismissed the account of the louder man. The thesis that follows makes lamentably little room for the gendered aspect of its history, and all the main actors discussed from documentary sources are inescapably masculine. This is a deficiency, but nevertheless much of the most valuable and indispensable information and opinions on these times and these men were provided by women of the community.

Despite the common belief that such matters are more open in Burundi than in Rwanda, there was no question of being able to ask an individual’s ethnic background. Ethnicity itself was not taboo, and questions of when ethnic divisions first emerged in the community, for example, proved particularly intriguing; more than anything else, however, it was not a matter that could be personalised, and in discussions of such times of ethnic pertinence I am unable to specify the position from which my informant was speaking, except in very rare cases. The significance of this issue was demonstrated one day when I and my assistant were travelling on foot to a particularly distant *colline*; caught in a sudden downpour of rain, we were given shelter in a nearby house just off the path. Having talked casually for a while, we were treated to an impromptu interview as neighbours too came to gather out of the rain. Before recording began, however, an argument broke out between the neighbours. One man had chosen to introduce himself and his fellows to me by saying, ‘As you know, we are Barundi. What is more, we are Hutu.’¹¹⁴ He was angrily shouted down by his friends, who questioned why he

¹¹⁴ Bahimanga Paul (pseud.), interview in Ruhororo (Kabarore), 27 April 2011.

would say such a thing. The man himself appeared very close to the physical stereotype of Tutsi, and may certainly have had a more personal motivation to proclaim his ethnic identity than others. The interview proceeded to fascinating detail and unusual stories, but ethnicity was not discussed in personal terms again.

A word must therefore be said about the political circumstances of the fieldwork. In many regards, my experience was privileged in comparison to previous researchers. Wagner described a process of ‘gradually internalizing fear’ during her time in 1985–1986, followed and harassed by intelligence agents, interviews conducted in a common atmosphere of extreme caution in which ethnicity could not be named at all until strong bonds of trust and secrecy had been established;¹¹⁵ Deslaurier in the 1990s similarly experienced particular restrictions on her work due to the civil war of the time.¹¹⁶ Some Barundi researchers also recount the political problems encountered in their work, Jean Rwakazina in the early 1980s explaining how ‘the majority of people interviewed displayed their inquietude at a young unknown man, without the presence of the communal administrator, without the *chef de zone*, without a councillor, so that in the majority of cases we came up against very incomplete information, indeed a categorical refusal to respond to our questions. The extreme case was when an attack was made on our person which, clearly, handicapped our approach in this domain considerably.’¹¹⁷ Charles Ndayiziga in 1987 recounted how interviews in his home region were acrimoniously halted when he turned to the main topic of his inquiry, the person of Chief Baranyanka.¹¹⁸ None of these considerable difficulties were encountered in my interviews. Other than the particular circumstances mentioned above, political obstructions to open discussion were considerably less problematic. The political atmosphere of Burundi during research was

¹¹⁵ Michele Wagner, “Both Sides of the Border: the Impact of the Political Milieu on Field Research in Burundi and Tanzania,” in *In Pursuit of History: Fieldwork in Africa*, ed. Carolyn Adenaike and Jan Vansina (Oxford: James Curry, 1996), 18–28, pp. 23–26.

¹¹⁶ Deslaurier, “Un monde politique,” p. 32.

¹¹⁷ Jean Rwakazina, “Etude monographique de la mission du Busiga (1922–1962)” (Mémoire de licencié en histoire, Université du Burundi, 1982), p. 11.

¹¹⁸ Ndayiziga, “Baranyanka,” p. 2.

substantially different to that of the 1980s and 1990s experienced by these researchers, and a simple *laisser-passer* letter from the Ministry of the Interior, presented to the communal administrator and to any *chef de colline* who was doubtful, was sufficient to permit movement and research without further official hindrance. I noticed no surveillance of my activities beyond general communal gossip.

Nevertheless, things were not entirely at ease during my research. Given the political subject matter of my interests I had delayed my arrival in the country until after the 2010 elections, which had been notably fractious; following the first round of presidential voting, in which the sitting President Pierre Nkurunziza of the CNDD-FDD (*Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie – Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie*) won by a substantial margin, almost all his opponents denounced fraud and boycotted the ensuing local and legislative elections, although international observers largely considered the vote fair and legitimate. Soon prominent opposition leaders, including Agathon Rwasa, the long-time leader of the oldest pro-Hutu rebel group Palipehutu-FNL (*Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu - Forces nationales de libération*, now known simply as FNL), and Alexis Sinduhije, the human rights activist and journalist leader of the MSD (*Mouvement pour la Solidarité et la Démocratie*) party, went into hiding and exile. Low-level violence continued throughout the period of my research, as targeted assassinations and mutual murders of, particularly, FNL and CNDD-FDD members in various parts of the country were widely reported. Rumours of rebels returning to the Kibira rainforest in western Kabarore were heard, and fears of a new civil war were certainly apparent.¹¹⁹ A permanent military post on the edge of the rainforest still guarded against potential attacks, and when I visited the forest and the graves of the kings within it I was obliged to accept a military escort. While political violence was no longer along ethnic lines, both the FNL and CNDD-FDD being former Hutu rebel groups, the atmosphere of politics at the time was far from calm. In the months after my departure a horrific attack on a bar in Gatumba, on the Congolese border, brought back memories of an attack on Congolese Tutsi

¹¹⁹ Dieudonné Hakizimana, “Rukoko et Kibira: replis des hommes armés?” 10 December 2010; *Iwacu* (Bujumbura), “Réserve de la Rukoko et forêt de la Kibira: rebelles ou bandits?” 1 September 2010.

refugees in the same town in 2004. The country has not descended into civil war as feared, but the treatment of opposition activists and the declarations of some individuals that they have begun new rebel movements are deeply concerning.¹²⁰

The effect of this context was varied. Uprona, the party of Independence, still persists as an opposition party today, but in a substantially different form. Decades of dictatorship made it deeply associated with Tutsi rule. However, it has been the one opposition party to maintain tolerably good relations with the CNDD-FDD, taking a subordinate role in government. People showed little concern in recounting their passionate support for its older incarnation in the 1960s, while making no association with its present form. The CNDD-FDD was widely and openly supported, although this rarely came up in discussions with elders; while it is true that the communes under concern have never been home to a great power base in the country, President Nkurunziza was born in the nearby commune of Mwumba, and support for his party is particularly strong across the province of Ngozi. In casual conversations with a young man in Mparamirundi, he explained that he was the president of the local association of *anciens combattants*, and that although he was FNL and the two parties were engaged in mutual assassinations elsewhere, ‘Here there is no trouble.’ This was an exaggeration, but it appeared that the new conflict was a young man’s game. In interviews elders lamented the violence of today, and contrasted the political atmosphere of their youth with the modern context. Discussion of politics was open, but the general support for CNDD-FDD was not challenged or criticised. The reluctance to discuss personal ethnicity may be little associated with these political developments, as the consociational system currently pursued openly requires mixed ethnic representation in each party, and appears to have defused ethnicity in political saliency in top-level competition. One of the branches of the FNL party notably declared that after 31 years of struggle, ‘the Hutu people is no longer oppressed’.¹²¹ The sensitivity of ethnicity

¹²⁰ Although angrily rejected by the government, the reports of Human Rights Watch provide thorough overviews of the allegations and proofs of violence in this period. See Human Rights Watch, *Closing Doors? The Narrowing of Democratic Space in Burundi* (2010); Human Rights Watch, “*You Will Not Have Peace While You are Living*”: *The Escalation of Political Violence in Burundi* (2012).

¹²¹ Lambert Gahungu, “Front National de Libération: “31 ans après, le peuple Hutu n’est plus opprimé”, selon

as a topic of conversation, however, should guard against too confident a declaration that the country has entirely shed the troubles of ethnic divisionism.

A final aspect of political context that must be taken into consideration is the President's declaration that a long-promised Truth and Reconciliation Process will shortly be commenced. This will be taking into account all crimes and political violence since Independence. It was not an imminent or prominent issue during my interviews, but has since emerged as a distinct possibility of realisation. As such, information that my interviewees disclosed that might potentially make them either targets of or witnesses in such a process has gained greater significance since they shared their stories with me. While none were at all reluctant to give me their names, and many were notably open in discussing in particular the catastrophe of 1972, I have nevertheless chosen to present many of them under pseudonyms here, largely dependent on the information used in Chapter 6.

Archives and Newspapers

Before, during and after my oral research I conducted extensive visits to the archives of Belgium and Burundi. 'And what sources!' to quote Deslaurier; 'Their profusion, their diversity and their fertility would make even the historian the most endowed with documents envious.'¹²² Largely transferred to Brussels following the Belgian departure, the colonial files form part of the extensive *Archives africaines*, alongside Rwandan and Congolese material.¹²³ An abundance of essential documentation is available. For the localised study of the border area the administrative reports of the local *Territorial* and his assistants are particularly valuable, with summaries of political and social developments within the region conducted at regular intervals, supplemented by more detailed reports on occasional special circumstances. Of particular interest, however, are the reports and briefings of the *Sûreté*, the intelligence and security service of the administration, from either its Urundi office in Kitega or its central

Pasteur Habimana," 14 April 2011.

¹²² Deslaurier, "Un monde politique," p. 33.

¹²³ See Christine Deslaurier, "La documentation africaine à Bruxelles: Les fonds du ministère belge des Affaires étrangères (Burundi, Congo, Rwanda)," *Afrique et histoire* 1, no. 1 (2003): 223–234.

office in Usumbura. *Bulletins d'information* (*BI*) were produced giving brief summaries and some more in-depth accounts of political interest, rumours and activities, with information given a rating that reflected the perceived reliability of the source and of the information itself, the highest category being A/1.¹²⁴ Above all, voluminous files of correspondence, including many petitions from local activists in rural communities and from the most powerful chiefs to the king, are extraordinarily valuable. Finally, extensive collections of political party paraphernalia, propaganda tracts with French translations, and translations of Kirundi newspaper articles and letters to the editor provide exceptional resources for the study of political activity and communication in the last days of colonial rule.

The Belgian material only covers relevant issues for the first couple of years of this thesis, and far more is therefore owed to the remarkable national archives of Burundi. While considerably less organised, with retention of documents largely left to chance until the project of the national archives was begun in the late 1970s, an exceptional range of material is nevertheless now available for researchers. This is a relatively new development; Deslaurier reported extreme restrictions on the access she was permitted in the 1990s, with each individual document inspected for undesirable content before she was allowed to see it.¹²⁵ During my research in 2010 and 2011, by contrast, restrictions were in fact freer than in Brussels; files did not require inspection by the archivist before release, while photographic reproduction was at will. The material gathered varies by region, as until the 1980s documents were stored by province and some collections were lost or destroyed. For the border region, within the historical Ngozi Province (incorporating modern Kayanza Province), the documentation is exceptional. Some material from the Belgian period is retained, parts of which are not matched in Brussels, while the postcolonial coverage is extremely good for most of the 1960s. Scattered documents up even until 1972 are invaluable, but that is where the archive collection substantially ends.

Following the bureaucratic practice of the Belgian administration, the Bujumbura archives match the colonial administrative reports for territorial units from the province down to the

¹²⁴ See Christine Deslaurier, "Du nouveau pour l'histoire politique du Burundi à la veille de l'indépendance: la documentation secrète de la Sûreté (1958–1961)," *Cahiers du CRA* 9 (1998): 36–69.

¹²⁵ Deslaurier, "Un monde politique," p. 47.

commune, and in some cases at a finer grain even than that. This permits a remarkably consistent level of detail across the decade. For the first three years of the Republic the coverage in fact increases, as the bureaucratic state grew considerably. Official reports may be cross-referenced with political reports by party leaders at each level, and frequently by further reports by the party youth league; the triplication of commentary and surveillance informs both on the state perspective on the population and on the internal suspicions and rivalries of the strands of government.

Finally, newspaper and periodical collections have been productive alongside this state material.¹²⁶ *Ndongezi y'Uburundi*, the newspaper of the Catholic Church, was the only periodical of the time to achieve any appreciable readership amongst the population at large, written in Kirundi and distributed for free at mass. It includes a rich strand of letters to the editor from across the country, an exceptional field of public debate and expression from otherwise unheard voices. Otherwise, state-produced news sheets provide government pronouncements and propaganda that can be very important in contextualising other sources; they include the terse briefing-sheets of the Belgian *Rudipresse*, succeeded by *Infor-Burundi* in 1962, itself reborn as *Flash-infor* in 1970, and a more explicit 'popular' propaganda tradition in Belgian *Amakuru y'Uburundi* and Republican *Unité et Révolution* and *Ubumwe*. Given the restricted success of these publications in the rural milieu under concern they do not feature prominently in the following investigation, but have been extremely useful in contextualising and comprehending other information gathered. Almost complete runs of most of these publications were consulted at the *Centre catéchétique africaine* in Muyange, Kayanza Province.

Finally, some supplementary material has been drawn from the Betts Collection of refugee-related grey literature at the University of Oxford, and from the online resources of the Derscheid Collection, consisting of ethnographic notes, biographical material on chiefs, and some early documents from the German and Belgian administrations up to 1939.¹²⁷ I have also been privileged to consult the personal papers of Valère and Henriette Vandenbulcke, largely

¹²⁶ For an overview, see Martha Baganzicaha and Gabriel Le Jeune, "La presse au Rwanda et au Burundi à la fin de la Tutelle," *Culture et société* 2 (1979): 11–31.

¹²⁷ <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/derscheid>.

relating to the former's decade of activity as a Belgian *Territorial* in Muhinga and Ngozi.

1.4 Chapter Outline

This introduction has provided an orientation in the situational, communal and thematic setting of the inquiry. Given the microhistorical focus, such orientation must continue in the following chapter with an historical overview of the political development of both Burundi and the border, from the pre-history of this study to its wider contemporary context. Largely compiled from secondary literature and thus providing a more substantive review of relevant historiography, this chapter tells something of a national story; events of national significance and transformation are detailed, events that may or may not have had equal centrality in the experience of the border. The potential disjunction between this narrative and the key moments of border history to follow is a stimulating problem to be borne in mind.

The following chapters form the core of the thesis, pursuing the themes of the border, political linkage and political community in sequential modes of political interaction arising from these discourses at times of particular crisis. In Chapter 3, a moment of dissent is explored at the point of decolonisation, when protest against local power holders developed to a revolt along the border. Chapter 4 demonstrates a strongly contrastive mode of interaction, in which a curious collaboration is pressed by the crises of border incursions across the 1960s. Within a similar time period, Chapter 5 presents the personal refinement of this collaboration, as the bonds of political linkage were tested and broken in the individual elimination of figures of local politics between the population and government. Finally, Chapter 6 witnesses the catastrophe of 1972, when the delicate mutual influence of preceding interactions is elided by the totalitarian repression of genocidal violence against the people. Collating the lessons learned from these actions, conceptions and discourses, a double conclusion is permitted; the unifying themes of the border, political linkage and the question of citizenship are brought together to reflect the fundamental dynamics of the political community in the period, before the particular problems and dislocations of the micro border history itself, its relation to wider circles of experience, provide the historiographical denouement.

In the Centre, On the Edge

2.1 Prologue: Burundi and the Border before 1950

The Kings and Kirima

In the eaves of the Kibira rainforest there lie the tombs of the ancient kings at Budandari, looking out across the hills towards the Kanyaru and Rwanda. They are evidence of the profound connection between the region and the idea of Burundi, dating back some three hundred years, yet even the ‘First Dynasty’ tentatively identified by Chrétien, associated with Ntare Karemera in the sixteenth century, seems to have been entirely localised on this area.¹ The rather more significant and historically well-founded realm of Ntare Rushatsi, the founder of the Ganwa dynasty in the seventeenth century, had its capitals a little way to the south in Bukeye and Muramvya, retaining the area along the Kanyaru as the *de facto* border with a growing Rwanda.² Budandari and the region around it therefore had a long history of intimate

¹ Jean-Pierre Chrétien, “Nouvelles hypothèses sur les origines du Burundi,” in *L’Arbre-mémoire: traditions orales du Burundi*, ed. Léonidas Nduricimpa and Claude Guillet (Paris: Karthala, 1984), 11–52. The precolonial period has been by far the most productive in the historiography of Burundi. For a comprehensive survey, with thematic bibliographies, see Mworoha, *Histoire du Burundi*. For the regional context, see Mworoha, *Peuples et rois*; Chrétien, *The Great Lakes of Africa*.

² Jean-Pierre Chrétien, “Du Hirsute au Hamite: les variations du cycle de Ntare Rushatsi, fondateur du royaume du Burundi,” *History in Africa* 8 (1981): 3–41; Vansina, *La légende du passé*, pp. 69–118; on the royal capitals, see Jean-Pierre Chrétien, “Les arbres et les rois,” in *Burundi, l’histoire retrouvée: 25 ans de métier d’historien en Afrique*, ed. Jean-Pierre Chrétien (Paris: Karthala, 1993), 19–32. For precolonial Rwanda, see

association with the rites of kingship; each mwami would be returned to this landscape at his death. The territory of the tombs was ruled by the Hutu *Abiru*, ritualists who performed the rites of burial and memorialisation. Characterised as Gramscian ‘Intellectuals’ by Mworoha, the *Abiru* were one category of the *banyamabanga* ‘people of the secrets’ who mediated the spiritual world of the kingdom.³ Their domain was practically a sub-kingdom in itself, ‘almost independent’ from central power;⁴ while alive, kings and chiefs were not allowed to enter their territory. Yet hosting guardians of the memories and mysteries of the kings, the northern border region was at the conceptual heart of the kingdom itself.

The significance of the tombs’ location on the edge of Rwanda appears equally long-lasting. When Rushatsi’s grandson Mutaga Senyamwiza was killed in battle with Rwanda across the Kanyaru in the eighteenth century, his body was brought back to be interred in this grove of Kibira above the river;⁵ ‘sorcerers foretold . . . that the mwami ought to be buried on the frontier of Urundi and Ruanda, so that his body would remain on the border’.⁶ The frontier has been broadly established along the Kanyaru ever since. Ntare Rugamba rapidly expanded the kingdom at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but here the frontier remained the same. Despite Rugamba taking much of Bugesera, the northeast corner of the country that today comprises Kirundo and Muyinga provinces (see maps in Appendix A), wars with Rwanda came

especially Jan Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda: The Nyiginya Kingdom* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004); Newbury, *Kings and Clans*.

³ Mworoha, *Peuples et rois*, pp. 150–155; 281–191.

⁴ Jean-Pierre Chrétien and Emile Mworoha, “Les tombeaux des bami du Burundi: un aspect de la monarchie sacrée en Afrique orientale,” *Cahiers d’études africaines* 10, no. 37 (1970): 40–79.

⁵ *Archives africaines*, Brussels (*AAB*), BUR 77 (1), R. Verstappen, *Historique du chefferie Baranyanka*, 18 March 1932. The claim of Mutaga’s burial in Budandari is endorsed by Jean-Pierre Chrétien, “Une révolte au Burundi en 1934. Les racines traditionalistes de l’hostilité à la colonisation,” in *Burundi, l’histoire retrouvée: 25 ans de métier d’historien en Afrique*, ed. Jean-Pierre Chrétien (Paris: Karthala, 1993), p. 46, but an alternative burial place a little further south, yet still near the border, at his residence in Kabuye is suggested by Mworoha, *Histoire du Burundi*, p. 127.

⁶ Derscheid Collection, O. Coubeau, *Traditions sur le règne de Mutaga I*, June 1935. The informant who recounted this tale was Chief Baranyanka, in whose territory the borderland and burial grounds lay. See below, Chapter 3.

to stalemate, and the Kanyaru through Kabarore and Busiga remained the border between the two powerful kingdoms, still the centre and the edge of Burundi.

With successive rulers expanding their territory east, west and south, Burundi acquired a reputation as a ‘warlike’ kingdom among bordering polities.⁷ The supposed isolationism of the kingdom has been robustly questioned, as it appeared integrated into long-distance trade from at least the eighteenth century,⁸ but in historiographical terms a hostility to those beyond its borders remains a powerful, often overstated trope, supported by the armed exclusion of Swahili merchants and the killing of European missionaries in the nineteenth century.⁹ With the Swahili forcibly prevented from entering or trading with the kingdom by Ntare Rugamba’s son, Mwezi Gisabo, Burundi suffered only a late and limited exposure to the Swahili slave trade that so motivated the rhetoric of European colonialism in East Africa and Congo.¹⁰ Protected from such depredations and associated catastrophes of disease, Burundi experienced considerable population growth under Rugamba and Gisabo, even as the territory controlled by the kings expanded.¹¹ Under Mwezi Gisabo, ‘Burundi’, as the territory claimed by the

⁷ As recorded in the problematic accounts of nineteenth-century European explorers, for example E.C. Hore, “On the Twelve Tribes of Tanganyika,” *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 12 (1883): 2–21, p. 12; Richard Francis Burton, *The Lake Regions of Central Africa* (New York: Horizon Press, 1995 [1881]), pp. 356–357; cf. Richard Reid, *War in Pre-colonial Eastern Africa: the Patterns and Meanings of State-level Conflict in the 19th Century* (Oxford: James Currey, 2007), p. 205.

⁸ Michele Wagner, “Trade and Commercial Attitudes in Burundi before the Nineteenth Century,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26, no. 1 (1993): 149–166.

⁹ Beverly Brown, “Muslim Influence on Trade and Politics in the Lake Tanganyika Region,” *African Historical Studies* 4, no. 3 (1971): 617–629; Jean-Pierre Chrétien and Emile Mworoha, “Mwezi Gisabo ou le maintien d’une fragile indépendance au Burundi,” in *Les Africains, vol. II*, ed. C. A. Julien (Paris: Jeune Afrique, 1977), 252–276; C. Achikbache, Prime Nayomoya, and Fouad Srouji, “Bujumbura: Muslim demographic and socio-economic aspects,” *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 4, no. 1 (1982): 145–174; Jean Perraudin, *Naissance d’une église: histoire du Burundi chrétien* (Ngozi, 1963), pp. 27–34, François Renault, *Lavigerie, l’esclavage africain, et l’Europe, 1868–1892* (Paris: Editions de Boccard, 1971), pp. 184–193.

¹⁰ Jean-Pierre Chrétien, “The Slave Trade in Burundi and Rwanda at the Beginning of German Colonisation, 1890–1906,” in *Slavery in the Great Lakes Region of East Africa*, ed. Henri Médard and Shane Doyle (Oxford: James Currey, 2007), 210–230.

¹¹ Christian Thibon, “Un siècle de croissance démographique au Burundi (1850–1950),” *Cahiers d’études*

mwami, reached approximately its modern extent, through an assemblage of subordinate Hutu and Tutsi chiefdoms to the west, the problematic territories under the command of Mwezi's brothers, the *Batare* Ganwa, in the east, and the centre under his direct control and that of his sons, the *Bezi*.

The north, however, under command of *Bezi* chiefs and the *Abiru* priest-kings, remained a stagnated frontier, subject even to a peace agreement with a similarly expansionist Rwanda in 1888.¹² Yet the north too had reasons to invest in its own local loyalties, distinct from the regional Ganwa royalty;¹³ Mwezi Gisabo built his kingdom amid a plethora of challengers, rebels and tenuously-controlled chiefs, and the latter half of the nineteenth century was riven with internal wars. Thus, despite this deep history of close association with the central power of Burundi, at the arrival of the Europeans the northern region of Kabarore and Busiga was rather characterised by strong challenges to the authority of the main line of the Ganwa kings, especially when it came under the power of Gisabo's strongest enemy. Known as Kirima or Kilima, he had come from Bushi in eastern Congo but claimed to be the son of Ntare Rugamba (and thus Gisabo's brother), born with the seeds in his hand. Little can be made of such claims, though Sihingereje notes that traditions of Ntare's behaviour make them partially believable; in Keuppens' account, Ntare 'often explored Burundi all alone. Crossing the border, he presented himself as a simple Muha when he was in Buha, as a simple Munyarwanda in Rwanda, a simple Mushubi or Mushi in Bushi'.¹⁴ Kirima established himself across the Imbo, Mugamba and Nkiko as king, even taking the appropriate dynastic name of Mwezi in outright confrontation with Gisabo.¹⁵

africaines 27, no. 105 (1987): 61–81; Christian Thibon, "L'expansion du peuplement dans la région des grands lacs au XIXe siècle.," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 23, no. 1 (1989): 54–72.

¹² Mworoha, *Histoire du Burundi*, p. 230.

¹³ cf. David Newbury, "Precolonial Burundi and Rwanda: Local Loyalties, Regional Royalties," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 34, no. 2 (2001): 255–314.

¹⁴ Joseph Keuppens, *Essai de l'histoire du Burundi* (Burasira, 1959), p. 17; Vincent Sihingereje, "L'anti-roi Kirima, ou l'échec d'une tentative dynastique au Burundi" (Mémoire de licencié, Université du Burundi, 1982).

¹⁵ Chrétien, "Une révolte au Burundi en 1934," p. 245. Following historiographical tradition, Kirima is never referred to as 'Mwezi' here, the title in this period reserved for Gisabo.

Kirima's career was an illustrative tale of the experience of the higher levels of authority in interaction with the newly-arrived Europeans. His conflict with Mwezi Gisabo was already in full flow when the Germans arrived in the region intent on making good their claim to Ruanda-Urundi, territories through which the Berlin Conference had drawn a straight line as a border between Congo and German East Africa.¹⁶ Crucial to the renegotiation of this line on the map was the argument for the strength and indivisibility of the kingdoms that it theoretically split down the middle, but the preoccupations of imperial authority were equally pressing; Burundi, in its fractious state, and Mwezi Gisabo, in his contended position, became exemplary targets for the new power in the Great Lakes. Captain Bethe, who led the earliest substantial expedition into Burundi in June 1899, sought to defeat and devastate Mwezi as an example of superior European might; 'if the sovereign, to whom was attributed a supernatural power not only by the Barundi, but also by the neighbouring peoples, the Banyarwanda, the Baha and others, would give in, succumb in combat or be chased from his residence and from his court, be harassed and pursued, this superstition, and with it his power, would be immediately broken,' he wrote.¹⁷ Kirima, on the other hand, was a convenient ally for German actions, and when Gisabo finally submitted to Bethe's successor Captain von Beringe on 6 June 1903, the last independent African sovereign to accept European overlordship, he was forced not only to acknowledge German authority but to recognise Kirima's independence.¹⁸

¹⁶ See Louis, *Ruanda-Urundi*; on the European 'exploration' see especially François Leroy, "1896: La première caravane des Pères Blancs à Bujumbura," *Revue de l'université officielle du Burundi* 1, no. 1 (1967): 37-43; Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "Le passage de l'expédition d'Oscar Baumann au Burundi (septembre-octobre 1892)," *Cahiers d'études africaines* 8, no. 29 (1968): 48-95; Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "Les premiers voyageurs étrangers au Burundi et au Rwanda: les "compagnons obscurs" des "explorateurs"," *Afrique et histoire*, no. 4 (2005): 37-72. On the German period, see also Pierre Ryckmans, *Une page d'histoire coloniale: l'occupation allemande dans l'Urundi*, Section des Sciences Morales et Politiques, 29/5 (Brussels: Institut Royal Colonial Belge, 1957); Jean-Pierre Chrétien, *Le Burundi sous la colonisation allemande (1896-1916)* (Bujumbura: Université du Burundi, 1977).

¹⁷ Heinrich Bethe, "L'expédition du Capitaine Bethe contre Mwezi Gisabo (Juin 1899)," *Cultures et sociétés* 3 (1980): 205-212.

¹⁸ Louis, *Ruanda-Urundi*, p. 117; Ryckmans, *Une page d'histoire*, p. 8; cf. Chrétien, *Le Burundi sous la*

The colonial mind was, however, decidedly schizophrenic, and von Beringe had vastly exceeded, even transgressed his orders from his superiors in Dar es Salaam. With the dangers posed by an angry population amply demonstrated by the Maji Maji rebellion in 1905–7, von Beringe was replaced. Kirima's recognition as an independent 'little Mwezi' was soon followed by his overthrow, capture and exile in 1906 when the replacement Captain von Grawert sought to reverse his predecessor's actions and consolidate power under Gisabo. Yet this policy was itself inverted at the death of Mwezi Gisabo in 1908 with an almost simultaneous change of European personnel in Usumbura and Dar es Salaam, the capital of German East Africa, and Kirima was allowed back into the country three years later once again as a disruptive influence to mitigate the control of Mwezi's son, Mutaga. Kirima died in 1920, with the northern borderland seeing in the arrival of the Belgians in the First World War as the domain of a semi-independent chief, just as it had first experienced the presence of the Germans.

In some ways, Kirima's actions and policies in the borderland were entirely in accord with the Ganwa rule to which he laid claim, placing members of his own family in control of the regions under him.¹⁹ Furthermore, he appears to have been one of the first figures in recent Burundi history to have explicitly invested in ethnic division as a means of eliciting popular support. 'He traversed the region pillaging systematically all the owners of cattle, and, favouring the Hutu and above all the poor Hutu, he managed to make himself loved and recruited hundreds of Barundi,'²⁰ nicknamed, according to Meyer's contemporary ethnography 'the butcher of the Tutsi.'²¹ This is an exaggeration, but a reflection of ethnic tensions; Kirima did in fact employ some Tutsi as subordinate chiefs, but they were said to 'boast about their

colonisation allemande; Jacques Marissal and Emile Mworoha, *Le Burundi à la fin XIXème siècle*, Textes de commentaire de cartes historiques du Burundi (Bujumbura: Université du Burundi, 1977); Jacques Marissal, "Le Burundi, dernier royaume independant de l'Afrique des grands lacs," *Azania: Journal of the British Institute in Eastern Africa* 13 (1978): 167–180.

¹⁹ Sihingereje, "L'anti-roi Kirima," p. 77.

²⁰ Derscheid Collection, *Enquête administrative Ngozi*, 1929.

²¹ Meyer, *Les Barundi*, p. 210. Lemarchand in particular emphasises this observation as evidence of long-term ethnic conflict in northern Burundi (Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p. 51).

Tutsi origins and look down upon [another chief] whom they call “Muhutu”.²² That Kirima’s territory at least as far as the Congo-Nile Ridge was largely, almost entirely Hutu is relatively agreed, however, with Tutsi families widely remembered as arriving on the ridge only in the 1920s and 1930s.²³ The incident demonstrates the early potential for ethnic conflict, though not necessarily carrying continuity to later divides.

Kirima as mwami or *umumenja*, ‘rebel’ is a mixed question in the region he controlled.²⁴ He was buried in the *nganzo z’abami*, the tombs of the kings, in full rite of kingship,²⁵ yet traditions surrounding Mwezi Gisabo’s own funeral suggests a significant local attachment to the ‘rightful’ mwami was similarly current under the power of the Kirima clan. At Mwezi’s death in 1908, when Kirima was in exile but his family still in control of his territory, it is said that the king’s body was smuggled into the region to be buried ‘clandestinely’ at the home of a certain Hutu farmer named Ndago.²⁶ Today, local people working in the tea fields bordering the Budandari wood say that one of the hidden tombs, marked by a tree that carries a curse of death for all who touch it, marks the true burial place of the last independent king in Africa.²⁷

Belgian Rule: Coffee and Catholicism

The Belgian colonial period is conventionally divided into the years as a League of Nations *Mandat*, 1919–1945, and those as a *Tutelle*, a Trusteeship from the UN, 1946–1962. The initial instinct had been to adopt the established German policies, a broad system of indirect rule

²² Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*.

²³ Chrétien, “Une révolte au Burundi en 1934,” p. 247.

²⁴ The archetypal figure of the rebel is a prominent character of Burundi story telling and historical memory; see Guillet and Ndayishunguje, *Légendes historiques*, pp. 201–272; Léonidas Ndoricimpa, “Du roi fondateur au roi rebelle. Le récit de rebelle dans les traditions orales du Burundi,” in *L’Arbre-mémoire: traditions orales du Burundi*, ed. Léonidas Ndoricimpa and Claude Guillet (Paris: Karthala, 1984).

²⁵ Chrétien, “Une révolte au Burundi en 1934,” p. 245.

²⁶ AAB, BUR 77 (1), R. Verstappen, *Historique du chefferie Baranyanka*, 18 March 1932.

²⁷ This claim was heard in May 2011; by Chrétien and Mworoha’s earlier calculations, Mwezi is more likely to be buried at Remera in Muruta commune (Chrétien and Mworoha, “Les tombeaux”).

since the fallout from the Maji Maji rebellion,²⁸ immediately. A request was made that colonial administrators be selected, as far as possible, for their ability to read German, in order to work according to the German code of practice; ‘Couldn’t the German colonial code be translated?’ scribbled a nonplussed official on the foot of the letter of request, an expressive comment that reflected the irritation of a Belgian system already largely comprised of Flemish officers required to conduct their work in French.²⁹ This instinct of continuity was given ideological substance by the first Résident Pierre Ryckmans, whose later treatise *Dominer pour servir*, ‘Rule to Serve’, confirmed him as the Belgian Lord Lugard.³⁰ Much as with the British Dual Mandate, the system developed through a propaganda war aimed at winning a political debate at home, as other officers in Belgian Congo argued for the necessity to break the ‘tyranny’ of local chiefs.³¹ But with encouragement as British Tanganyika, under the same League of Nations Mandate terms as Ruanda-Urundi, adopted indirect rule in 1919,³² the treatment of the new Belgian acquisitions as appreciably distinct from Congo was ensured.

The system was not entirely the same as Lugard’s model. Lugard himself was horrified at the Belgian system he considered ‘did not seem to allow of any personal responsibility

²⁸ John Iliffe, “The Organization of the Maji Maji Rebellion,” *Journal of African History* 8, no. 3 (1967): 495–512.

²⁹ AAB, BUR 80 (18), Résident, Letter to *Commissaire royal*, 19 April 1918.

³⁰ Ryckmans, *Dominer*; cf. Lord Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London: Routledge, 1965). The comparison of Belgian and British rule is too rarely attempted; for a rare exception, see Michael Crowder, “Africa under British and Belgian Domination, 1935-45,” in *UNESCO General History of Africa, vol. VIII: Africa since 1935*, ed. Ali A. Mazrui (Oxford: Heinemann, 1993), 76–101.

³¹ For example, A. Engels, “Administration directe ou indirecte au Congo?” *Congo* 1 (1922). See Gahama, *Le Burundi*, pp. 41–43; cf. Anthony I Nwabughuogu, “The Role of Propaganda in the Development of Indirect Rule in Nigeria, 1890–1929,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 14, no. 1 (1981): 65–92.

³² The Tanganyikan incarnation of indirect rule has received much attention, for example John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 318–341; Henry Francis Morris and James S. Read, “The Framework of Indirect Rule in East Africa,” in *Indirect Rule and the Search for Justice: Essays in East African Legal History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 3–40; Justin Willis, “The Administration of Bonde, 1920–60: A Study of the Implementation of Indirect Rule in Tanganyika,” *African Affairs* 92, no. 366 (1993): 53–67.

for the chiefs', subordinating all their decisions to the European administration, yet this was an inconsistent policy; 'good' chiefs were permitted almost total freedom.³³ And as the Belgians considered what to do with Kirima's old territory, considered rebellious and resistant to control, only the best chief would do. And so the exceptionally promising, enthusiastically Western chief Baranyanka, one of the *Batare* Ganwa descended from Ntare Rugamba, was sent from his own *chefferie* in Kitega in the centre of the country (see maps in Appendix A) to bring a large, T-shaped section of it to order, spanning up the Congo-Nile ridge and along the border east and west. Baranyanka had been one of the first students at the German school for the children of princes in Kitega, and, as a clerk in the German administration, had followed the colonial forces before the Belgian offensive, in retreat to Tabora in 1916. But his qualifications and attitude transferred easily to cement him in Belgian favour when he returned, his linguistic ability and enthusiasm for European 'modernity' soon recommending him to the task of bringing the new, difficult border *chefferie* back under the authority of the state.

Under the *Mandat*, Baranyanka was a knight of the colonial project. A principal beneficiary of the system of indirect rule, he also supported the limited Belgian 'modernisation' policies with the fire of the convert. Religion and commerce were the creeds, and he fostered both. Baptised in 1929 with the Belgian Resident Pierre Ryckmans as his sponsor, he was rewarded with an expansion of his territory when he gave up his former lands in Kitega.³⁴ In his new acquisition of Busiga now lay one of the earliest Catholic Missions, founded by the Pères Blancs at Busiga in 1922,³⁵ while in 1929 in the region of Ijene an old German protestant church at Rubura was restored by Danish Baptists;³⁶ founding daughter churches in Rwanda, it would

³³ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, pp. 70–78.

³⁴ Rwakazina, "Etude monographique," p. 35. For an overview of Catholic evangelism in Burundi, see Augustin Mvuyekure, *Le catholicisme au Burundi, 1922–1962: approche historique des conversions* (Paris: Karthala, 2003).

³⁵ The mission diary begins in 1922; the formal founding was established in January 1923. See Perraudin, *Naissance d'une Eglise*, p. 77; Gahama, *Le Burundi*, p. 218.

³⁶ Mukama, "Histoire sociale"; Gahama, *Le Burundi*, pp. 235–237.

later come to be treated with deep suspicion by successive governments for its trans-border network. But while an enthusiastic Christian, Baranyanka was most passionate about coffee. The prime means by which the Belgian administration hoped to monetize its new territory and establish a tax base, coffee was trialled in many areas but none so early, or so extensively, as in the borderland under Baranyanka's own sponsorship; the region of Ijene in particular was filled with coffee plantations as early as 1932.³⁷ Living at his palace at Irabiro, just west of Kayanza town, his personal lands extended over 260 Ha, and people from across the *chefferie* were required to come and work them for him.³⁸

In the 1920s and 1930s, however, memories of the rebel king he had replaced would awaken whenever Baranyanka mistreated the people at his command, or whenever the rains were late and times looked tough. Natural affliction signalled vengeance against him as a usurper,³⁹ or heralded the return of Kirima;⁴⁰ a consistent dissatisfaction with the authority of the imposed replacements manifested in nostalgia for the old regime. In 1934, the border region west of Kabarore, in the forest of Kibira itself, hosted a dramatic revolt against Belgian colonial rule. A female *umupfumu*, diviner,⁴¹ named Inamujandi appeared, prophesying the imminent arrival of a new king who would bring about a golden age. Her support spread widely and rapidly, and people began to reject the orders and authority of the Belgian-endorsed chiefs. 'We do not want the people of [Kitega], we do not want a Ganwa, not even one,' they said, according to one of these chiefs; 'we want the descendants . . . of Kirima, those who give milk

³⁷ On the significance and socio-political transformations of coffee, see Alexandre Hatungimana, *Le café au Burundi au XXe siècle: paysans, argent, pouvoir*, Hommes et sociétés (Paris: Karthala, 2005); Alexandre Hatungimana, "Le café et les pouvoirs au Burundi," *Les cahiers d'outre-mer: revue de géographie de Bordeaux et de l'Atlantique* 61, no. 243 (2008): 263–283.

³⁸ AAB, BUR 77 (1), R. Verstappen, *Historique du chefferie Baranyanka*, 18 March 1932; Niyongabo Côme (pseud.), interview in Karama (Kabarore), 8 March 2011 *et al.*. See Chapter 3.

³⁹ Chrétien, "Une révolte au Burundi en 1934," p. 245.

⁴⁰ Sihingereje, "L'anti-roi Kirima," p. 131.

⁴¹ 'Umupfumu' was the term used by Baranyanka himself, to be differentiated from the more malign *umurozi*, witch (AAB, BUR 73 (8), R. Verstappen, letter to Résurundi, 24 September 1934).

and meat, and we do not want anyone else!’⁴² Baranyanka’s imposed right to rule was seriously challenged, and a willingness to rebel against an undesired authority amply demonstrated.

The Belgians appeared relatively unaware of this supposed connection with Kirima, noting only with confusion that a certain ‘Rwasa’, perhaps to be identified with Kirima’s son Rwashwa, was rumoured to be eagerly anticipated in the rainforest.⁴³ What did strike them, however, was the ethnic makeup of the rebels. In 1929 it had been noted that throughout the territory, ‘the Tutsi have never been political chiefs’, numbering only 3 1/2% of the population and ‘exerting no influence’ on the rest.⁴⁴ In 1934, however, all the administrative chiefs and *sous-chefs* imposed by the Belgians in the region were either Tutsi or, like Baranyanka, *Batare Ganwa*. The rebels were notably different. Baranyanka first raised the alarm that Inamujandi was followed by ‘a considerable bodyguard formed principally of Twa’,⁴⁵ while daily Belgian reports similarly recorded sightings of ‘numerous Twa descending from Kibira’.⁴⁶ Other witnesses later recalled that ‘there were no Tutsi among them, none but Hutu and Twa, above all many Twa’, levelling threats against Tutsi and Europeans alike.⁴⁷ For a short period the rebellion gravely threatened the colonial order in the north. But between Baranyanka and the Belgians, the rebellion was crushed, Inamujandi captured and imprisoned on the other side of the country. It would be the last major rebellion against Belgian rule until the period of decolonisation, but as such it was a crucial instance of themes and tensions that would be seen again, not simply ‘re-emerging’, but reconstituted and reshaped by new circumstances. Chrétien’s conclusion on the revolt is not unreasonable, that ‘the ethnic aspect was confounded with the problem of power’ when the whole administrative body was constituted of Tutsi and Ganwa, with the

⁴² Chrétien, “Une révolte au Burundi en 1934”; cf. Gahama, *Le Burundi*. Compare also expressions of disassociation from central Ganwa rule, also through the memory of an *umupfumu*, on the southern edges of Burundi in Wagner, “Whose History is History?”

⁴³ AAB, BUR 73 (8), A. Gille, *Les évènements de la révolte de la Kibira*, 6 October 1934.

⁴⁴ Derscheid Collection, *Enquête administrative Ngozi*, 1929.

⁴⁵ AAB, BUR 73 (8), R. Verstappen, letter to Résurundi, 24 September 1934.

⁴⁶ AAB, BUR 73 (8), A. Gille, *Les évènements de la révolte de la Kibira*, 6 October 1934.

⁴⁷ Chrétien, “Une révolte au Burundi en 1934,” p. 249.

result that ‘to attack a Tutsi in these conditions signified an aggression against the authorities that had been imposed on the region from the outside’.⁴⁸ Between Kirima’s divisive rule and the Inamujandi revolt, the potential for ethnicity to be a factor in conflict was made clear both before Belgian influence and exacerbated by it. Equally, the tension that local people along the border could maintain between passionate investment in a distant monarch, rooted outside of their community, and resentment against those placed in authority closer to their lives, would be a motif of borderland politics for many years to come.

2.2 Decolonisation: 1952–1962

From Slow to Sudden: Political Development in the 1950s

The Inamujandi revolt unfolded scarcely fifteen years after the Belgians displaced a German administration that had attempted little to shape its colony beyond the subjugation of the mwami. Another fifteen years after the prophetess had been imprisoned, the borderland and the country rested relatively calm. Belgium and its delegate chiefs settled into a routine of gradual christianisation, Westernisation and coffee promotion, and despite the transformation of the terms of Belgium’s control from a League of Nations *Mandat* to a UN *Tutelle*, there appeared little change in the administration’s attitude to suggest that Burundi was being groomed for political maturity as a Western-style state. Despite the limited European settlement, the colonial system conformed to Mamdani’s ‘bifurcated state’; the mass of rural Burundi was administered through the indirect rule of chiefs, while direct rule was applied to the *Centres extra-coutumières*, urban developments largely devoted to Europeans, Swahili speakers and migrants.⁴⁹ In the hills, limited education was provided through the private efforts of the missions, while the sons of chiefs and other elites were sent to Rwanda, to the *Groupe scolaire* in Astrida, for their secondary education, Burundi lacking any secondary

⁴⁸ Chrétien, “Une révolte au Burundi en 1934.”

⁴⁹ cf. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

school itself.⁵⁰ Elsewhere in Africa the political demands of a new educated class met an altered attitude from colonial states in the post-war world to encourage the provision of new services, and eventually a shift towards political demands for Independence. Burundi, having formally existed as a colony for fewer years than any other territory, showed little sign of joining them.

In the 1950s a few tentative changes were attempted. A ten year plan was announced in 1952, its relatively modest aims reflecting both the political pressure Belgium felt to follow the international trend of colonial developmentalism and the limited attention it had hitherto devoted to the territory.⁵¹ State schools were introduced in 1954, against strong ecclesiastical opposition, and a *Conseil supérieur du Pays* was formed of select chiefs, *sous-chefs* and colonists, formally beneath the presidency of the mwami but incorporating strong ‘guidance’ from the *Tutelle*, particularly the new *Résident-Général* Jean-Paul Harroy, who substantially contributed to the transformation of Belgian policy towards the social emancipation of the Hutu.⁵² The *Conseil*, though riven by intense internal differences, was not entirely supine however, acting against the *Tutelle* to oppose lay education, and undertaking a reformation of the *ubugabire* system of cattle-clientage. But as an elite body, partially elected solely by elites, it scarcely amounted to substantial political empowerment for the Burundi. When even

⁵⁰ On education in general in Burundi, see Jean-Pierre Chrétien, “L’enseignement au Burundi,” *Revue française d’études politiques africaines* 76 (1972): 61–81; Mary T. Duarte, “Education in Ruanda-Urundi, 1946–1961,” *Historian* 57, no. 2 (1995): 275–284 contains some useful figures for the colonial period.

⁵¹ Belgian Government Information Center, New York, *A Ten Year Plan for the Economic and Social Development of the Belgian Trust Territory of Ruanda-Urundi* (1952); cf. Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) for an incisive reflection of the international climate of the time.

⁵² See Jean-Paul Harroy, *Burundi 1955–1962: souvenirs d’un combattant d’une guerre perdue* (Brussels: Hayez, 1987), and another colonial memoir, Jean Ghislain, *Souvenirs de la territoriale au Burundi: “le brouillard sur la Kibira”*, *Enquêtes et documents d’histoire africaine* 11 (Louvain-la-Neuve: Centre d’histoire de l’Afrique, 1992) (cf. Jean Ghislain, *La féodalité au Burundi* (Brussels: Académie royale des Sciences d’outre-mer, classe des Sciences morales et politiques, 1970)). On the *Conseil*, see Valentin Bankumuhari, *Le conseil supérieur du pays: promoteur de l’indépendance nationale* (Bujumbura, 1977).

Rwanda joined the general political fervency of Africa in 1957, with the publication of the 'Hutu Manifesto' demanding liberation for the Hutu masses and the formation of the first political parties north of the border, Burundi remained politically silent.

Burundi's political awakening came abruptly in 1959.⁵³ The small educated elite, the *évolués*, who had been watching the political ferment in bordering territories over the previous years, formed the first political parties in 1959. The first was Unaru, *Union nationale africaine du Ruanda-Urundi*, formed among urban, Swahili-speaking Muslim circles as the local cell of the Tanganyika African National Union. The first to demand Independence, they were also almost the only African voice urging continued union between Rwanda and Burundi, a step towards broader union with Nyerere's Tanganyika. They were nevertheless determined to press for their own Burundi identity, something that was often denied to them by Kirundi speakers, and included in their earliest statement of goals the resolution to respect the rights of each mwami in Rwanda and Burundi.⁵⁴

Following soon after was Uprona, *Union et progrès national*, which quickly became the dominant force in the politics of Burundi. Its platform was one of substantial conservatism with regards to ideas of the monarchy and tradition, combined with notable progressiveness when it came to questions of economic development and the promotion of cooperatives, but its overriding theme was passionate nationalism and urgent independence. The Belgian *Sûreté* was disparaging of the initial meeting of the party,⁵⁵ but soon came to treat it with fear and hatred, not least for the role played by their public face and talisman, Prince Louis Rwagasore.

⁵³ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, and particularly Deslaurier, "Un monde politique," remain the most comprehensive studies of this period.

⁵⁴ AAB, BUR 65 (1), Mussa Ramathan, *Unaru Declaration*, 7 September 1959. Unaru has been largely neglected in the history of decolonisation, but there have been recent attempts to reverse this in academic circles (Geert Castryck, "The Hidden Agenda of Citizenship: African Citizenship in the Face of the Modern Nation-State," in *Citizenship in Historical Perspective*, ed. Steven Ellis, Gudmundur Hálfdanarson, and Ann Katherine Isaacs (Pisa: Edizioni Plus, 2006), 189–202) and in popular memory at the fiftieth anniversary of Independence (Abdoul Mtoka, "Honoré les oubliés de l'Indépendance," 2012).

⁵⁵ AAB, BUR 65 (1), *BI 664*, (Usumbura), 19 September 1959. Uprona first appears in Belgian records as 'Unipro', but its lasting abbreviation became standard very soon after.

Though never the party president, the eldest son of Mwami Mwambutsa had been involved from their earliest *réunion*, and as both a skilled politician in himself and the perfect symbol for the royalist party he became a substantial force in their leadership and propaganda.⁵⁶

However, the formation of these first political parties was overshadowed by events that were rapidly overwhelming Rwanda. In August 1959, the Rwandan Mwami Mutara Rudahigwa died in hospital in Usumbura, sparking rumours that he had been murdered by the Belgians, and politics north of the border accelerated towards disaster.⁵⁷ The initial response on the Burundi side of the frontier, on the other hand, seemed relatively sanguine. An intelligence report for Ngozi province days later declared that the Burundi had received the news in a ‘rather indifferent manner’, and that ‘if they are persuaded that the Belgian authorities and the missions were in league to make him disappear, they calculate however that the death of a Mwami of Rwanda does not concern them at all’.⁵⁸ But the violence that followed drew horror from Burundi, and sparked fears that the nascent civil war might even spread. As political agents from Rwanda grew in number in the borderland, either fleeing violence or plotting to pursue it, the *Tutelle* placed the north of Burundi under military rule.

Nationalists, Gradualists and Populists

As Rwanda embarked on intimate ethnic conflict, the Belgians made a dramatic announcement of political reforms in November 1959; a gradual series of elections at various levels would

⁵⁶ See Christine Deslaurier, “Louis Rwagasore, martyr de l’indépendance burundaise,” *Afrique contemporaine* 235, no. 3 (2010): 68; Denis Martin and Tatiana Yannopoulos, “Régimes militaires et classes sociales en Afrique noire. Une hypothèse,” *Revue française de science politique* 22, no. 4 (1972): 847–882.

⁵⁷ For the Rwandan decolonisation period, far more studied than that of Burundi, see Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, pp. 93–196; M. Catherine Atterbury, *Revolution in Rwanda* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, 1970); Newbury, *Cohesion of Oppression*, pp. 180–206. Partisan accounts are nevertheless richly informative; see Jean R. Hubert, *La Toussaint rwandaise et sa répression* (Brussels: Académie royale des sciences d’outre-mer, 1965); Jean-Paul Harroy, *Rwanda: de la féodalité à la démocratie* (Brussels: Hayez, 1984), and the indispensable collection of political documents from the period, F. Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda politique, 1958–1960* (Brussels: Centre de recherche et d’information socio-politiques, 1961).

⁵⁸ AAB, BUR 74 (8), BI 561, (Usumbura), 25 August 1959.

establish national governmental bodies, progressing towards internal autonomy.⁵⁹ 1960 was therefore a year of intense political activity conducted in an atmosphere of fear and trepidation. New parties sprang up rapidly. Propaganda campaigns on a grand scale were launched by Uprona, with their rivals gradually following in more muted fashion, and tensions between propagandists on a local scale became acute as the political debate spread into the hills. Despite the ethnic tint of violence in the borderland decades before, under Inamujandi or Kirima, in the late 1950s political expression in Burundi appeared remarkably devoid of ethnic divisionism. The civil war in Rwanda became a dire parable in Burundi, a terrifying vision that propagandists of all stripes invoked to alarm the listener of what would happen if their rivals gained power. ‘Cast your eyes beyond the Kanyaru,’ exhorted one notable Uprona tract scattered in the hills, ‘you will see how it is. Now only flies live there, where there used to be men.’⁶⁰ In the emerging political discourse of Burundi the national character was defined in opposition to Rwanda, amid curious terms of consensus between rapidly polarising political blocs; to be Murundi in these political times, according to those who gained the vast majority of the popular support, was to be devoted to peace, to the mwami, and to reject absolutely any distinction between Barundi. It was a vital period of formation. Under the *Tutelle*, the people of Burundi legally had no nationality or citizenship, but counted as ‘*ressortissants du Ruanda-Urundi*’.⁶¹ The cultural and social conception of the nation was achieving prominent new expression just as the legal status of the country came under review, and the investment by both the Belgian administration and the feuding parties in the character of the ‘Murundi’, rather than the ‘*citoyen*’, ensured this emic term of national, quasi-ethnic identity became the legal term of citizenship upon Independence.⁶² Yet despite this broad consensus in political expression, the competition was ferocious; the fifth UN Visiting Mission, an inspection conducted every three years to monitor the progress of the *Tutelle*, arrived in

⁵⁹ Deslaurier, “Un monde politique.”

⁶⁰ AAB, BUR 65 (1), Uprona, *Badasigana b’imana n’uburundi*, 12 October 1960.

⁶¹ Jentgen, *Les frontières du Ruanda-Urundi*.

⁶² André Verbrughe, “Introduction historique au problème de la nationalité au Burundi,” *Revue administrative et juridique du Burundi* 6, no. 18 (1972): 5–8.

March 1960, and was met by protests and petitions from a broad range of the population, demanding or refusing immediate Independence, decrying the behaviour of opponents.

The new-born political parties began to coalesce into three broad groupings. Uprona dominated and defined the Nationalists, demonised as 'feudalists' by the *Tutelle*, agitating for immediate Independence without, as they saw it, the manipulation and delaying tactics of internal autonomy. The charge of feudalism derived from Uprona's celebratory preservation, even elevation, of the monarchy, employing conceptions of 'tradition' as a powerful weapon against the Belgian presence. Adoration of the monarchy became one of their most influential characteristics, and however much rival parties might insist on their own loyalty to Mwami Mwambutsa, the knowledge that Rwagasore was the guiding force behind Uprona ensured that his party was universally understood to be the 'party of the mwami', despite frequent denials from Mwambutsa himself and the fervent information and propaganda distribution of the *Tutelle*.

Unaru, never able to extend its support outside of the *Centres extra-coutumières* or its Swahili base, loosely affiliated itself with Uprona, along with a number of smaller satellites that garnered only limited regional appeal. They formed the core of a semi-informal coalition, identified by Deslaurier as the 'Cartel Uprona'.⁶³ But the political choice in the Busiga and Kabarore borderland was unclouded by these complications; Rwagasore had taken a chieftaincy of his own a little way to the south, and married a woman from Rukeco in Busiga, adding close regional loyalties to his innate royal attraction. Uprona was a powerful force in the region, and soon the northern edge of Ngozi Province would become a representative site of struggle between Rwagasore's party and that of his main rival, Baranyanka.

The great chief held a personal distaste for Rwagasore, while his close identification with the *Tutelle* ensured the Prince's claims for immediate Independence were anathema to him. Baranyanka became the godfather of Uprona's leading challenger, the *Parti démocrate chrétien*, the PDC, formally founded by his sons Ntidendereza Jean-Baptiste and Biroli Joseph in

⁶³ Deslaurier, "Un monde politique," p. 594.

February 1960 with active Belgian support.⁶⁴ The PDC wished to establish political reforms and democratic institutions within the structure of the *Tutelle* prior to any move towards Independence. Thus praised as ‘democratic’ by the *Tutelle*, they might better be termed Gradualists; Uprona similarly devoted itself to the ideals of popular democracy, but maintained that this would take place only as a concomitant of Independence. The PDC pledged its loyalty to the mwami just as any other party, made no plans to abolish the monarchy in its hopes for democratic reforms, and invoked the idea of tradition with some frequency, but it often found itself struggling to avoid being seen as enemies of Mwambutsa in many communities. This was certainly due to the active propaganda of Uprona, but the perception of a personal rivalry between the family of Baranyanka and that of Mwambutsa ensured that it was not a difficult argument to sell. The grandeur of Baranyanka and the long years of praise and prestige he had found under Belgian rule was not lost on the Barundi, and Belgian favouritism encouraged conspiracy theories. Chrétien recounts that in some official Belgian circles the idea had even been circulated that Baranyanka might be established as a supreme sovereign of Ruanda-Urundi.⁶⁵ While there is little to suggest this was at any point a serious proposition, it reflects both the chief’s status in the eyes of the administration and the sources of hatred for his Barundi rivals.

The antipathy between pro-Independence, Nationalist Uprona, under Prince Rwagasore, and the pro-Belgian, Gradualist PDC, under the family of Baranyanka, was analysed by Lemarchand as an expression of Ganwa politics.⁶⁶ Since the nineteenth century, two Ganwa lineages, the *Batare* and the *Bezi*, had consolidated power between themselves, and Belgian policies in the selection of chiefs had exacerbated this division. The PDC, under Baranyanka’s influence, appeared dominated by the *Batare* lineage of princes; while Rwagasore ought to have been considered as a member of a new line after his father, the *Bambutsa*, the political pressures of the day subsumed him into association with the older *Bezi* line, and the PDC-

⁶⁴ Harroy, *Burundi 1955-1962*, p. 368.

⁶⁵ Jean-Pierre Chrétien, *Burundi, l’histoire retrouvée: vingt-cinq ans de métier d’historien en Afrique* (Paris: Karthala, 1993) p. 200.

⁶⁶ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, pp. 324–343.

Uprona rivalry appeared as a *Batare-Bezi* mirror. A valid argument, used at times by the parties themselves in denunciation of the other as an aristocratic power-grab, it must also be appreciated as an analytic model rather than a definition. Uprona in particular included many prominent figures from both lineages, and its leaders were largely Hutu and Tutsi. And in the hills, the currency of a Ganwa feud was unclear; the personal feud between Rwagasore and the family of Baranyanka, on the other hand, was widely recognised, a key element of popular political debate.

This was more than just speculation. Baranyanka wrote private letters to Mwambutsa, claiming his loyalty yet lambasting the mwami for failing to control his son, being a poor father and a poor monarch who neglected to enforce the 'rules of politeness and respect that a son of a mwami ought to follow and show to other Ganwa, to other nobles and to Tutsi who exercise command'.⁶⁷ He even went so far as to insinuate knowledge of a pervasive rumour that Mwambutsa was in fact illegitimate. Since the king's birth his enemies, Kirima among them, had suggested that he was not the son of Mwami Mutaga.⁶⁸ Mutaga's brother Karabona was one rumoured candidate for Mwambutsa's true father, and Baranyanka's barbed intentions were scarcely concealed when he suggest to Mwambutsa that 'Karabona is also the son of a king ... Rwagasore is not the first mwami's son that we have seen. Karabona was injured at Saburemye, the arrow's iron remained in his belly; you can ask him yourself.'⁶⁹ Though formally submissive to the authority of the mwami, the personal antipathy between Baranyanka, Rwagasore and Mwambutsa was very much real.

While the PDC and Uprona were certainly by far the most influential and prominent parties, they were joined by the third grouping of political ideologies, one which would have a quieter degree of success in the final years of the Tutelle, but whose presence and ideas would be crucial in the emergence of subsequent developments in the region after Independence. Labelled the 'populists' by the Belgians, the third group did indeed make populist arguments but markedly failed to accrue popular support. They began in early 1960 by speaking of the

⁶⁷ AAB, BUR 79 (8), Pierre Baranyanka, Letter to Mwambutsa, 3 May 1960.

⁶⁸ Derscheid Collection, M. L. de Lannoy, *Notes concernant l'origine du roi Mwambutsa*, 18 February 1918.

⁶⁹ AAB, BUR 79 (8), Pierre Baranyanka, Letter to Mwambutsa, 3 May 1960.

People as a broad-based family of Hutu, Twa and poor Tutsi, decrying both the Nationalists and the Gradualists as Ganwa cabals. Led most prominently by the *Parti du Peuple* (PP), by mid-1960 they had graduated to explicit pro-Hutu rhetoric. But their policies were widely divergent from the popular mood, the party's membership too thin and inactive to make much headway in shifting the mood in their direction. They joined an alliance with the PDC and its satellites, the *Front commun* against Uprona, and were largely swamped in influence by the senior party. It was in many ways a nominal, insubstantial alliance, 'a fiction imagined by the *Tutelle*'.⁷⁰ Yet despite their minimal impact on the country as a whole, the Populists too were a presence in the borderland, heralded as indicative of the incursion of Rwandan ideas, and potentially Rwandan violence, into peaceful Burundi; the fight for Busiga and Kabarore would prove the most explosive political contest of the decolonisation years.

Troubles and Elections

The Belgian response to the Revolution in Rwanda and the trend of political development in Burundi was crucial. In Rwanda, the emergence of a self-conscious Hutu identity was in concert with the moral and political perspectives of the *Tutelle*, now transformed from the convenience of indirect rule to the ethical obligation to postpone independence until the 'feudal' oppression of the majority ethnicity had been overturned. A clear desire to see the same occur in Burundi was to be thwarted, however. The *Résident Général* Jean-Paul Harroy, whose memoirs recall the last years in Burundi as a '*guerre perdue*',⁷¹ corresponded in August 1960 with military and intelligence advisors on the probability of a Hutu revolution south of the Kanyaru. Regretfully, he was informed that 'the situation in Urundi is, despite everything, fundamentally different', and that, if the Administration went ahead with its desires, 'the whole revolution would have to be made by us, without knowing in advance how it would be received by the beneficiaries themselves. There are no viable leaders. The people are not

⁷⁰ Harroy, *Burundi 1955-1962*, p. 370.

⁷¹ *ibid.*

organised.’⁷² The Belgians had lost the Barundi; ‘everything indicates that Rwagasore and Uprona represent the great majority of ‘public opinion’ in Urundi.’ The advisors could only, regrettably, advise strategies by which to manage an inevitable Independence on their terms, even if it meant surrendering power to Uprona.

This was not, however, the path taken. Communal elections were to take place in November, and on October 27 Prince Rwagasore was sensationally placed under house arrest by the Belgian administration. Outraged, and already opposed to a system that they saw as legitimising the Belgian presence and delaying Independence, Uprona declared a boycott of the elections; the PDC duly won a considerable victory, with a large majority of the new bourgmestres, assuming the task of local administration from the abolished *sous-chefs*, affiliated with the Front Commun. Rwagasore was released the day after the elections were completed.

With the PDC in triumph, negotiations between the parties and the Administration took place in Belgium while local activists continued their campaigns and conflicts. An interim government of national unity was set up according to the results of the local elections, Uprona offered a limited role, but again events in Burundi would be overshadowed by those north of the border. Two days after the announcement of the new government, on 28 January 1961 Mwami Kigeri Ndahindurwa of Rwanda was deposed in the Gitarama Coup, when Hutu political leaders declared themselves to be the government of a new Republic; Belgium immediately accepted their claim. In February, in a rather perplexing decision, the UN Trusteeship Council announced its preference that Republican Rwanda and Monarchic Burundi remain as a single country at Independence, a view that could barely have been more at odds with sentiments in Burundi at this time. It was roundly ignored, and both countries made plans for separation. As with the ethnic war preceding the coup, the apparition of the Republic was anathema to politics in Burundi, and all parties intensified their investment in Mwami Mwambutsa, while balefully charging that their rivals wished to follow the Rwandans and depose the monarch. The debacle of the communal elections and the possibility that Independence might arrive

⁷² H. Guillaume and P. J. Lannoy, Letter to Résident Général, 8 August 1960.

under PDC control fuelled the political contest to new extremes, and 1961 saw the outbreak of open hostilities in a number of locations across the country, and on the borderland most of all.⁷³

Eventually, national legislative elections were held in September 1961, this time with full Uprona engagement, and the result was conclusive. Uprona took 58 of the 64 available seats and Rwagasore became the Prime Minister-elect, but only 25 days later he was assassinated at the Tanganyika Hotel in Usumbura by a Greek gunman, Jean Kageorgis. The PDC leadership was held responsible for plotting to kill the Prince, with Baranyanka's sons Ntidendereza and Biroli among the conspiracy. Other accounts have suggested Belgian complicity, which did not escape the attention of Uprona at the time; noting the frequency of meetings between the prominent PDC members and Belgians at the house of the the European secretary of the PDC, a Ms Belva, the remaining leadership of Uprona sent a letter to the Resident ominously concluding that, 'If following their plotting human lives are lost, you will have proved that the *Tutelle* is complicit'.⁷⁴ Ms Belva later recounted in court a conversation held between the Resident Régnier and the PDC leaders some time previously. 'Rwagasore must be killed,' she reported Régnier saying. 'Nothing is lost if one gets rid of Rwagasore in time,' he went on. 'Once the deed is accomplished the lake is not too far away.'⁷⁵

The political struggle, the election, and above all the assassination destroyed Baranyanka's political dominance of the north. On the night of the murder, the Residency had sent a handwritten note to all the Belgian *Territorials*, administrative officers, to inform them of Rwagasore's death, asking them to keep a watch on the roads for the grey car seen speeding away from the scene, and requesting that they gather all isolated Europeans into protected

⁷³ Discussed below, Chapter 3.

⁷⁴ AAB, BUR 65 (1), André Nugu, *Motion adressée à Monsieur le Résident Général*, 8 November 1961.

⁷⁵ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* p. 340. On the assassination and the ensuing trial, including the allegations against Régnier, see Jules Chomé, "L'Affaire Rwagasore," *Remarques congolaises* 41–44 (1962): 1–42; Guy Poppe, *L'Assassinat de Rwagasore, le Lumumba burundais* (Bujumbura: Iwacu, 2012); cf. the emotional account of one of Uprona's lieutenants, Boniface Kiraranganya, *La vérité sur le Burundi* (Sherbrooke: Editions Naaman, 1985).

residence in the *Tutelle* posts. Baranyanka's palace at Irabiro, on the other hand, was bustling with activity. All his servants had apparently been told to arm themselves, acquiring large numbers of arrows in anticipation of unknown 'troubles' that he warned them were coming.⁷⁶ At 8 o'clock the morning after the Prince's death, a Ford station wagon arrived carrying four men, all members of Baranyanka's extended family, and all named in the conspiracy.⁷⁷ Baranyanka's 'boy', Ndaruzenze, who would later narrate this story to the Uprona government after Independence, claimed he was ordered to join them and given a package of cartridges as they prepared to flee the country. They were in a panic, at one point veering off the road and crashing into a tree, one of the conspirators berating the driver to stop 'torturing himself' or he would kill them all. The 'boy' Ndaruzenze was told to hide a cache of weapons, burying them in his own coffee plantation. A second, larger cache of arms was collected together in a chest; Ndaruzenze described how Baranyanka took out a submachine gun, mimed firing it, then set it back and ordered it to be hidden where no one would ever find it. 'I asked him what they would do with me if the guns corroded,' Ndaruzenze described a year later. 'He told me that the guns were no longer needed, because the mission for which they had been intended had already been accomplished. He told me to bury them in a marsh, to help them rot away.'

Almost all of those who arrived at Baranyanka's palace that night were convicted of conspiracy to murder Rwagasore. Baranyanka himself, however, was never charged. 'His role before the crime is at least uncertain,' wrote the observer Chomé at the time.⁷⁸ 'It is not likely that he had advised or even controlled the action of his two sons. As for his role after the crime, if it is profoundly regrettable, it can be explained by his great age . . . and by the fact that one could not humanly ask him to denounce his children.' Yet he was politically and emotionally destroyed by the conviction of his sons in the murder of the beloved Rwagasore. As Independence came, the great knight of the colonial decades retired to obscurity.

The country was in total shock, yet fears of widespread violence went unrealised. Mwam-

⁷⁶ ANB, BI 6 (181), Budumo Onésime, *Interrogations: Ndaruzenze, Bakundukize, Fanjura*, 7 January 1963.

⁷⁷ Nahimana Antoine, Bigirindavyi Pascal, Ntakiyica Jean-Baptiste and his brother Henri.

⁷⁸ Chomé, "L'Affaire Rwagasore," p. 358.

TRES SECRET

Memorandum

à Mr l'Administrateur du Territoire
de et à N6021

J'ai l'honneur de vous informer que le Mwanu
Rwagasore a été assassiné sur le terrain de l'Hotel
Banyanku à Bumbura dans la soirée du 13 octobre vers
23 heures (probablement ballé d'une arme de gros calibre).

L'auteur de ce crime n'est pas encore connu.

Il y aurait lieu de faire surveiller tout passage de véhicule
dans votre territoire et spécialement une voiture américaine
récente genre station, de couleur grise qui paraît suspecte.
Les territoires frontaliers (Muhanga, Ruzizi - -) feront
exercer une surveillance spéciale aux frontières.

Je vous conseille d'adopter une attitude d'extrême prudence.
Les Européens isolés et exposés seront invités à se regrouper
dans les postes.

Je vous recommande également la prudence dans vos propos
et votre attitude vis à vis des autochtones.

Signaler tout ce qui paraîtrait suspect sans tarder.

En besoin, d'autres instructions vous seront
communiquées ultérieurement.

Kutaga 14-10-61 à 2h.

Le Président

Respectueusement

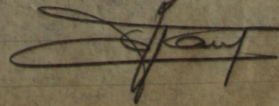


Figure 2.1: The letter notifying the *Administrateurs de Territoire* of the assassination of Prince Louis Rwagasore. From Vandembulcke's collection.

butsa spoke on the radio and embarked on a national tour in which he urged peace and showed that the loss was his to bear as a bereaved father.⁷⁹ The mwami's words and actions had a significant impact on the population, and may have contributed to the remarkable calm of the country as it dealt with horror and grief. Internal autonomy was granted on 1 January 1962, with the majority of the Belgian administration departing for good. Uprona took command of the government even as it was stricken by internal turmoil, and six months later Independence was formally achieved, 1 July 1962.

2.3 Independence and Violence: 1962–1972

Independence came under the shadow of Rwagasore's death. Before formal withdrawal in July 1962, Belgian courts convicted most of the accused conspirators and sentenced several to death, but in an act of clemency framed as a concession to peace, only the gunman was executed. Baranyanka's sons, Ntidendereza and Biroli, were among those whose sentences were commuted, but immediately upon formal Independence the Uprona government ordered a retrial, to international judicial outrage. Protests from observers came to nothing; when Paul-Henri Spaak, the Belgian Foreign Minister, confronted Prime Minister Muhirwa and laid out the argument for the inviolability of legal judgements, however unpalatable to the population, the response was firm. 'With us,' Muhirwa replied, astonished, 'things go completely differently. When justice has been poorly rendered, you restart the process.'⁸⁰ Baranyanka's sons, along with two other prominent PDC leaders and a Greek businessman implicated in the hiring of the gunman, were executed in a stadium in Gitega on 15 January 1963. Up to 20,000 people attended, watching each man hang in the pouring rain;⁸¹ those who were there

⁷⁹ Bamboneyo Thaddée, interview in Mihigo (Busiga), 23 February 2011; Ntimbonero Déo, interview in Caga (Busiga), 2 March 2011.

⁸⁰ Paul-Henri Spaak, *Combats inachevés* (Paris: Fayard, 1969), p. 306. The abridged English translation (Paul-Henri Spaak, *The Continuing Battle: Memoirs of a European, 1936–1966* (London: Weidenfeld, 1971)) cuts all Spaak's memories of Burundi affairs.

⁸¹ *The Times* (London), "Crowd of 20,000 see Burundi hangings," 16 January 1963

remember it now with grim pride.⁸²

Monarchy and Government Anarchy

The first post-colonial years thus unfolded in deep mourning and political chaos. The PDC was destroyed, damned in absolute disgrace. The PP, yet to gain substantial support, suffered shocking violence and reason to further invest in their pro-Hutu politics as a number of their leaders were murdered by Tutsi Uproniste youth in the Kamenge district of Bujumbura.⁸³ But even with its rivals broken, Uprona took power in total disarray. With Rwagasore gone and Independence achieved, the party was both leaderless and directionless, and swiftly tore itself apart through the claims of inheritance from its various prominent figures. Paul Mirerekano, Uprona's brilliant propagandist and close confidant of Rwagasore, had sought refuge in Léopoldville within Lumumba's circle in 1960, certain that the Belgians intended to remove him from the political game in Burundi. This was not unfounded, *Résident-Général* Harroy writing privately in August 1960 that 'it is in our interest that Miserekano should not return.'⁸⁴ The childish nickname, playing on *misère*, 'misery', was no typing slip, repeated twice in the same note. But when Mirerekano finally returned from exile, he found himself thoroughly sidelined despite his claim to be the chosen heir of Rwagasore. He and his supporters considered him a Hutu leader shut out from power by Tutsi and Ganwa solidarity, as the Ganwa André Muhirwa was chosen as Prime Minister over him by the mwami. In response, the returning hero was portrayed by his enemies as the harbinger of ethnic division. Uprona began to factionalise into two aisles, initially defined by support for Mirerekano or Muhirwa, but soon conceptualised in both political and ethnic terms. The 'Casablanca'

⁸² Nduhiye Marcus, interview in Kibuba (Kabarore), 30 November 2010

⁸³ cf. Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, pp. 343–468. Useful overview histories leading to the events of the 1990s, in which both authors took key political roles (the former Burundi's President from 1994–1996), are found in Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, *Une démocratie pour tous les Burundais: de l'autonomie à Ndadaye (1956–1993)*, vol. 1 (Paris: Harmattan, 1999); and Augustin Nsanze, *Le Burundi contemporain: L'Etat-nation en question (1956-2002)* (Paris: Harmattan, 2003).

⁸⁴ AAB, BUR 65 (1), Jean-Paul Harroy, *Note pour les AP*, 30 August 1960.

faction, largely Tutsi in membership, stood in opposition to the 'Monrovia' faction, grouping together Hutu politicians, although neither was entirely monoethnic.⁸⁵ The two aisles derived their nicknames from the respective groups of African states struggling over the future political direction of the continent at the time, named after the cities in which they held their key conferences, and the Uprona aisles were stereotyped with a broad association with the appropriate ideologies;⁸⁶ the Casablanca faction loosely favoured relations with Communist states, Monrovia appearing more pro-Western. Mirerekano was repeatedly accused of a nefarious alliance with republican Rwanda, and under legal harassment he returned to a fugitive life, travelling across the country and across the border with Rwanda in a famous Volkswagen, holding clandestine meetings and distributing political tracts amongst the population as he had done during Belgian control. Surveillance of his movements in Ijene commune and his apparent collaboration with the Rwandan government became a key concern for the local administration.⁸⁷

The confusion of politics in the four years that followed the accession to independence involved seven governments and six prime ministers.⁸⁸ Despite Mwambutsa's lauded role as beloved and unifying monarch in popular perception at the end of the *Tutelle*, his judgement in the years that followed was shown to be seriously misguided. Time and again he intervened in the government, attempting to quell the turmoil of the Uprona rivalries but only serving to

⁸⁵ Inside views of the splits within Uprona across the decade are provided by Kiraranganya, *La vérité*; Marc Manirakiza, *La fin de la monarchie burundaise (1962-1966)* (Paris: Le Mât de Misaine, 1990). Manirakiza, a Tutsi, served in the Prime Minister's office from 1962-1965; Kiraranganya served in numerous governmental posts. He self-identified as Tutsi, was of the *Batare* Ganwa by lineage, and was founder of the first 'pro-Hutu' party, *Association des progressistes et démocrates Burundi* (Aprodeba), before he joined Uprona in 1961. Both authors would be considered as belonging to the Monrovia faction, despite their ethnic background.

⁸⁶ See, for example, S. K. B. Asante and David Chanaiwa, "Pan-Africanism and Regional Integration," *General History of Africa* 8 (1993): 724-743.

⁸⁷ See Chapter 4.

⁸⁸ André Muhirwa, 1961-1963; Pierre Ngendandumwe (I), 1963-1964; Albin Nyamoya 1964-1965; Pierre Ngendandumwe (II), 1965; Joseph Bamina, 1965; Léopold Bihumugani, 1965-1966; Colonel Michel Micombero, 1966.

exacerbate them as he chose and dismissed favourites, apparently confirming the suspicions of some Hutu leaders that he was actively seeking to exclude them from power. Mwambutsa began to concentrate more and more power in the hands of his own court. He spent more time in Europe than in Burundi, in 1965 taking up permanent residence in Switzerland. The contradictory picture of a king who was both too distant, uninterested in his country, and too involved, too meddling, may be explained by his own political deafness or by the influence of advisors, but regardless, the monarchy as an institution suffered severely.

The degradation both of party and monarchy was exacerbated by the poisonous atmosphere on the border with the new, militantly republican and pro-Hutu Rwanda. Burundi hosted many thousands of Tutsi refugees from the Republic, some of whom began to form together in militia groups known as '*inyenzi*', 'cockroaches', for their propensity to slip across the border at night.⁸⁹ From 1961 to 1963, numerous bloody strikes were launched from several locations in Uganda and Congo. But as Uganda took steps to close its border and remove the refugees from dangerous locations, attention shifted to Burundi. At the end of 1963, the largest invasion yet struck across the northeast corner of the border from Kirundo province in Burundi, reaching almost to Kigali before it was destroyed. Retaliatory pogroms against Tutsi who had remained in the country exacerbated ethnic tensions throughout the region. Given the notional support for the deposed monarch claimed by the '*inyenzi*' militants, republican Rwanda levelled outraged accusations of collaboration and active support for the rebels at the government of Burundi, and threatened an armed response. Their accusations were not without basis; some prominent politicians among the Casablanca group actively collaborated with the Rwandan exiled opposition leaders and even colluded with the Chinese embassy. But the government at the time was led by the remarkable, Monrovia-supported Prime Minister Pierre Ngendandumwe, and a split between private support for the rebels and institutional

⁸⁹ The term *inyenzi* is today irrevocably associated with hate speech against all Tutsi from its use during the 1994 Rwandan genocide. In the 1960s, however, it applied only to the invading militants, and was in fact used by the militants themselves. It is employed here within its limited terms of historically-appropriate usage, but its later development as a horrific dehumanising slur must be recognised.

restriction on refugee movement was appreciable.⁹⁰ Another attack took place in early 1964 across the western edge of the border, a group of ‘*inyenzi*’ raiders gathering in Congo, crossing to Burundi and striking against Cyangugu in Rwanda, where a Rwandan customs officer and two guards were ‘tortured and put to death . . . at the same time as 30 other people (men, women and children), whose belongings were pillaged and taken away to Burundi.’⁹¹ But once back in Burundi, the returning band were apprehended and expelled from the country back into Congo, the notice of expulsion strikingly forthright in its terminology: ‘Having entered Burundi after massacring the people of the prefecture of Cyangugu without any provocation on the part of the Rwandan population, they cannot be considered as refugees.’⁹²

While pushing for such firm treatment of militant refugees, Ngendandumwe, a Hutu himself, denounced the internal behaviour of the Rwandan state as the actions of genocide against their Tutsi population, and the two countries exchanged angry and threatening words.⁹³ War along the border appeared inevitable, but never quite ignited. Rwanda unilaterally withdrew

⁹⁰ On the ‘*inyenzi*’ militants, their organisation and association with Burundi politicians, see Filip Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit au Rwanda: droit public et évolution politique, 1916–1973* (Tervuren: Koninklijk Museum voor Midden-Afrika/Musée royal de l’Afrique centrale, 1985), pp. 445–470; Filip Reyntjens, “Rencontres burundaises: Inyenzi du Rwanda et rebelles du Kivu,” *Cahiers du CEDAF* 7–8 (1986): 123–137; Rachael Yeld, “Implications of Experience with Refugee Settlement,” *East African Institute of Social Research Conference Paper, Makerere University College* (1965). On the refugee camps in general, see Louise W. Holborn, Philip Chartrand, and Rita Chartrand, *Refugees, a Problem of Our Time: The Work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1951–1972*, 2 (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1975); Nathaniel H. Goetz, “Towards Self Sufficiency and Integration: An Historical Evaluation of Assistance Programmes for Rwandese Refugees in Burundi, 1962–1965,” *New Issues in Refugee Research* 87 (2003): 1–28. Much important material from the UN and involved NGOs are to be found in the Betts Collection, University of Oxford.

⁹¹ Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (Rwanda), *Toute la vérité sur le terrorisme “inyenzi” au Rwanda*, 1964.

⁹² ANB, B 12 (3), Bubiriza Pascal, *Notification d’Indésirabilité*, 14 February 1964. This attack was counted by the Rwandan government as a Burundi-based raid, while the UN Dorsinville Report mistakenly describes the government’s actions preventing the raid, rather than following it (“The United Nations’ Findings on Rwanda and Burundi,” *Africa Report* 9, no. 4 (1964): 7–8).

⁹³ The Rwandan propaganda pamphlet *Toute la vérité* sets out their position passionately, but also includes the text of telegrams and appeals to the UN from both sides. See also Augustin Mariro, *Burundi 1965 : la 1ère crise ethnique* (Paris: Harmattan, 2005).

from an economic union that had been in place since 1962, and the last vestiges of 'Ruanda-Urundi' were dissolved.

The bloody strikes of its exiles on Rwanda were the beginning of a new period of vicious politics within Burundi. Despite, and partly because of, his forthright position on Rwanda, Prime Minister Ngendandumwe faced protests in the streets of Bujumbura by the militant youth wing of Uprona, the *Jeunesse nationale Rwagasore* (JNR), and he resigned in March 1964 to be replaced by the Tutsi, Casablanca-aligned, Albin Nyamoya. The year proceeded in an atmosphere of fear and anxiety, border violence meeting rumours of ethnic conspiracy, during which Paul Mirerekano was convicted in absence of plotting a civil war; he was still in hiding in Rwanda at the time.⁹⁴ However, it was 1965 that saw the gravest disasters of the first Independent years. Nyamoya was dismissed by Mwambutsa in January, and Ngendandumwe appointed Prime Minister once again, but his second term lasted only one week. On 15 January 1965 he was shot dead by a Rwandan Tutsi exile who worked for the American embassy; Nyamoya was among those arrested for conspiracy to murder. He was never tried.

The assassination of Ngendandumwe was perhaps the key that condemned the highest level of politics to destruction, as his own promise was extinguished and the confirmation of violence as the primary means of political advancement exacted, just three years after universal condemnation of Rwagasore's murderers might have established the self-defeating futility of such actions. Mwambutsa's interference in government was destroying his authority among the elite politicians, while some political exiles from Rwanda saw their own sentiments of Tutsi-supremacy rapidly spreading among certain of their hosts. 'Ngendandumwe's assassination was both an act of revenge and an act of solidarity,' wrote Lemarchand; 'an act of revenge against the crown, and the expression of a growing solidarity between the Casablanca elites and the refugee leadership.'⁹⁵ In the hills the continuous political turmoil limited the response to yet another governmental crisis. But those who do recall Ngendandumwe speak of him as

⁹⁴ See Chapter 4.

⁹⁵ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p. 388; cf. Mariro, *Burundi 1965*, a detailed if partisan and hagiographical consideration of Ngendandumwe's assassination and surrounding events.

a true heir of the Prince confirmed in his goodness by the same brutal end.⁹⁶ ‘There was great sorrow in the country, because he was a good man,’ remembers Gahungu François, who credits the Prime Minister with freeing him from imprisonment in Kigali when he was caught there on business during the peak of the ‘*inyenzi*’ crisis; ‘We didn’t know what to do. If we were able to do anything to bring him back we would have done it.’⁹⁷ Ngendandumwe stood, in Gahungu’s eyes, as a leader who cared about his people, who took interest in the poor. But most of Gahungu’s neighbours have little they wish to say about his loss.

Ngendandumwe’s successor, Joseph Bamina, spoke of peace and solidarity to the people, and recalled an old slogan of Uprona that had been common during the struggle for Independence: ‘*Uburundi ntibwegeze bugwa mw’isanganya*’, Burundi has never fallen to disaster.⁹⁸ However, the political crisis would soon serve only to divide the nation further. In an attempt to begin anew on the political plain, Mwambutsa dissolved the parliament created in 1961 and called new elections, an act proclaimed by state media as ‘a brave decision by His Majesty the King of Burundi to attempt to save that which remains to be saved’.⁹⁹ But the process of an election would be traumatic, and there was no better way to accelerate the adoption of the political divisions of the elites among the population. ‘The death of Pierre Ngendandumwe would go on to radicalise the ethnicist ideology,’ reflects Mariro, since ‘the whole electoral campaign and the propaganda distributed secretly after his assassination until the legislative poll of 10 May 1965 would polarise the Burundi population over their ethnic origin.’¹⁰⁰

Uprona took 21 seats in the new parliament, to a reformed PP’s 10; sensationally, Paul

⁹⁶ Nyamuhashi Sabène, interview in Nyanza-Tubiri (Busiga), 20 April 2011

⁹⁷ Gahungu François (pseud.), interview in Nyanza-Tubiri (Busiga), 20 April 2011.

⁹⁸ ANB, BI 6 (220), Joseph Bamina, *Déclaration gouvernementale*, 15 January 1965. The slogan may be found on political tracts from 1960 and 1961 (AAB, BUR 65 (1), Uprona, *Badasigana b’imana n’uburundi*, 12 October 1960; AAB, BUR 66 (4.4), Uprona, *Ukuri kuca*, 27 September 1960; AAB, BUR 65 (1), Uprona, *Ijwi ry’Abadasigana*, n.d.), and was used on placards during demonstrations (AAB, BUR 73 (5), P. Cabri, Letter to AT, 3 February 1960).

⁹⁹ *Infor-Burundi* (Bujumbura), “La Dissolution de la chambre des représentants,” 27 February 1965, pp. 1–8.

¹⁰⁰ Mariro, *Burundi 1965*, p. 171.

Mirerekano was elected as an Uprona candidate in Bujumbura, returning to the country in triumph. But popular dissatisfaction with the political chaos was unmistakable, as only two previous *Députés* were reelected.¹⁰¹ The new saliency of ethnicity became clear, however, when a government of national unity was formed between Hutu in both parties. Mwambutsa rejected this coalition's choice of Prime Minister, Gervais Nyangoma, appointing the Ganwa Léopold Bihumugani, known widely as Biha, in his place. The debacle served only to enflame tensions across the country. In the north, the Governor was rebuked by Biha's office that 'Complaints are mounting on the subject of arrests and harassments against the population of your province. Many confirm that your province has become one vast prison.'¹⁰² In response, the government ordered the 'depoliticisation' of the population; by investing in colonial practices, urging the *banyagihugu* to dedicate all their time to growing food and coffee, it hoped to 'deprecate politics in favour of fruitful labour, a shield against every cause of subversion.'

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Depoliticisation failed. In the borderland it was reported that 'the politics of the moment tend towards regime change. It has been preached to the population of the communes bordering Rwanda that the regime of that country is better than ours, and there is a unique opportunity offered to them.'¹⁰⁴ Rumours were overtaking the fears of the government; 'It has been reported to me,' the Governor of Ngozi said, 'that republican flags will be raised in certain corners of the province. Rumours are circulating that the King has been chased away by the Tutsi and that he will not return.'

The year 1965 ended in a bloodbath, as reciprocal coup attempts failed. Popular, ethnically-aligned violence broke out in response to these attempts in Muramvya province, Hutu attacking Tutsi shortly after certain Hutu army officers led an attack on the royal palace, a partially

¹⁰¹ Nsanze, *Le Burundi contemporain*, p. 106. These were the former Prime Minister Albin Nyamoya and Emile Bucumi, another leading Uprona figure.

¹⁰² ANB, BI 6 (81), Prime Minister, Telegram to Progou, 18 May 1965.

¹⁰³ ANB, BI 6 (95), Bizimana Septime, *La réunion de cadre des fonctionnaires*, 24 May 1965.

¹⁰⁴ ANB, BI 6 (216), Raphaël Biregeya, *La réunion des Gouverneurs*, 4 June 1965.

failed coup attempt.¹⁰⁵ The state responded in brutality. The loyalist army under Captain Micombero crushed the rebels and slaughtered the Hutu population implicated in the Muramvya unrest, sending up to 4,000 in flight across the border to Rwanda.¹⁰⁶ Hutu members of the national assembly, Mirerekano included, were rounded up and shot.¹⁰⁷ Ethnicity was now a mortal issue in Burundi, although it had not yet reached an all-pervasive pertinence; with conflict still primarily expressed in terms of party affiliation, and the Uprona state maintaining its self-delusion in opposition to ‘Rwandan’ ethnic politics, overt observation of the ethnic dimension of Burundi’s own political calamities was still suppressed.

The Republic: Paranoias and Purges

In 1966, all that had been certain about Burundi and about politics for the majority of the population was inverted. Mwambutsa had, essentially, abandoned his country, fleeing to Switzerland following the coup attempts and bloodshed at the end of 1965. In his absence he invested his son Charles Ndizeye with many of his royal responsibilities. The Catholic newspaper *Ndongozi* threw all the people’s desperation on Ndizeye’s shoulders. ‘Prince Charles Ndizeye, Hope of Burundi, Lightens the Hearts of the Barundi’, ran the headline as he toured the country, the front page bearing a composite picture that set Charles alongside his lost brother Rwagasore, beneath the benevolent image of Mwambutsa (Figure 2.2, p. 78).¹⁰⁸

Two months later Ndizeye deposed his father, and *Ndongozi* now celebrated the occasion by devoting the entire front page to his image, surrounded by photographs of his new government; it was a coup in denial, the deposition of Mwambutsa unacknowledged but Ndizeye’s

¹⁰⁵ Gilles Bimazubute, “Le 19 octobre . . . et après?” *Remarques africaines* (1965); Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, pp. 416–419.

¹⁰⁶ Betts Collection, Box 20, Ministère de l’agriculture et de l’élevage (Rwanda), *Projet pour l’installation des réfugiés Barundi au Rwanda*, May 1966.

¹⁰⁷ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, pp. 416–422; Mariro, *Burundi 1965*, pp. 173–194.

¹⁰⁸ *Ndongozi y’Uburundi* (Gitega), “Umuganwa Karoli Ndizeye mizero y’Uburundi, yatamanzuye imishaha y’Abarundi,” 15 April 1966, p. 1.



Figure 2.2: Mwami Mwambutsa (top), Louis Rwagasore (left) and Charles Ndizeye (right), from the front page of *Ndongezi y'Uburundi*, 15 April 1966.

photograph captioned as ‘Prince Charles Ndizeye, Crown Prince of the Kingship¹⁰⁹ of Burundi, agrees to govern Burundi. He will be named Ntare V.’¹¹⁰ Below his image was Captain Michel Micombero, Ndizeye’s new Prime Minister, whom the newspaper reported as ‘Valiant among the valiants, who snatched Burundi from the claws of the raptors.’¹¹¹ The same proverb that had been recited to give courage to Upronistes struggling against the Belgians, and to give heart to the nation following the death of Ngendandumwe, was again set forth: ‘Burundi has never fallen to disaster’.

It was the beginning of the first ‘creeping coup’ of Burundi’s independent history, gradually

¹⁰⁹ *Ingoma*, literally ‘Drum’.

¹¹⁰ *Ndongezi y'Uburundi* (Gitega), “Umuganwa Karoli Ndizeye, Samuragwa w’Ingoma y’Uburundi, yemeye gutegeka Uburundi,” 15 July 1966, p. 1.

¹¹¹ *Ndongezi y'Uburundi* (Gitega), “Umuganwa Karoli, Samuragwa w’Ingoma y’Uburundi abogozza Leta, aha-garika ishingiro ry’amabwirizwa y’ingoma y’Uburundi,” 15 July 1966, p. 4.

eroding opposition to the theft of state.¹¹² The repercussions of the previous year were still unfolding, and the king and Prime Minister engaged in open power struggles. While Micombero was at a summit in Ethiopia during early October, Ntare made a desperate play to declare his Prime Minister's dismissal, but was forcibly prevented from entering the national radio station to make the announcement. Soon enough, the Prime Minister returned the gesture. On 23 November 1966, Ntare was in Kinshasa on a state visit, and Micombero made a radio broadcast of his own. 'Murundi People,' he declared, 'our fatherland has been betrayed, the army dishonoured, Mwambutsa and Ntare have withered our honour and that of our ancestors . . . Dear compatriots! Before this high treason of Ntare V, conscious that the monarchic regime is the cause of all these evils, of nepotism and corruption, loyal to the promise that I have made to you to defend Burundi and its inhabitants, and solely in the highest interest of the Nation, I declare King Ntare V deposed.'¹¹³ The mwami was abolished, but the party stayed on; Uprona was declared the single party of state, its now-embarrassing slogan *Imana, Umwami, Uburundi*, 'God, King and Country', smoothly transformed to *Ubumwe, igikorwa, n'amajambere*, 'Unity, work and progress'.¹¹⁴

The new republican government dismissed all the civilian provincial Governors, and replaced them with military personnel. But as the entire army in 1965 only boasted 37 officers, it was forced to rely on much of the old civilian administration of which it was deeply suspicious.¹¹⁵ The officers' ranks swelled quickly as Micombero gifted meteoric promotions for those

¹¹² The term 'creeping coup' was first applied to the events of 1993 and the assassination of President Ndayaye; see Filip Reyntjens, "The Proof of the Pudding is in the Eating: The June 1993 Elections in Burundi.," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 31, no. 4 (1993): 563–583, p. 582; Filip Reyntjens, *Burundi: Breaking the Cycle of Violence* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1995).

¹¹³ ANB, BI 6 (82), Michel Micombero, *Proclamation du Président*, 28 November 1966.

¹¹⁴ On the coup itself, see René Lemarchand, "Political Instability in Africa: the Case of Rwanda and Burundi," *Civilisations* 16, no. 3 (1966): 307–337; René Lemarchand, "The Passing of Mwamiship in Burundi," *Africa Report* 12, no. 1 (1967): 14–24. On Uprona's peculiar talent for survival, see Cyriaque Sumu, "La permanence du Parti UPRONA au-delà des transformations socio-politiques du Burundi de 1958 à 1993" (Thèse de doctorat en sociologie, Université de Laval, 1998).

¹¹⁵ A full list of the officer corps of the army in 1965 is provided in Nsanze, *Le Burundi contemporain*, p. 27.

that supported his coup. The first years of the Republic saw barely more stability than had the independent monarchy. The new regime feared counter-revolutionary rebels, monarchists, ‘racists’ (implying Hutu-supremacists), and internal opponents desiring a more communist future than the ‘revolutionary’ government actually intended to impart. The party’s youth league, the JNR, in particular was noted as a dragging weight on the morale of the people; its abolition and rebirth as the *Jeunesse révolutionnaire Rwagasore*, the JRR, in February 1967 was intended to revitalise its political fervour for the new orthodoxy, but singularly failed to domesticate a vocal population of radical students.¹¹⁶ Thus with internal support considered deeply unreliable, the new Republic sought to calm eternal tensions with Rwanda. A prolonged diplomatic effort eased relations on the border somewhat, Rwanda welcoming the destruction of the ‘mwamist’ regime to the south but remaining extremely distrustful of the Tutsi hegemony emerging in the new Republic; top-level negotiations succeeded in defusing the threat of war, but tensions in the borderland remained acute.¹¹⁷

Within the government, accusations of coup plots and corresponding purges removed many leading Hutu from positions of power and influence. At the end of 1969 a ‘Hutu plot’ was supposedly uncovered, its alleged leaders swiftly convicted and executed. The ethnic composition of the republican government shifted steadily towards domination not only by Tutsi, but, through endless power struggles and political manoeuvring, by those of a single region. Power concentrated among the *Groupe de Bururi*, key actors from the southern province of Bururi (see maps in Appendix A). Perceived largely to be of the ‘Hima’ subgroup of Tutsi clans of lesser status in the old social hierarchy of the kingdom, the tight circle of power nevertheless included several members of the *Abasapfu* noble clan, who could marry into Ganwa families. The *Groupe de Bururi* was often portrayed as opposing a nebulous assembly of supposedly higher-status Tutsi from the centre and north of the country, the ‘Banyaruguru’,¹¹⁸ who, along

¹¹⁶ On the role of youth, in particular the student body, in the political development of the 1960s, see Henri-Philippe Cart, “Etudiants et construction nationale au Burundi (1962–1969),” *Les cahiers du CEDAF*, no. 2 (1973): 1–93.

¹¹⁷ See Chapter 4.

¹¹⁸ See René Lemarchand and David Martin, *Selective Genocide in Burundi* (London: Minority Rights, 1974),

with Hutu, were frequent targets of the arrests for sedition. Meanwhile, in characteristic displacement, government rhetoric revolved incessantly around the evils of racism, tribalism and regionalism.¹¹⁹

The most sensational case of coup-allegations unfolded in 1970, in what would come to be called the Muramvya Trial. Twenty six key political figures, mostly Tutsi associated with Muramvya province, were charged with engagement in an immense conspiracy and subjected to a prolonged trial of such blatant political theatre and manipulation that even the government Prosecutor closed his case with a demand that the accused be freed, and the prosecution witnesses prosecuted.¹²⁰ Twenty of the accused were nevertheless convicted, nine condemned to death. Many of the sentences were commuted by Micombero, but nevertheless, the purge was a sign of the deep paranoia and instability at the heart of government, and the political atmosphere once more sputtered with gall and fear.

Ikiza, *The Catastrophe*

In 1972 Ntare V, the Republic's exiled bogeyman, returned to the country. The deposed king had met with Idi Amin in Uganda, from where he was flown to Bujumbura and immediately arrested; accounts diverge as to whether Amin had negotiated a safe repatriation that Micombero betrayed, or whether the former mwami was kidnapped and delivered to his ene-

p. 6; Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*"; René Lemarchand et David Martin, *Selective Genocide in Burundi*; Henri-Philippe Cart, "Etudiants et construction nationale au Burundi (1962–1969)," *Cultures et développement* 6, no. 3 (1974): 643–650; René Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 11.

¹¹⁹ For an emblematic example of the official attitude of government towards ethnicity in particular at the time, consider Térance. Nsanze, *L'édification de la République du Burundi au carrefour de l'Afrique*, 15 (Brussels: Éditions remarques africaines, 1970).

¹²⁰ E. Xavier Ugeux, "Parodie judiciaire au Burundi," *Remarques africaines* 393 (1972): 9–14. One of the supposed Muramvya plotters provides his perspective on the farce, along with reproductions of key public documents from the time, in Marc Manirakiza, *De la révolution au régionalisme (Burundi, 1966–1976)* (Paris: Le Mât de Misaine, 1992), pp. 47–107.

mies.¹²¹ Public announcements claimed that Ntare had finally attempted his long-rumoured violent return to power, accompanied by white mercenaries in an imperialist coup.

The following events became known as *Ikiza*, the catastrophe, in Burundi.¹²² The word denotes a total disaster that affects the entire population, used elsewhere of plague and famine. Amidst deep internal strife, particularly regarding the fate of the imprisoned Ntare, Micombero dismissed his government. Soon after, intense violence broke out in Bururi province, the homeland of the notorious *Groupe*, with a bloody Hutu uprising that systematically slaughtered Tutsi officials and many civilians. The government claimed that it was an invasion of militants from Congo, in concert with internal dissidents agitating in support of the mwami, who had stockpiled machetes in anticipation of genocide. As Lemarchand notes, many of these claims are distinctly problematic.¹²³ Witness accounts are nevertheless entirely consistent on the Congolese motifs of the violence, the attackers appearing drugged and shouting ‘*Mai Mulele*’, the slogan of the 1964 Congolese rebellion of Pierre Mulele that was associated with magical invulnerability to bullets.¹²⁴ Amid spurious claims that a simultaneous attack in Gitega at-

¹²¹ Jean-Pierre Chrétien and Jean-François Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972, au bord des génocides* (Paris: Karthala, 2007), pp. 75–80.

¹²² *ibid.* See also contemporary analyses, e.g., Lemarchand and Martin, *Selective Genocide*; Warren Weinstein, “Conflict and Confrontation in Central Africa: the Revolt in Burundi, 1972,” *Africa Today* 19, no. 4 (1972): 17–39; Warren Weinstein and Robert A. Schrire, *Political Conflict and Ethnic Strategies: A Case Study of Burundi*, (23) (Syracuse, NY: Maxwell School of Citizenship / Public Affairs, Syracuse University, 1976); Jeremy Greenland, “A propos des droits de l’homme au Burundi,” *Revue française d’études politiques africaines* 11, no. 128 (1976): 65–79; Chrétien also wrote at the time under pseudonyms, Bernard Aupens, “Burundi: le massacre érigé en politique,” *Revue française d’études politiques africaines* (1972): 1–3; Bernard Aupens, “L’engrenage de la violence au Burundi,” *Revue française d’études politiques africaines* 91 (1973): 48–69; Romain Forscher, “Les massacres du Burundi, le “tribalisme” en Afrique Noire,” *Esprit* 7–8 (1972): 123–131. Further accounts are discussed in Chapter 6.

¹²³ Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict*, pp. 90–95. On the question of the uprising as a proto-genocide against Tutsi, see Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, pp. 108–121, and the response in René Lemarchand, “Burundi 1972: Genocide Denied, Revised, and Remembered,” in *Forgotten Genocides: Oblivion, Denial, and Memory*, ed. René Lemarchand (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), pp. 45–47.

¹²⁴ For example, NB, “Témoignages,” April 2012, p. 8, and other accounts in the same issue. On the Mulele

tempted to liberate the former king, Ntare himself was instantly executed, shot in the night of 29 April.

There are numerous suggestions that the state had been aware that the violence was coming, but allowed it to happen.¹²⁵ The demonstration of mortal threat to the Republic and to Tutsi in general may have been more useful to some in power than the constant rhetoric of unity. But whether anticipated or not, the response to the rebellion was absolute. The rebel slaughter in the south was suppressed swiftly and violently.¹²⁶ With support from Mobutu, who provided paratroopers to secure Bujumbura airport so that the Burundi army was free to throw all its force against the enemy, the government crushed the rebellion in short order. But the deployment of the technical might of the national army then continued against perceived rebels rather than actual ones; from a genuine context of warfare the repression proceeded into an artificial policing operation that carried all the violence of the initial conflict, manifested through different means. Hutu elites that had survived the purges of the previous years were arrested and disappeared, the army in particular rapidly rendered monoethnic. Reprisals in Bururi were accompanied by arrests and violence in Gitega and Bujumbura, where it was claimed that tiny offshoots of the monarchist rebellion had attempted to seize power. After a week of such purges, President Micombero, who was almost entirely absent from public view throughout the crisis, announced that the rebels had been defeated, but in the same voice called for the party faithful to advance to new victories.¹²⁷ The repression spread out across the country, and changed from the extraction of indicted individuals, charged by politicised courts, to general round-ups, victims taken twenty at a time and killed out of sight.

This phase, which lasted somewhere between two to five months, was diagnosed by the US diplomatic mission at the time as a ‘selective genocide’, a phrase analysed and endorsed rebellion, otherwise unconnected to Burundi, see Benoît. Verhaegen, *Rébellions au Congo*, 2 vols. (Brussels: Centre de recherche et d’information socio-politiques, 1966), pp. 35–186.

¹²⁵ For example, Christian Bigirimana and Fabrice Manirakiza, “Rumonge, le 29 avril 1972: “J’avais eu des informations sur les préparatifs de l’attaque”,” April 2012, 5–6.

¹²⁶ See Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, pp. 139–288, for the chronology of the repression.

¹²⁷ Michel Micombero, “Message à la Nation,” 9 May 1972, pp. 1–3.

by Lemarchand;¹²⁸ no attempt was made to wipe out all Hutu, an impossible task given their majority status, but a pattern was quickly identified in which all Hutu elites, potential elites and relative elites were liquified. ‘Selective genocide’ is a legal oxymoron, the nature of genocide as a crime against humanity precluding the possibility of the selection of victims from within the targeted group,¹²⁹ but the term remains a necessary and powerful tool of description to convey both the process and the scale of the violence. Remaining national leaders were eliminated, but the massacres then moved onto schools and the university, identifying literate Hutu, teachers, or Hutu children learning to read, as targets. Ultimately, illiterate Hutu who appeared from their business success or any marginal luxury to be relatively more prominent than others were included in the target list.

The northern border region, though distant and unconnected to the uprising in the south, suffered some of the most devastating violence outside of Bururi, and many thousands fled the country to take up residence, either briefly or for many decades, as refugees in Rwanda and Tanzania.¹³⁰ While as in any such situation the numbers of the dead are unknown and estimates vary wildly, a calculation of the literal decimation of the male Hutu population, along with many female victims, is not unlikely.¹³¹ In July President Micombero seemed to wish to draw a close to the violence, appointing a new cabinet that did not include the most fanatical Tutsi-supremacists of the *Groupe de Bururi*; it was headed by Albin Nyamoya,

¹²⁸ Lemarchand and Martin, *Selective Genocide*. International objection to the violence was appallingly muted. See Michael Bowen, Gary Freeman, and Kay Miller, *Passing By: the United States and Genocide in Burundi, 1972*, 12(13) (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Washington DC, 1973); Sophie Pontzele, “Burundi 1972/Rwanda 1994: l’“efficacité” dramatique d’une reconstruction idéologique du passé par la presse” (Thèse de doctorat en sociologie, Université de Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2004).

¹²⁹ cf. related discussions more recently with regards to the Darfur violence of 2003–2010, especially Mahmood Mamdani, “The Politics of Naming: Genocide, Civil War, Insurgency,” *The London Review of Books* 29, no. 5 (2007): 5–8.

¹³⁰ The refugee population in Tanzania has been the subject of much excellent work, especially Liisa H. Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

¹³¹ Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 282.

the former Prime Minister once implicated in the assassination of Pierre Ngendandumwe in 1965. But despite the rhetoric of reconciliation, arrests and mass murder continued for several further months. The country did not ‘emerge’ from the violence, as the cliché would have it; rather politics settled into a new mode of oppression and terror, only the acuity of the violence eventually receding. *Ikiza* remains the most agonising moment of Burundi’s history, its repercussions still to subside.

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It is within this narrative of national politics that the following discussions take place. From the political possibility and contest at the end of colonial rule, to extreme violence and the confirmation of an ethnic, military dictatorship, the thesis spans a decade of transformation. The border was reinstated in legal recognition, for years marked the confrontation between a Hutu Republic in Rwanda and an outwardly anti-ethnic monarchy in Burundi, saw violence as armed bands crossed from one country to the other, and finally provided refuge and respite for the borderlanders who escaped the state’s genocidal repression. The border was in the centre of many political developments and crises across these years, the edge of the emergence of Burundi as a newly-Independent nation.

However, the history of the nation and the history of the border do not always coincide so closely. There were moments in this national story when events in the northern borderland dominated, defined or exemplified the politics of the time; there were moments that, while transformative for the country at large, went scarcely remarked or remembered along the border. As we move on to focus attention on the experience of the borderland, the former incidents are analysed in close detail, the latter passed by with little further discussion. This is the framework of context. The disjoints between the national narrative and the border history are problematic and productive areas of tension, but must be set aside while the extraordinary richness of detail offered by the microhistorical perspective is explored to the full. The dislocations between the histories that can be told across this time will be the final question to be considered, once the border itself has had its say on the stories, personalities and crises

that defined the decade. Now, however, we may move towards the borderland, and explore the encounter between people and state it permitted in episodes of contest and cooperation across this time of trauma and transformation. Beginning in the kindling of political activity at the end of the brief colonial episode, a time of the most open and widespread debate on the form and nature of the state and the nation, it is in dissent against the local authorities and established structures of power that we find our point of departure.

Dissent: The Rebel Triangle

In the last two years of Belgian rule, the northern regions that would become the communes of Kabarore and Busiga played host to the most significant anti-colonial agitations seen in the entire country. Within the opportunities and closures of decolonisation, dissent against old and new authorities was expressed in an ascending tone that ran the full course of Beinart and Bundy's 'declension' of civil unrest, from 'disaffection, disturbance, unrest and rebellion, to insurrection and revolution'.¹ By the end, dissent in the borderland required a colossal military operation to quell. Only Deslaurier has previously recognised the significance of this episode, christening the border communes the 'Rebel Triangle' of Burundi; the summary in her thesis was the first history to accord it the recognition it deserves on the national scene.² But the present microhistory requires closer attention to the development and spread of political conflict through the community. In the intimate dynamics of political confrontation, personal expression and communal crisis, rich strains of analysis are permitted into the intense struggle over the nature and possession of authority in the borderland, the means and content of political communication between and within society and state, and the nature of new manifestations of violence that emerged as Burundi contemplated Independence. The expression of dissent opens the first window into the political dynamism and conundrums of the border

¹ William Beinart and Colin Bundy, "State Intervention and Rural Resistance: the Transkei, 1900–1965," in *Peasants in Africa: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Martin Klein (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1980), 271–316, p. 272.

² Deslaurier, "Un monde politique," pp. 1021–1031.

community.

The story is one of gradual rebellion, as elements in the community of *banyagihugu* first began to question the authority of Baranyanka and the local colonial order of indirect rule, and then sought to replace it entirely. The opposition of two, mutually-exclusive hierarchies of authority lies at the heart of the story, the Upronistes presenting their own party cosmology and structure as the rightful basis of society, standing against the system of chiefs and *sous-chefs*, and their administrative replacements that the Belgian *Tutelle* imposed at the end of 1960. The chapter therefore begins with something of a prologue, a necessary exploration of the experience of power and perception of authority in the latter years of indirect rule in which the contestation of decolonisation grew. From this beginning, the subsequent narrative is split between the years 1960 and 1961, civil disobedience in the former set against violent rebellion in the latter. In between, the individuals most deeply involved in this conflict are given particular attention, their divisions of party and personal affiliation, their particular individual backgrounds, circumstances and relationship with the community all necessary to understand the reticulation of a population vacillating between citizen and subject, and powerful authorities torn between repression, support and disownment. The perspectives on political authority in this conflict, and the particular forms of protest and violence enacted to bring them into being finally reveal fundamental conceptions of society, state and the borderland itself that took root as the country moved rapidly towards Independence.

3.1 Prologue: Authority and Subjecthood

Ever since 1920, the borderland had rested in the hands of the most illustrious and powerful chief in the nation, the great Pierre Baranyanka. Sent to pacify the region following Kirima's turbulent rule, Baranyanka was the archetypal 'decentralised despot',³ 'something of an institution all by himself',⁴ and expected unquestioning submission from his people. They

³ Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, pp. 37–61.

⁴ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p. 314.

were the bottom of a hierarchy. ‘Authority . . . was structurally given’, in Laely’s words,⁵ and the *banyagihugu* were expected to acknowledge ‘authority’ as a matter of unchallenged, legitimate power in the hands of their superiors, an innate function of their social standing. The *banyagihugu* were subjects to authority, and lacked the claim of citizenship to moderate or engage with it.

The public meeting was the crucial act of self-presentation of a leader to his people, intense displays of untouchable superiority and popular submission. These meetings were first and foremost work orders, manifested either directly through Baranyanka’s own declamation or through the intermediary of his delegate *sous-chefs*, and constituted commands to cultivate coffee, work on the roads, plant trees or construct buildings. ‘*Igikorwa na discipline*’, explained Ngerenranya David, an old man from the west of Kabarore who had worked without pay as a child for the local *sous-chef*: the meetings were all about work and discipline.⁶ This amounted to forced labour, whether the *banyagihugu* were ordered to cultivate their own coffee or work in Baranyanka’s vast plantations. The use of force was not concealed or implied, but openly executed; dried grass was to be spread on the soil beneath the coffee trees to prevent other plants growing in their shade and sapping nutrients, and the *chicote*, the hippopotamus-nerve whip made notorious by its early use in Congo,⁷ was deployed to discipline farmers who neglected this duty or even attempted to grow their own food beneath the eaves of the coffee plants. For the *banyagihugu* such disobedience was a result of the imperative, ‘*manger*

⁵ Thomas Laely, “Peasants, Local Communities, and Central Power in Burundi,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 35, no. 4 (1997): 695–716, p. 700.

⁶ Ngerenranya Daniel, interview in Munege (Kabarore), 14 March 2011.

⁷ Archetypically described in Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (London: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), but see also more nuanced considerations in Marie-Bénédicte Dembour, “La chicote comme symbole du colonialisme belge?” *Canadian Journal of African Studies/Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 26, no. 2 (1992): 205–225; Aldwin Roes, “Towards a History of Mass Violence in the Etat Indépendant du Congo, 1885–1908,” *South African Historical Journal* 62, no. 4 (2010): 634–670; cf. Bogumil Jewsiewicki, “African Peasants in the Totalitarian Colonial Society of the Belgian Congo,” in *Peasants in Africa: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1980), 45–76.

d'abord: first of all, eat.⁸ For the colonial order, the absence of hay beneath the coffee trees was an act of 'rebelliousness', and demanded corporal punishment to ensure submission.⁹

Attendance at the meetings themselves was enforced in a similar manner, even late arrival punished with the whip.¹⁰ When asked what he remembered of Baranyanka, a man named Majombora raised his wrist to his mouth, looked to the side and muttered, wryly, 'Eh, eh.' The beatings were the first thing that came to mind. The standard punishment, he recounted after a pause, was five whips to each palm; if you flinched and clenched your fingers, the whips continued on your knuckles. Alternatively, an undisciplined *munyagihugu* would be made to lie down on the ground and receive five strikes to each buttock, or forced to sit in a contorted position on their own feet.¹¹ Both the violence and its precision carried an 'educative virtue', an emphatic expression not only of the power that was to be acknowledged, but the hybrid colonial order into which one was to conform.¹²

The meetings, therefore, displayed Baranyanka's dominance by violence; if this was authority, it was in contravention to Arendt's consideration that 'where force is used, authority itself has failed'.¹³ Nor was it limited to the *banyagihugu*. Havyarimana Marie, a daughter of one of Baranyanka's *bahamagazi* ('town criers', 'messengers'), recalls her father being called away to the chief's palace to receive a dozen lashes for an anonymous transgression,¹⁴ while in day-to-day dealings the *sous-chef* Harushumwami recalled that 'With or without the

⁸ Hatungimana, *Le café au Burundi*, pp. 28–33.

⁹ Ghislain, *Souvenirs*, p. 51.

¹⁰ Ntimbonero Déo, interview in Caga (Busiga), 2 March 2011; Niyongabo Côme (pseud.), interview in Karama (Kabarore), 8 March 2011.

¹¹ Majombora, interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 18 April 2011. Colonial law officially limited the permissible strikes to four in 1951, and abolished the punishment entirely in 1959 (Dembour, "La chicote," p. 207).

¹² Florence Bernault, "The Shadow of Rule: Colonial Power and Modern Punishment in Africa," in *Cultures of Confinement: A Global History of the Prison in Asia, Africa, the Middle-East and Latin America*, ed. Frank Dikötter (London: Hurst, 2007), 55–94, p. 82.

¹³ Hannah Arendt, "What is Authority?" In *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (London: Penguin, 2006 [1961]), 91–141, p. 92.

¹⁴ Havyarimana Marie (pseud.), interview in Ngoma (Kabarore), 10 March 2011.

chicote, Baranyanka was always terrible. He struck everyone.¹⁵ As Ndayiziga wryly notes, ‘Baranyanka was not a friend of the people.’¹⁶ One of his most striking idiosyncrasies was the handkerchief he always carried, pressed up to his nose; whether at mass or at a meeting, the people had no doubt that he could not stand the smell of them.¹⁷ Ndayiziga records a more charitable explanation; Baranyanka was asthmatic, and kept the handkerchief ‘to protect himself from a harmful current of air, or to serve as a spittoon as necessary’.¹⁸ People came to their own conclusions, however.

This affected distance brings us to a more complex matter of authority in the borderland. Violence was not Baranyanka’s only claim to power. That he was not, in fact, the apex of authority was remarkably an essential aspect of his expression of rule. While he would often be perceived as a rival to the mwami, he was careful to present himself, to a limited extent, as Mwambutsa’s loyal subject, his delegate of power; he claimed to derive his authority from above, as much as he enforced it on those below him. This was an ambiguous deference. In one grand assembly, for example, the ‘Lord of Kayanza’¹⁹ celebrated his jubilee, fifty years as a chief of Burundi, with *banyagihugu* and Belgians alike in attendance. He received the submission of his subjects, but also spoke archly of his faithfulness to the mwami. He claimed that he had rented out his Kayanza home for Mwambutsa’s wedding, and played host to the birth of Rwagasore; he could be both loyal servant and powerful, paternal figure of influence, both before and behind the throne.²⁰ He humbly deferred his power to that of the mwami, ‘master of the soil’ as he named him. But this was an ambiguous deference; it came as he distributed 200 hectares of his own land to his *abagererwa*, his dependent tenants, and publicly expected that Mwambutsa would abolish this system of clientage. ‘I believe that people ought

¹⁵ Interviewed in Ndayiziga, “Baranyanka,” p. 38.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 47.

¹⁷ Havyarimana Marie (pseud.), interview in Ngoma (Kabarore), 10 March 2011; Niyongabo Côme (pseud.), interview in Karama (Kabarore), 8 March 2011.

¹⁸ Ndayiziga, “Baranyanka,” p. 47.

¹⁹ Ghislain, *Souvenirs*, p. 14.

²⁰ AAB, BUR 79 (8), Draft report on Baranyanka’s Jubilee celebrations, n.d. (1960).



Figure 3.1: Baranyanka receives one of his subjects. Vice Governor General Jean-Paul Harroy sits behind, and *Administrateur de Territoire Assistant Principal* Valère Vandembulcke stands at the edge of the picture. Undated, possibly taken at Baranyanka's Jubilee in June 1960. From Vandembulcke's Collection.

to live before beasts,' he announced. 'Each man ought to be the master of his property.' This was not a meeting called to demand work and service, but to give favours and claim the right to rule through the abrogation of innate authority. Here again, the invocation of the mwami as his own lord and master was a barbed submission; Baranyanka led the way in caring for the people, and publicly expected Mwambutsa to follow. He firmly placed himself within a hierarchy of authority, submitted his right to rule to the gift of his monarch, yet used this position simultaneously to obscure the power of the sovereign and strengthen his own authority before the subject *banyagihugu*. Even as he 'liberated' his tenants, he received their submission.

This curious manipulation of authority as hierarchy requires some consideration. Power

unseen is potentially amplified; the idea of a superior power beyond the immediate presence of the leader suggests that any limits the audience might see to his own power are compensated by that of the higher sovereign. Authority entails legitimacy; knowledge of a superior authority defers the question of that legitimacy, indicates that the legitimacy of the speaker is based in the authority of the greater sovereign who has placed them there, and therefore not open to the question or challenge of the local people. Baranyanka's personal mythology and activity came close to claiming a supreme right to rule, yet he attempted to maintain a shaky image of the greater authority that he served. He acknowledged his submission to the mwami while seeking to place his own greatness to the forefront. If not entirely an eclipse of the higher power, he sought a corona effect from it; he stood before the sovereign in the eyes of the people, and with the light of the ruler shining around his silhouette it was his shadow that would fall across their faces.

There was thus a coherent conception of authority and power that required a higher sovereign to function, yet one that was obscured. With the relationship with the people uncertain, reliance on a superior to imbue the legitimacy of authority was a valuable tool. Similarly, a leader could not claim to act solely from his own power, which was the matter on display and therefore visibly limited, however great it may be; the suggestion of a higher power supported his own with unlimited implications. But while that supreme power, and ultimate authority, was invoked, it had also to be pushed away, a distant sovereign whose power may be greater yet whose significance was inversely proportionate to that of the leader standing before the people. Presence was vital. The people must not be able to reach the sovereign, who could thus remain under the symbolic control of his delegate. The meetings were a re-establishment of present authority, the immediate power of delegation the population were urged, or even forced, to recognise.

This was in part an aspect of continuity from the pre-colonial monarchic order, in which the sacral kingship received universal submission while the attendant Ganwa and other chiefs exercised considerable freedom in their own communities, provided the deference to the sovereign

was maintained.²¹ In a modern context, Turner has attempted to meld such mystical heritage to prosaic politics, exploring the supremacy of secrecy in conceptions of power among the Barundi today. The sovereign in modern political systems, he suggests, and in the perceptions of the Barundi especially, is defined by an unknown: ‘secrecy - located at the summit of forces - becomes the irreducible element of political ontology. Without secrecy we cannot assume the sovereign just as power could not maintain the illusion of its sovereignty without the supplement of the secret.’²² Authority, Turner concludes, requires the popular belief that there is more to power than is revealed, since what is revealed suggests that the leader is a man like any other; conspiracy theories are necessary for power to be maintained. While such a conception manifests itself in conspiracy theories today, it may be linked to the function of the *banyamabanga*, the ‘people of secrets’ under the old monarchy, who guarded ‘the rules on which the life of the State was founded’;²³ the mwami ruled through the popular knowledge that there were transcendent secrets to his power.

In the dynamics of the meetings on the border in the 1960s, however, we find only limited revelation, not attempted secrecy. Partial concealment of the higher authority was attempted, not the maintenance of a secret to power. Mwambutsa as the known sovereign was specifically invoked, but kept distant; this was the necessary action of the middle ranks of hierarchy, performed on the edge of the state and not in its centre or at its summit. Knowledge of a sovereign in this intermediate stage of hierarchy assumed the role Turner assigns to secrecy, the suggestion of greater power backing the leader than that which was evident. Authority on the local level derived from being known as an element in a hierarchy, and not from claiming to be at its summit.

For the function of authority in the local edge of politics, however, even more than the knowledge of a higher sovereign, the hierarchy had to extend below the local leader just as it reached above him. Power as performed in the public meetings required a subordinate over

²¹ See above, p. 13.

²² Simon Turner, ““The Tutsi are Afraid we will Discover their Secrets”: On Secrecy and Sovereign Power in Burundi,” *Social Identities* 11, no. 1 (2005): 37–54 p. 38.

²³ Mworoha, *Peuples et rois*, p. 150.

whom to reach in order to speak to the people. Baranyanka, therefore, exerted his power over and through his *sous-chefs*, who were often despised for their exaction of his policies where he himself could remain above the reaches of discontent in the eyes of many. Authority derived from above, but was substantiated by a rung of command in the hierarchy below that he could bully and deploy as the abused hard edge of his power. Distance was necessary to permit the leader to act the friend.

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One story recounted in Rohororo *colline*, during the pouring rain in eastern Ijene, provides an expressive image of Baranyanka and his power in the land, the way he was seen before the crisis of Independence saw his downfall. When he first arrived in the north (from where the people did not know), Baranyanka planted his spear in the ground so that it stood upright in the soil. He placed his coat and his hat on the spear, and declared that he now possessed the land; people gathered to wonder at the spear erect in the earth. It was then that the hatred between Baranyanka and Mwambutsa began, and Baranyanka despised the latter rather as a rival than a lord; he would speak in disparagement of how he himself had nine children, but the mwami only two.²⁴

The story conveys intricate significance. The planting of the spear invokes the moral, judicial authority of the *bashingantahe*, whose name signifies ‘those who plant the rod’ for the symbol of office (*intake*, ‘stick’) placed in the ground when they passed judgement in arbitration.²⁵ But in its aggression and the use of the spear, *icumu*, this was a matter of political power expressed through sexual rivalry; when a man slept with another man’s wife, it was explained to me, he would leave his spear planted in the ground outside the woman’s house, to let the world know that he had taken her from her husband. Baranyanka’s ritual of power was thus a matter of possession, of conquest even if he had deployed no military strength to take control of his *chefferie*. A call to work at his command was the routine

²⁴ Musavyi Daniel (pseud.), interview in Ruhororo (Kabarore), 27 April 2011.

²⁵ Mworoha, *Peuples et rois*, p. 170.

confirmation of his ownership of power.

The distance, violence and arrogance of Baranyanka's rule was not entirely fatal to authority. Some *banyagihugu* even today, long after Baranyanka's prestige was destroyed by the cataclysm at Independence, remark that the people had to 'like' (*gukunda*) Baranyanka 'because it was he who governed, he was a *muganwa*',²⁶ or 'because he was a *mutware*',²⁷ each term designating the authority of position, even if 'he governed badly'.²⁸ Attributing to Baranyanka the new way of life built around the relative prosperity of coffee, as well as the establishment of a peace that would not be seen again in the years that followed, Ngerenranya of the Kabarore midlands enthused, 'It was Baranyanka who did everything, who gave us discipline - even today I love Baranyanka!' Of course, he mentioned with slight amusement, 'Anyone who didn't love Baranyanka got beaten...'²⁹

But submission was not an unequivocal recognition of just authority. While some recognise their respect, even love for the rewards of Baranyanka's despotism, for others obedience and supplication were simply the necessary responses, the performance required of the audience at a theatre of power. The behaviour of the subject was a conscious act, a 'tactic', in de Certeau's terms, for managing the life of the powerless in the terrain commanded by another, finding the cracks that might open for new opportunities of expression.³⁰ '*Umwansi utagira aho umuhungira uramusaba*,' explained Ntiruvakure Sévérin of Gahini, near Mparamirundi: you submit to the enemy you cannot flee.³¹

As the political world shifted at the end of the 1950s, a new choice began tentatively to emerge. Rather than submission or flight, a new claim to authority came into view that permitted open dissent against Baranyanka's rule. The *banyagihugu* had submitted to Baran-

²⁶ Mbazumutima Thérèse (pseud.), interview in Ryamukona (Kabarore), 9 March 2011.

²⁷ Barakamanye Paul, interview in Bitambwe (Busiga), 2 March 2011.

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ Ngerenranya Daniel, interview in Munega (Kabarore), 14 March 2011.

³⁰ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 36–39.

³¹ Ntiruvakure Sévérin, interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 21 April 2011.

yanka's forced authority for decades; they now found that authority was within their gift, and as they had confirmed it through obedience before him in his public meetings and work orders, so too could they revoke it. They turned the hierarchy of authority against their chief, and expressed dissent against him in the name of the higher power he sought partially to exclude.

3.2 Civil Disobedience

March - May 1960: Loyalty and Dissent

That the central northern border of Burundi would be the most fractious at Independence was inevitable. Here the dangers of overspill from the Rwandan civil war were witnessed early, and with feeling. As thousands of refugees began to move across the border into Busiga, Mparamirundi and further into the interior, some staying with local Burundi families,³² they brought with them the strains of violence that they fled. In the first week of the Revolution, a leader of the Rwandan pro-Hutu Aprosoma (*Association pour la promotion sociale de la masse*) party named Kanyaruka was brutally murdered by Rwandan Tutsi commandos on the soil of Burundi, as he took refuge in Ngozi; the murderers were said to be descendants of the *Abahevyi*, the border guards of the pre-colonial kingdom.³³ Considered 'the most odious of all' the early crimes of the Rwandan war, Kanyaruka and his companion were hacked 114 times with spears and machetes while bound on the floor. The brutal murders caused great alarm in the borderland.³⁴ By night the huts burning in Rwanda could be seen from Burundi, and new flows of refugees anticipated before they arrived.³⁵

³² Ntiruvakure Sévérin, interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 21 April 2011; Ndakoze Pierre (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 27 April 2011; *et al.*; cf. Holborn, Chartrand, and Chartrand, *Refugees*, pp. 1120–1122, although their specification of Tutsi alone as hosts is misleading.

³³ Hubert, *La Toussaint rwandaise*, p. 37, 84–85, 131–132; on the *Abahevyi*, cf. Warren Weinstein, "Military Continuities in the Rwanda state," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 12, nos. 1–2 (1977): 48–66.

³⁴ AAB, BUR 74 (5), *Chronologie Politique 1959, 1960*.

³⁵ ANB, B 8 (1), Libakare Ildephonse, letter to *Administrateur de Territoire* (AT), 14 April 1960; ANB, B 8 (1), Libakare Ildephonse, letter to AT, 14 April 1960 ANB, B 8 (1), Libakare Ildephonse, letter to AT, 22 April 1960.

However, it was the internal divide that made the borderland the most susceptible to confrontation. Rwagasore's own *chefferie* was shortly to the south, and the family of his wife, Marie-Rose Ntamikeyo, lived in Rukecu, within Baranyanka's territory near the border. Rumours abounded that subjects were obligated to vote for their chief, and many chiefs enthusiastically encouraged this belief. Marking the border between a warring Rwanda and a tense Burundi, and a major front line between Baranyanka's PDC and Rwagasore's Uprona, the communes of Busiga and Mparamirundi were at the heart of the conflicts that would shape both nations. As a partisan local administrator, attempting to explain the subsequent crisis, later described,

'These troubles derive from rumours launched a long time ago in the frontier regions. We have on the side of Burundi the political parties Uprona, PDC, Upruhutu,³⁶ PP, and on the other side Parmehutu,³⁷ Aprosona, Unar³⁸ ... a camaraderie reigns between the inhabitants of our border and those on the side of Rwanda.'³⁹

This was the verdict of hindsight, and the excuse of an implicated agent, as shall be seen. But it is a necessary premise for the explosion of dissent, fed by both external and internal tensions, that would herald Independence in the northern borderland of Burundi.

*

* *

Uprona made the first move. Rwagasore's party approached a handful of notable local men in Mihigo, within later Busiga commune, with a proposition. The choice of location was no accident; the family of Rwagasore's wife lived nearby. The men were approached as potential leaders, and invited to a personal meeting of the party. One, Ntigacika, was a mason, another a merchant, but three, including a man named Bucumi Côme whose career would personify

³⁶ *Union pour la promotion des Hutu*, an early Populist party.

³⁷ *Parti du mouvement d'émancipation Hutu*, which emerged victorious from the confusion of the civil war.

³⁸ *Union nationale rwandaise*, the leading royalist, pro-Tutsi party.

³⁹ AAB, BUR 74 (4), Jean Ntawe, *Rapport Administratif*, 31 May 1961.



Figure 3.2: Key locations in the 1960–1961 political contest.

the political experience of the decade, were teachers. Education was the hallmark of the new politicians, the *banyagihugu* considering that the new ‘*temps politique*’⁴⁰ was initiated when Rwagasore, along with Baranyanka’s sons Biroli and Ntidendereza, returned from university abroad ‘with new minds’.⁴¹ They set about forming a new political class, and the men selected in Mihigo were wooed assiduously. ‘It appears,’ the Belgian administrators later stated, ‘that before attending the aforementioned meeting, the individuals concerned were neither members, nor even sympathisers of Uprona.’⁴² Their attendance attracted immediate attention, and although they had not initially committed to Uprona, they found themselves subject to severe intimidation from members of the PDC, known colloquially as *Pédécistes*, loyal to Baranyanka back home. ‘In a spirit of opposition, the men affiliated themselves to Uprona, and broke into active propaganda in [its] favour.’⁴³

⁴⁰ Rwageze Pierre, interview in Mihigo (Busiga), 23 February 2011.

⁴¹ Ntiruvakure Séverin, interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 21 April 2011; Nduhiye Marcus, interview in Kibuba (Kabarore), 30 November 2010, *et al.*

⁴² AAB, BUR 73 (5), *Les incidents de la région Rukecu-Busiga-Mihigo*, 4 May 1960.

⁴³ *ibid.*

In the first half of 1960 confrontations between Uprona and PDC supporters were frequent, but the cases pursued by the police were mostly dropped after the intervention of Baranyanka or Rwagasore.⁴⁴ Numerous Pédécistes defected to Rwagasore's party, apparently convinced by the rumours and accusations that Baranyanka's organisation was opposed to the mwami.⁴⁵ Rwagasore made speeches declaring that Baranyanka was another Kirima, inheriting his predecessor's rebellion as he inherited his territory, and called for resistance to the 'Pédéciste repression'; Baranyanka announced that Rwagasore was a thief who had been disowned by his father, and the two laid legal charges of slander against each other.⁴⁶ The mockery of children reinforced the party propaganda, as van-loads of Pédécistes were assailed with insults from groups of schoolchildren, who labelled them as *ibisuka*, signifying both 'ogres' and 'usurpers', 'invaders'.⁴⁷ 'After that day,' found the *Territorial Vandenbulcke's* inquiry, 'the attitude of Chief Baranyanka hardened considerably.'⁴⁸

The swell of rumours proved both a symptom and cause of growing adherence to Uprona in the region. As Deslaurier argues, 'rumours permit the understanding of the political history of Burundi,' their content, form and response proving deeply revelatory of public debate.⁴⁹ But whereas she illustrates this remarkable potential with a rumour of the extraordinary and supernatural, reminiscent of White's work on vampire stories in eastern Africa,⁵⁰ describing

⁴⁴ AAB, BUR 74 (4), *BI 47*, (Kitega), 19 April 1960.

⁴⁵ AAB, BUR 73 (5), *Les incidents de la région Rukecu-Busiga-Mihigo*, 4 May 1960.

⁴⁶ Deslaurier, "Un monde politique," p. 888.

⁴⁷ Francis M. Rodegem, *Dictionnaire rundi-français*, Menselijke Wetenschappen/Sciences Humaines 69 (Teruren: Koninklijk Museum voor Midden-Afrika/Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 1970), s.v. *igisuka*.

⁴⁸ AAB, BUR 73 (5), *Les incidents de la région Rukecu-Busiga-Mihigo*, 4 May 1960.

⁴⁹ Christine Deslaurier, "La rumeur du cachet au Burundi (1960–1961): essai d'interprétation d'une conversation nationale sur le politique," *Cahiers d'études africaines* 45, no. 178 (2005): 545–572, p. 546.

⁵⁰ Luise White, "Telling More: Lies, Secrets, and History," *History and Theory* 39, no. 4 (2000): 11–22. White's *bachinjachinja* vampires were equally rumoured in Burundi, Chief Libakare compiling a report for the Belgians to explain that '*bachinjachinja* cannibals', who 'do not exist, at least according to my current knowledge', were to be contrasted to '*bachinjachinja* assassins and murderers', who 'do exist, among the Blacks' (AAB, BUR 75 (2), Libakare Ildephonse, Letter to AT, 18 June 1951; cf. AAB, BUR 73 (6), A. Soubry, *Etat d'esprit des populations indigènes (Ruyigi)*, 1933).

the belief that a seal placed on a Murundi's voting card marked him or her out for elimination, the substance of rumour was frequently far more prosaic in form. It was a case of reported news, or 'improvised news' as Shibutani puts it,⁵¹ an exchange of knowledge of events that entailed a constant dialogue of consideration, commentary and debate. Word passed around that the Uprona national committee was going to visit the area, and people began to gather together in the belief that '*umwana w'umwami*', the son of the king, or even the mwami himself was coming to the hill.⁵² Rwagasore's name was enough, excitement spreading at the chance just to see what the son of a king looked like.⁵³ No one came. Baranyanka and the *Tutelle* believed this was an orchestration of Uprona, manipulation of rumour as a political weapon, but as Shibutani explores, 'although there is apparently a widespread conviction that procedures . . . exist for the manipulation and control of rumors, evidence to support this conviction is not impressive.'⁵⁴ Upronistes would certainly have engaged in propagating the story, but controlling it is a different matter. Rather than Uproniste strategy, the rumour is significant for the power it clearly carried in the community, its prominence and interest a demonstration of Rwagasore's prestige, and the curiosity the community had for the new promise of Uprona. Baranyanka was forced to respond.

The chief's reaction was powerful and counter-productive. He threatened to bring small armies down on the region to terrify it into obedience, armies composed of Twa warriors. The use of these men was significant, recalling ancient links between the highest and lowest in society against the mass middle. In bygone years Twa often linked themselves to Ganwa courts and served as royal hunters, the Rwandan kings retained Twa bodyguards and shock troops.⁵⁵ In one legend mwami Ntare once instructed the Tutsi to kill the Hutu, only to be

⁵¹ Tamotsu Shibutani, *Improvised News: a Sociological Study of Rumor* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966).

⁵² AAB, BUR 73 (5), *Les incidents de la région Rukecu-Busiga-Mihigo*, 4 May 1960.

⁵³ Nyamuhashi Sabène, interview in Nyanza-Tubiri (Busiga), 20 April 2011.

⁵⁴ Shibutani, *Improvised News*, p. 212.

⁵⁵ Meyer, *Les Barundi*, p. 23, 55–56; Mworoha, *Peuples et rois*, p. 199; Weinstein, "Military Continuities," p. 55.

refused, while the Hutu in turn refused to murder the Tutsi; only the Twa would do the king's bidding, and slaughter their neighbours.⁵⁶ Baranyanka's intimidatory tactics were not only an appeal to this memory of ancient authority and power, but a cruel manipulation of social divisions and brute violence. 'I will send to you the Twa and the soldiers,' he was reported as declaring in Rukecu on 30 March, 'so that they may have intercourse with your wives and your daughters.'⁵⁷ The threat was not carried out, but lingered oppressively in the community. Baranyanka announced that he was going to burn the huts of Mihigo; four days later he came hunting in the region with twenty five 'exuberant' Twa attendants. They made no attack on the people, but their presence was enough. Fear reigned in the hills for the week that they resided, and Ntamikeyyo Ildephonse, Rwagasore's father-in-law, appealed to the state on behalf of the community.⁵⁸

It was in this acidic atmosphere that the *Tutelle* conducted an information campaign in an attempt to control the political discourse of the nation. *Territorials* across the country went out to hold *réunions d'information* in the hills, agents driving *cars-information*, small vans equipped with a loudspeaker, to administrative centres to set out matters relative to the political transformations at hand and reinforce the claimed position of both the *Tutelle* and the mwami 'above the parties'. Alongside flagrantly partial propaganda that denounced the 'Communism' supposedly infiltrating the country,⁵⁹ the meetings also distributed political tracts, in the hope that the official message would spread still further.⁶⁰ Such tracts were distributed with the edict *soma kandi somesha*, read then read it out, in an overt attempt to seed the oral networks of the hills and reach beyond the limited literate population, and small groups of people gathering around an individual who read the text aloud were scattered

⁵⁶ Vansina, *La légende du passé*, p. 28–29. The tale is intended to explain why only Hutu and Tutsi were wise enough to become *bashingantahe*.

⁵⁷ AAB, BUR 73 (5), *Les incidents de la région Rukecu-Busiga-Mihigo*, 4 May 1960.

⁵⁸ AAB, BUR 65 (1), Unattributed cutting, 1960.

⁵⁹ AAB, BUR 66 (4.4), Draft texts, n.d. (1960).

⁶⁰ ANB, B 25, H. Leonard, letter to Résurundi, 17 May 1960. The tracts of the decolonisation era are discussed in great detail in Deslaurier, "Un monde politique," pp. 636–677, and a large number are collected particularly in AAB BUR 243.

across the hills. The phenomenon of *parlementaires debout*, in which people standing in the streets of Kinshasa and elsewhere read out newspaper articles and debate them for passers-by, the ‘social event’ of newspaper reading in Africa generally described by White, was actively solicited;⁶¹ the Belgians sought to mould the discourse of a rural *radio-trottoir*, the principal arena of debate and comment in the hills.⁶²

While many such papers were disseminated, all paled in comparison to a series of open letters from the mwami himself, each bearing his image and signature;⁶³ the letters were so well received that several audiences rejected any other tracts produced by the Administration if they did not carry Mwambutsa’s signature or image.⁶⁴ Urging peace and unity, claiming distinction from the political squabbles beneath him, the mwami wrote most powerfully in denunciation of what he called *ibigendajoro*, ‘nightwalkers’, those who surreptitiously spread propaganda as *ibihuha*, ‘false rumours’, and fixed their own tracts to trees throughout the country.⁶⁵

In Busiga, attendance at the Belgian meetings plummeted after an initial curious response. 2,500 people attended in March 1960, but this had dropped to only 500 by July.⁶⁶ The meetings

⁶¹ See Hubert Kabungulu Ngoy-Kangoy, “Parlementaires debout: l’interface de l’opposition politique pendant la transition en République démocratique du Congo,” *Africa Development* 34, nos. 3–4 (2009); White, “Telling More,” p. 253.

⁶² cf. Stephen Ellis, “Tuning in to Pavement Radio,” *African Affairs* 88, no. 352 (1989): 321–330; Stephen Ellis, “Rumour and Power in Togo,” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 63, no. 4 (1993): 462–476.

⁶³ AAB, BUR 65 (1), Mwami Mwambutsa Bangiricenge, *Ijambo Umwami w’Uburundi*, 16 April 1960; AAB, BUR 243 (1) and (8), Mwami Mwambutsa Bangiricenge, *Barundi mwese*, 10 February 1960; AAB, BUR 243 (1) and (8), Mwami Mwambutsa Bangiricenge, *Barundi mwese*, 16 April 1960; Harroy released his own message at the head of another tract, followed by a short note from Mwambutsa but still bearing the mwami’s image above all: AAB, BUR 243 (1) and (8), Jean-Paul Harroy and Mwami Mwambutsa Bangiricenge, *Ivyavuzwe na Bwana Resident General*, 1960.

⁶⁴ AAB, BUR 74 (4), *RH Ngozi*, 5 March 1960; AAB, BUR 74 (4), *RH Ngozi*, 9 April 1960.

⁶⁵ AAB, BUR 243 (1) and (8), Mwami Mwambutsa Bangiricenge, *Barundi mwese*, 10 February 1960.

⁶⁶ ANB, B 25, Valère Vandenbulcke, *Réunion d’information: Busiga*, 29 March 1960; ANB, B 25, H. Callebaut, *Réunions d’information: Kunkiko-Mugamba*, 14 May 1960.



Kitega, ku wa 16 aprili 1960.—

Burundi mwese,

Mw'ibaruwa nabandikiye ku wa 11 februwari 1960, nabasiguriye ivyerekeye ukwikukira kw'ihugu c'i Burundi. Noshima cane ko iryo baruwa mwongera kurisoma kandi mukarizirikana. Iryo ndabandikiye uyu musu naryo n'iry'ukubasigurira icyumviro canje ku vyerekeye imigambwe.

Ubu mu Burundi imigambwe yabaye myinshi. Kandi ndamaze kwumva yuko hari abidoga bavuga ko imigambwe imwe imwe igora abantu mu kubahenda ngo ni jewe nayitumye. Ndabamenyesha ko atamugambwe n'umwe natumye, ata nkunzi muriyo. Muzokwinjira mwebwe nyene mu mugambwe mwishimiye kandi mbona ko ushakira ineza Uburundi n'ababubamwo. Umugambwe utsindikira abantu ngo bawujemwo vyanse bikunze, uragira nabi cane; uyo mugambwe ntugirira neza Uburundi n'ababubamwo. Umugambwe wogira ngo nawutumye kundwanira, woba ugomba aho ubera ngo utere intabara mu Burundi. Mbega aho ndwanirwa natewe na nde? Umugambwe ushaka ineza wigisha amahoro, urwanya agatsindikire, ukareka umuntu wese akinjira mu mugambwe yishimiye.

Umugambwe canke umutware yotsindikira abantu ngo ni batange amafaranga ageretse ku y'ikori y'ukugura ikete ry'umugambwe wiwe, yoba arenganije abantu, nanje nari namushinze intara ngo ayitunganye. Umugambwe canke umutware yoraba ijisho ribi abantu atwara, kuko binjije mu mugambwe atarimwo, aba agize nabi cane. Simbujije abaganwa n'abatware kwinjira mu mugambwe bishimiye. Nico gituma lero nabo nyene batobuza abantu babo kwinjira mu mugambwe bishimiye.

Umugambwe wose uronderera ineza abantu, niwo mwokurikira. Umugambwe mpakanye n'uwuhatira abantu ku co badashaka. Umusi nomenya neza ko hari umugambwe cabure umutware abigira, akanavyagira, yobihanirwa cane. Umugambwe ugira neza uba uriko urafasha kutunganya Uburundi. Erega ntakindi nifuzatari uko Uburundi bwotunganyirwa. Ico imigambwe yose lero ikwiye kwitwaririka kandi ikwiye kwumva namwo n'amajambere y'Uburundi. Imigambwe ntiyotukana, imigambwe yosonerana, ikareka umurundi wese akaba ariwe yitorera umugambwe ashimiye. Imigambwe igenje guryo izoba yerekanye ko ishakira Uburundi amahoro. Igihugu muri vyose n'uko Uburundi bwokwamana amahoro, maze mwese mukitegurira ivy'itora ata gahato, mukagirako mugatora neza, mugatorera Uburundi abazobutwara neza n'abazobushingira intahe y'ubutungane. Ni mutunganyirwe mwese, mugire amahoro mu ngo zanyu no mu vyanyu vyose.

Nd'Umwami w'i Burundi
MWAMBUTSA.

Figure 3.3: The mwami's tract of 16 April 1960. AAB, BUR 243 (1) and (8).

themselves were windows on the political awareness of the population, the agents noting a growing polarisation between the young and the old.⁶⁷ The youth objected to what they saw as the consolidation of power by the elders in their community; Rwagasore, memorialised today as *Roi gasore*, ‘The Young King’,⁶⁸ was their perfect figurehead of youth, authority, tradition and change. The generational tension expressed in these stages of authority co-opted them as arenas of debate, betraying the frustrations, ambitions and ‘availability’ of a new class of political youth teetering on the edge of rebelliousness and ready to make new demands on power.⁶⁹ As attendance at the meetings dropped, and reactions from the audience fell to silence, some agents claimed success, ‘a reasonably large comprehension’ of the *Tutelle*’s truth accepted by the population.⁷⁰

But the belief that Uprona was the party of the mwami remained unshakeable. Mwambutsa was sent on a national tour to convince the people that he was unaffiliated with any party, that they need not follow their ‘traditional’ leaders in the new political order, but performed ‘passively and with an air of boredom’.⁷¹ The population remained resolutely persuaded ‘that Uprona is and remains the party of the mwami. Indeed, emissaries of the party took care to follow, and sometimes to precede the caravan and to reveal, in their own style, the terms of the mwami’s declaration.’ They took great delight in emphasising Mwambutsa’s message that no one was required to vote for the party of their chief. Rather than scotch the support for Uprona, the mwami’s tour liberated the conscience of those who felt obliged to support Baranyanka.

⁶⁷ ANB, B 25, P. Cabri, *Réunion d’information: Kabarore*, 1 August 1960; ANB, B 25, P. Cabri, *Réunion d’information: Busiga*, 1 August 1960; AAB, BUR 74 (4), *RH Ngozi*, 2 April 1960; AAB, BUR 74 (4), *RH Ngozi*, 9 April 1960.

⁶⁸ Athanase Karayenga, “‘Le Roi Gasoré,’” 13 October 2011. Suggesting a portmanteau of French ‘king’ and Kirundi *umugasore*, ‘youth’, lad’.

⁶⁹ Frederick Cooper, “Possibility and Constraint: African Independence in Historical Perspective,” *The Journal of African History* 49, no. 2 (2008): 167–196, p. 193; cf. Richard Waller, “Rebellious Youth in Colonial Africa,” *The Journal of African History* 47, no. 1 (2006): 77–92.

⁷⁰ ANB, B 25, H. Callebaut, *Réunion d’information: Busiga*, 20 April 1960.

⁷¹ AAB, BUR 65 (1), *RH Urundi*, 8 May 1960.

This was the first opening that was wrenched wider by the political debate of the *banyagihugu*. The parties themselves produced voluminous political tracts, Uprona in particular, under the management of its masterful propagandist Paul Mirerekano, developing the tract to the level of an artform unmatched either by its rivals or by the *Tutelle*. The physical presence of these tracts in the community crystallised the political debate they were intended to effect. Paper could be burnt and torn, and thus its handling provided the theatrical extension of political argument into display and performance. When suspected of preaching Uproniste views, a pervading *Tutelle* belief that was in fact shared by many Upronistes who considered it to be ‘their’ newspaper, the Catholic journal *Ndongezi y’Uburundi* was snatched from the hands of congregants and torn up by hostile *sous-chefs*;⁷² discovering a cache of *Front commun* propaganda, the Upronistes of Mparamirundi had no hesitation in sending them all up in flames.⁷³ The ability to declare the unacceptability of a political opinion was assumed by the politically active in the hills, adopting the same logic of prohibition to denote the outlaw that the state itself applied.

‘When they began to throw the tracts in the street,’ recalled Havyarimana Marie of Ijene commune, ‘people would come to say, “These tracts are not good, they are lies, they are false rumours, we must not gather them.” But others would say, “They are true, they are not rumours.”’⁷⁴ Tearing up and denouncing rival messages in the public eye would be a crucial act of political communication in itself, the label of ‘rumour’ a considered censure. ‘The qualification as rumour is in fact a disqualification, since in affirming that [a story] is a rumour, one assures equally that it is not worth believing.’⁷⁵ The negative connotations of ‘rumour’ as a label have been considered as a twentieth-century, Western sociological norm,⁷⁶

⁷² A frequent complaint voiced in letters to the newspaper itself, for example Simon Mihogo, “Ibibazo n’inyishu ku vyerekeye itora n’itorwa,” 15 May 1960, p. 2.

⁷³ Ntiruvakure Sévérin, interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 21 April 2011.

⁷⁴ Havyarimana Marie (pseud.), interview in Ngoma (Kabarore), 10 March 2011.

⁷⁵ Pascal Froissart, *La rumeur. Histoire et fantasmes* (Paris: Débates Belin, 2002), pp. 13–14.

⁷⁶ Pascal Froissart, “L’invention du “plus vieux média du monde”,” *Médiation et information* 12–13 (2000): 181–195; Pascal Froissart, “Historicité de la rumeur: La rupture de 1902,” *Publications de la Sorbonne I*.

a form of pre-emptive condemnation certainly apparent in the Belgian attitude that required its agents to report weekly on *faux bruits*, ‘false rumours’, a principal concern of the *Sûreté*.⁷⁷ But in the hills, in the Kirundi discourse of *ibihuha*, which indicates an inherent judgement of falsehood, this question of censure was equally vivid and apparent. The ‘truth-debate’ of unsourced news is a universal concern of those who engage in ‘rumour’ in any context;⁷⁸ this was the field on which the political debate in the hills was fought,

In the first half of 1960, the competition between the PDC and Uprona had already become a question of loyalty and dissent, expressed in the evaluation of the truth claimed by the rival parties and the figures of authority in whom they were invested. Given the claim to structuralist authority within his *chefferie*, support for Baranyanka’s rival was an act of dissent against his rule; judgement of the falsehood of his party’s claims denied his authority to define truth in the community. His intimidatory response was an overt reiteration of his claim, investment in symbols of historic state violence belying his performance of modernity for the Belgian audience. But the debate over whether one was obligated to vote for one’s chief was the political battleground, and once it was opened for question at all, the possibility of rejection was glimpsed. In Nugent’s reading of African chiefs across the course of decolonisation, Baranyanka’s formal power was at its peak, as he melded the colonial chief’s role to that of the politician; his prestige was slowly being eroded, his influence soon to follow, as the possibility of disobedience grew.⁷⁹

The dynamics of competition became curiously cyclical. Popular action shadowed the

Hypothèses (2001): 315–326. Froissart points to the work of Allport and Postman as key in framing the scholarly perspective forming this conception in Western thought, from which many other studies derive (Gordon W. Allport and Leo Postman, “The Basic Psychology of Rumor,” *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences* 8 (1945): 61–81, *et al.*).

⁷⁷ cf. Deslaurier, “Du nouveau pour l’histoire politique.”

⁷⁸ cf. Geschiere’s criticism of White’s dismissal of this concern in her vampire tales, Peter Geschiere, “Gruesome Rumours, the Reality Question and Writing History,” *The Journal of African History* 43, no. 3 (2002): 499–501.

⁷⁹ Paul Nugent, *Africa since Independence: A Comparative History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 109–140.

swell and ebb of rumour in the community. The impending arrival of the *umwana w'umwami* became a rumour that reappeared from time to time, and proved one of the most effective motivators of mass action.⁸⁰ As such it might be read as a certain *contre-pouvoir*,⁸¹ a weapon of the weak as analysed elsewhere,⁸² yet as Deslaurier notes, the power and prominence of such pro-Rwagasore rumours reflected not the subaltern voice of Uprona, but the areas of its growing dominance;⁸³ currency reflected the power and presence of Uproniste-inclined individuals in the community who took an interest in the elements of such reported news.⁸⁴ The effect was dramatic; the idea that the prince was on his way gave Upronistes the confidence to stand up to local Pédéciste authorities, while whether or not they were even interested in Uprona's message, the people who passed on the story to their neighbours raised the party's profile and legitimacy as the representative of the nation and the monarchy. 'One can be affected by rumour even if one does not believe it';⁸⁵ engagement in the local political discourse, even in refutation, established the conversation that permitted the contemplation of local dissent.

June - October 1960: 'What is a rebellion against authority?'

As the possibility of disinvesting in Baranyanka's authority grew in the borderland, so did the suspicion of Rwandan infiltration. The Belgians heard rumours of 'shady intrigues in Ngozi', whispers that 'all the Rwandans [in exile] are required do their best to bring it about that Urundi should also have a civil war',⁸⁶ led by a formal 'Regional Committee of Banyarwanda'. And simultaneously, the internal competition in Burundi took on terms from beyond the Kanyaru. Uprona began lambasting the PDC as 'Aprosoma', suggesting Baranyanka's party

⁸⁰ cf. Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, pp. 251–277.

⁸¹ Jean-Noël Kapferer, *Rumeurs: le plus vieux média du monde* (Paris: Editions du seuil, 1987), p. 253.

⁸² Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, pp. 282–290.

⁸³ Deslaurier, "La rumeur du cachet," p. 563.

⁸⁴ cf. Edgar Morin, *Rumour in Orleans* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971), pp. 94–101.

⁸⁵ Kapferer, *Rumeurs*, p. 283.

⁸⁶ AAB, BUR 74 (4), H. Leonard, Letter to Résurundi, 31 May 1960.

intended to start a rebellion against the mwami.⁸⁷ Belgian fears of a spreading war were shared among the people. ‘They said that if the Rwandans are at war, here too in Burundi it would come,’ remembers Havyarimana Marie near Ijene; ‘But if your neighbours fight, you must not fight as well.’⁸⁸

Across the country Uprona was gaining ground, the *Sûreté* acknowledging that it had ‘acquired a majority position’ that would be ‘difficult to overturn’.⁸⁹ The party was reaching the tipping point in Arendt’s definition of power, that of sheer numerical consensus.⁹⁰ Baranyanka’s *sous-chefs* were consistently targeted by Uprona propagandists. In Rukecu, *sous-chef* Nkurikiye was the subject of petitions appealing against his favouritism towards Pédécistes,⁹¹ while Nzibakwiye in Busiga was dragged into a personal feud with Bucumi Côme, the foremost of Uprona’s new converts.⁹² The shadow of Rwagasore gradually emboldened the Upronistes to the point where they could stand in the face of orders from the chief himself and give voice to their dissent. Popular chants engaged the party debate over political priorities; ‘*Indépendance! Indépendance!*’ people shouted in the hills, while others answered with ‘*Demokrasi! Demokrasi!*’.⁹³

When more than two thousand people gathered in Rukecu, having heard that Rwagasore was on his way to meet them, Baranyanka descended on the assembly. It was an impromptu *réunion d’information* to dispel the rumour, conducted from a ‘*car-information*’ and accompanied by the Belgian agents Vandembuleke and Schmidt. ‘[Baranyanka] declared to the people that they found themselves in his territory, and ought to obey him.’⁹⁴ But for the first time, the gathered crowd drew on their power of numbers and expressed dissent in the face of both

⁸⁷ AAB, BUR 74 (4), *BI 99*, (Kitega), 21 May 1960; Deslaurier, “Un monde politique,” p. 755–769.

⁸⁸ Havyarimana Marie (pseud.), interview in Ngoma (Kabarore), 10 March 2011.

⁸⁹ AAB, BUR 65 (1), *BI 330*, (Usumbura), 2 June 1960.

⁹⁰ Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1970).

⁹¹ AAB, BUR 75 (4), People of Rukecu, Letter to mwami, 16 May 1960.

⁹² e.g., AAB, BUR 79 (8), Nzibakwiye Domitien, Letter to AT, 7 June 1960.

⁹³ Havyarimana Marie (pseud.), interview in Ngoma (Kabarore), 10 March 2011.

⁹⁴ AAB, BUR 65 (1), *BI 126*, (Kitega), 18 June 1960.

chief and Belgian authorities, booing Baranyanka's demand for obedience. 'If you want a war, you will have it,' he snarled in response.⁹⁵ 'I asked them what they were waiting for,' Baranyanka wrote indignantly to Mwambutsa, 'but nobody said a word, except for three youths who stood up to greet me.'⁹⁶ Already furious, he declared to the crowd that all public meetings were strictly forbidden. As for Rwagasore, 'I will not tolerate that he should hold meetings in my *chefferie*.' He fed the rumours of his own rebellion against the son of the king.

'Tell us, where are your limits,' a *mushingantahe* who was leading the meeting allegedly challenged, 'and where are those of the mwami? Rwagasore is the son of the mwami, and so he is mwami himself, and it would be absurd to want to impede Mwami Rwagasore from going where he wished, for the country is his.'⁹⁷ Such an outright claim for Rwagasore as king, when reported by Baranyanka, is perhaps suspect; the *Sûreté*'s report only notes that the crowd claimed Rwagasore 'represented' the mwami.⁹⁸ But it was clear that refusal to obey an order from the chief had swiftly become the most expressive political act an Uproniste in Baranyanka's *chefferie* could perform.

This was the first emergence of civil disobedience and the defiance of authority as tools of political expression and motivation in the borderland. In Mparamirundi it is said that two local men, named Kanyamapfu and Ntirugirasoni, went to the chief to borrow money, but when challenged to declare their fealty had the courage to deny him. 'We do not want to follow the party of your son,' they said, and in fury the chief threw them out, scornfully ordering them to go to Uprona for money, if they would not pledge their loyalty to his politics.⁹⁹ Dissent against the chief was performed personally, in the name of Uprona.

It appeared that Baranyanka's anger was getting the better of him. He visited the *colline* of Bigera in Mparamirundi and exploded at the truculence of the Upronistes he met there. The chief, according to the Upronistes, abused them for belonging to a 'party of fools', tore

⁹⁵ AAB, BUR 75 (4), H. Leonard, letter to Résurundi, n.d. (June 1960?)

⁹⁶ AAB, BUR 75 (4), Pierre Baranyanka, letter to Mwambutsa, 18 June 1960.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

⁹⁸ AAB, BUR 65 (1), *BI 126*, (Kitega), 18 June 1960.

⁹⁹ Ntiruvakure Sévérin, interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 21 April 2011.

up Uprona membership cards and berated one man, named Nahagere Gabriel, for failing to attend a meeting of the *conseil de chefferie*, even though he wasn't a member.¹⁰⁰ Nahagere at first kept silent, but when he responded to a direct challenge from the chief to say that he was not a fool, Baranyanka departed enraged, ordering five or six men to be arrested. In Baranyanka's absence, however, the onlookers came to the men's aid and drove off the police; returning in fury, Baranyanka and his entourage fired gunshots into the air, dispersing the terrified crowd. Shocked by the rebellion he saw before him, Baranyanka declared that he would call on the Belgian *Territorial* to institute a military occupation of the region.¹⁰¹

The chief issued summonses for Nahagere and his companions to be judged before the *Tribunal de chefferie* at his palace at Irabiro. The men did not attend, refusing the call three times; where once the chief's authority had been confirmed by answering his summons to attend his meetings, it was now rejected through civil disobedience. Finally they were brought by force before him. Baranyanka demanded to know why they had failed to attend, and one man, a *mushingantahe* named Minani Bernard, replied curtly, 'Because I am Uprona.'¹⁰² The blunt statement was a political slogan. 'I am Uprona, I shall not hide it from anyone! Truth passes through the fire, and is not consumed,' proclaimed one of the most striking Uprona tracts, appearing a little while after the trial and printed in vibrant red ink.¹⁰³ As a statement in court, the slogan was the epitome of dissent and defiance.

Baranyanka turned to his attendant advisors. 'I ask you, *bashingantahe*,' he declaimed, 'what is a rebellion against authority?'¹⁰⁴ Each man replied in turn, 'To fail to respond to a call from authority is a rebellion.' Baranyanka, judge over his own prosecution, sentenced most

¹⁰⁰ AAB, BUR 79 (8), Nahagere et al., letter to the *Procureur du Roi*, 20 July 1960.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*; AAB, BUR 74 (5), P. de Fays, letter to Guillaume, 1 August 1960.

¹⁰² AAB, BUR 79 (8), Pierre Ngendandumwe, *Jugement de l'affaire chef Baranyanka*, 9 August 1960. Ngendandumwe, the future Prime Minister, was at this point a simple *Chef de Poste* in the *Tutelle*'s employment at Kayanza, holding the rank of *Agent de Territoire Assistant* (AAB, BUR 79 (2), *Fiche de Renseignements: Ngendandumwe Pierre*, n.d.).

¹⁰³ AAB, BUR 65 (1), Uprona, *Nd'Umudasigana!* 1960.

¹⁰⁴ AAB, BUR 79 (8), Pierre Ngendandumwe, *Jugement de l'affaire chef Baranyanka*, 9 August 1960.

of the men to two months in prison and a fine of 2000 Fr, veering to the extreme end of the sentences advised by his four *assesseurs* and the *juge suppléant*. The customary punishment for refusing the call of authority was stated in court as a week in prison. As living martyrs, the imprisoned Upronistes instantly gained regional notoriety.¹⁰⁵

The weeks that followed the sentencing proved that the personal antipathy of individual dissent did not exhaust the political contest in the hills. Uprona protested at the burning of the huts of their members,¹⁰⁶ Baranyanka responded that they had burnt them themselves in order to play the victim,¹⁰⁷ while the rumour passed around that the Belgians were distributing arms to the PDC in anticipation of a war.¹⁰⁸ In Mparamirundi in particular, people muttered that they should strike first against the symbols of Baranyanka's power, and cut down his coffee plantations.¹⁰⁹ The authority of Baranyanka's Tribunal and his police further rotted away. Policemen sent to bring men to court in early September were met violently, with bows, spears and farming implements, the local people taking sides to attack or defend the police. 'What chief dares issue a summons for me?' their first suspect said, according to the police report; 'I'll give you my arm, and we'll see who dares put on the handcuffs.'¹¹⁰

Struggles over authority in the borderland were exacerbated by the administrative overhaul undertaken by the Belgians. The *sous-chefs* were dismissed in preparation for local elections, but Upronistes in Baranyanka's territory saw the move as a cynical sleight of hand, devoid of substance. They wrote letters of complaint objecting that the former *sous-chefs* continued to exercise power through their replacements as puppets.¹¹¹ Far from abolishing the abusive authorities, it appeared to the Upronistes that the Belgian reforms were intent on confirming

¹⁰⁵ Ntiruvakure Séverin, interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 21 April 2011; Ndayizeye Pascal (pseud.), interview in Cendajuru (Busiga), 26 April 2011.

¹⁰⁶ AAB, BUR 65 (1), Résurundi, Telegram to AT Ngozi, 10 August 1960.

¹⁰⁷ AAB, BUR 65 (1), BI 201, (Kitega), 16 August 1960.

¹⁰⁸ AAB, BUR 65 (1), BI 195, (Kitega), 12 August 1960.

¹⁰⁹ AAB, BUR 65 (1), BI 201, (Kitega), 16 August 1960.

¹¹⁰ AAB, BUR 74 (4), Ntibazonkiza and Baragondoza, *Rapport des policiers*, 9 September 1960.

¹¹¹ AAB, BUR 73 (5), Inhabitants of Mparamirundi and Mihigo, letter to mwami, 11 September 1960.

them through concealment and pretence. In response, the two *ex-sous-chefs* Mpagaze and Ntaganzwa wrote a viciously condescending letter of their own, copied to Mwambutsa, Harroy and Baranyanka, which once again invoked the border and the infiltration of Rwandan refugees; ‘These Rwandan murderers that you hide in your homes, is it they who have told you what to do?’¹¹² The implication of Rwandan politics had become a universal, mutual accusation, used by both PDC and Uprona. Together they responded to and encouraged the trajectory of public debate that saw the Rwandan conflict as antipathetic to Burundi.

The dynamics of dissent had become personalised, but party recruitment became a declaration of loyalty to one or the other authority. Deslaurier describes how individuals would carry the membership cards of several parties, tactically displaying each depending on their company.¹¹³ In the north, however, Uprona’s cards became conceived as a local *laisser-passer* or an identity card, a sign of its domination.¹¹⁴ With an emerging hierarchy topped by the towering figure of Rwagasore, a new order of authority was urged and discussed in the hills. According to Pédéciste accusations, Upronistes were claiming that ‘he who possesses the [Uprona membership] card is no longer ruled¹¹⁵ by chiefs, *sous-chefs* or even *bashingantahe*; if anyone sees a chief or *sous-chef*, or even a policeman come to us, they must attack them.’¹¹⁶ Rwagasore was being cast almost as the rebel king, a powerful theme of Barundi historical legends, even as Baranyanka was explicitly denounced as the *anti-roi*, a second Kirima.¹¹⁷ The colonial order, symbolised more by Baranyanka than by the Belgians, had been one long usurpation of authority, and now was the time finally to declare the nation’s dissent, a revolution that was nevertheless a restoration, renewing the true authority of the kingship. It

¹¹² AAB, BUR 73 (5), Mpagaze and Ntaganzwa Mathias, Letter to the Inhabitants of Busiga and Mparamirundi, 19 September 1960.

¹¹³ Deslaurier, “Un monde politique,” pp. 779–782.

¹¹⁴ Ngerenranya Daniel, interview in Munege (Kabarore), 14 March 2011; Havyarimana Marie (pseud.), interview in Ngoma (Kabarore), 10 March 2011; Niyongabo Côme (pseud.), interview in Karama (Kabarore), 8 March 2011.

¹¹⁵ ‘*ntaba akigabwa*’.

¹¹⁶ AAB, BUR 65 (1), *BI 230*, (Kitega), 5 September 1960.

¹¹⁷ On the *anti-roi* archetype, see Ndoricimpa, “Du roi fondateur.”

was the ‘subversive’ face of royalty;¹¹⁸ adhesion to the highest rung of hierarchy permitted the total destruction and reconstitution of the authorities between the king, or at least the king’s son, and the people.

3.3 Old Hatreds and New Faces

The graduation of political contest in the north from a mass conversation over the relative authority of Baranyanka and Rwagasore, to the personal expression of dissent against the chief himself, to the reordering of the community into a literally card-carrying Uproniste force, was thrown into confusion by the debacle of the local elections in November 1960. With Rwagasore placed under house arrest and Uprona consequently boycotting the elections, the confidence of an Uproniste majority was suddenly set in doubt, even as the state hierarchy they challenged was itself reconfigured. This shock, in conjunction with a new administrative system intended to smooth the transition from the *autorités indigènes* of chief and *sous-chefs* to modern democratic rule, meant a realignment of political contest in the borderland, setting the scene for a very different expression of dissent and loyalty in 1961. In order to explore this new world, it is useful to identify the individuals who emerged to represent the opposing forces in 1960, and would stand at the heart of conflict the following year.

Party Militants

In a series of interrogations held in June 1961 some sixty five local men were asked about the conflict in their community, and required to point out the leaders that disturbed them and set the hills against each other. ‘So if I arrest and remove these people, the arguments will be over in your region?’ Vandenbulcke asked one young Uproniste who had named the leaders of each party.¹¹⁹ ‘Yes, probably,’ came the answer.

¹¹⁸ Jean-Pierre Chrétien, “Pouvoir d’état, autorité mystique et société civile,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 15, no. 3 (1981): 415–432.

¹¹⁹ ANB, AI 5 (13), Valère Vandenbulcke, *Interrogations: Tungirayo, Nkurikiye, Buhunyeri*, 7 June 1961. The other interrogation records are ANB, AI 5 (13), Valère Vandenbulcke, *Interrogations: Mashavu, Ndabaherana*,

But the popular militants of the *Front commun* are difficult to pin down. This is partly a function of a state surveillance less interested in monitoring its friends and a community unwilling to remember its engagement in the heresies of national mythology. Yet many Pédéciste names emerge in the archives, but there is little consensus on their leaders; within the community the *Front commun* appeared disparate and formless, if numerous. While the *Territorial Vandenbulcke* compiled tables of the equivalent chains of command for the PDC and Uprona,¹²⁰ only one of the captains of the former played a dominant part in the conflict of the time: Ntaganzwa Mathias, the former *sous-chef* of Mparamirundi. A member of the *Batare Ganwa*, giving his identity as Tutsi in 1961,¹²¹ he was the archetypal Baranyanka subordinate in the region, the chief's man who pursued his PDC mission even after his formal power was

Ntabujana, 5 June 1961; *ANB*, AI 5 (13), Valère Vandenbulcke, *Interrogations*: Sematuro, Ntawembarira, Ntaganzwa, 9 June 1961; *ANB*, AI 5 (13), P. Cabri, *Interrogations*: Nteziryayo, Nyandwi, Nyawigwangaza, 5 June 1961; *ANB*, AI 5 (13), P. Cabri, *Interrogations*: Ndayavugwa, Bikeye, Rurazikiye, 7 June 1961; *ANB*, AI 6 (69), P. Cabri, *Interrogations*: Sikubwabo, Bahigwa, Ndabumviye, Singurumukunzi, 8 June 1961; *ANB*, AI 6 (69), A. A. Cappuyns, *Interrogations*: Misago, Ruksha, Mbisamakoru, Nyanzara, Semireko, Kibombogoro, 8 June 1961; *ANB*, AI 6 (69), A. A. Cappuyns, *Interrogations*: Ndabameye, Topori, Nyakarundi, 7 June 1961; *ANB*, AI 6 (69), A. A. Cappuyns, *Interrogations*: Ntakamurenga, Bibeshe, Bacakuribi, 5 June 1961; *ANB*, AI 6 (69), Marcel Crébeck, *Interrogations*: Gafeke, Manimbona, Sentozo, 8 June 1961; *ANB*, AI 6 (69), Marcel Crébeck, *Interrogations*: Tinya, Ntirwonza, 5 June 1961; *ANB*, AI 6 (69), Marcel Crébeck, *Interrogations*: Sinumvahaya, Bijunati, Bitana, 7 June 1961; *ANB*, AI 6 (69), Willy Belle, *Interrogations*: Kanyeshamba, Busangoye, Ntawigaya, Muhanda, 8 June 1961; *ANB*, AI 6 (69), Willy Belle, *Interrogations*: Ntiruziyumwe, Madagasha, Rwajekera, Bucumi, 7 June 1961; *ANB*, AI 6 (69), Willy Belle, *Interrogations*: Shanga, Ntakasiga, Kaburabuza, Turabanye, Simbagoye, Barashakuza, 5 June 1961; *ANB*, AI 5 (13), Kiburugutu Daniel, *Interrogations*: Ndarurhire, Baranyiziye, Nyabanwa, Ntibigaya, 5 June 1961; *ANB*, AI 5 (13), Kiburugutu Daniel, *Interrogation*: Bukuru, 7 June 1961; *ANB*, AI 5 (13), Kiburugutu Daniel, *Interrogations*: Buregeya, Bucumi, Nyandwi, 8 June 1961; *ANB*, AI 5 (13), Kiburugutu Daniel, *Interrogations*: Barazokoroza, Matereza, 9 June 1961. All records are written in French, but Kiburugutu and Vandenbulcke both conducted their interviews in Kirundi. A later report by Ntidendereza mentions inquiries by men named Francis and Bilenne as well, but these either did not produce interrogation records or they are missing from the archives. See *AAB*, BUR 74 (4), J. B. Ntidendereza, *Rapport sur les incidents en Province de Kayanza*, 28 June 1961.

¹²⁰ *ANB*, AI 6 (68), Valère Vandenbulcke, Draft report notes, 13 June 1961.

¹²¹ *ANB*, AI 5 (13), Valère Vandenbulcke, *Interrogations*: Sematuro, Ntawembarira, Ntaganzwa, 9 June 1961.

ended.

By contrast, the Uprona leaders were universally recognised, even by the PDC. In one tract, tailored to a regional audience, the *Front commun* listed the names of their local rivals as ‘the great liars, the inconstant ones’:¹²²

‘It is not the first time that you have heard the names of these great devils,¹²³ and you are completely aware of the names of their disciples. Never listen to their speech, never believe their words. Never think of electing them. They are capable of betraying you as they have elsewhere always done.’¹²⁴

In Busiga the tract named Bucumi Côme and Ntigacika, the teacher and mason personally wooed by Rwagasore. But chief among the ‘great devils’ were the men of Mparamirundi whom Baranyanka had imprisoned for dissent, released in October as the pre-eminent Upronistes of the borderland. Rumours spread that Baranyanka had wanted them dead, that they escaped at night while the guards were distracted by dogs fighting, and that they personally brought in Rwagasore to confirm their freedom.¹²⁵ Dissent and persecution marked out the leaders for unequalled prestige in popular discourse.

Considered the ‘chief of the Upronistes’ was Nahagere Gabriel, who had faced down Baranyanka and refused to be called a fool by the chief.¹²⁶ Along with another man named Seryobagi he was identified as a local commander by Belgian intelligence, answering directly to Rwagasore.¹²⁷ Below these two were cadres of assorted militants, among whom the most ferocious firebrands would be the remarkable *mushingantahe* Minani Bernard, who had steeled himself in court to declare ‘I am Uprona,’ and Budonderwa Joseph, each counted as Seryobagi and Nahagere’s second-in-command respectively.

¹²² ‘*bangushi bakuru-bakuru, ba bigaragu*’.

¹²³ ‘*bishitani bakuru-bakuru*’.

¹²⁴ AAB, BUR 65 (1), *Abadasigana bahomvye ni bahombe birakwiye*, 24 November 1961.

¹²⁵ Ndayizeye Pascal (pseud.), interview in Cendajuru (Busiga), 26 April 2011.

¹²⁶ AAB, BUR 75 (5) and ANB, AI 6 (68), Ntahorwamiye Joseph, *Les Insurges de la Commune*, n.d. (1961).

¹²⁷ ANB, AI 6 (68), Valère Vandenbulcke, Draft report notes, 13 June 1961.

RWAGASORE		BARANYANKA	
Nahagere	Seryobagi	Ntaganzwa	Bahezwa
Budonderwa	Minani	Binyabwoya	Mbanzindori
Mashavu	Ndabaherana	Ntarikize	Gitondo
Bacakuribi	Rwamakuba	Busongoye	Ntibiraba
Ntiruziyumwe	Ntirwonza	Sekaganda	Ntawembarira
Ntancuti	Nyakarundi	Barashubije	Sematuru
Nsaguye	Ntakasigaye	Sembwa	Butoyi
Rutsikiri	Gishiringara		

Table 3.1: The local structure of command among propagandists in Mparamirundi according to Vandembulcke's notes, ANB, AI 6 (68). Individuals otherwise prominent in the archives and oral testimony marked in bold.

Other than Budonderwa, who was simply a farmer, each of these propagandists stood on the edge of the state. Nahagere had a heritage of authority, once serving as a *sous-chef* himself,¹²⁸ while Seryobagi and Minani were each established in late 1960 as *conseillers communal*. They were relative local elites. They might be considered as local intellectuals;¹²⁹ they permitted and gave form to the expression of the rural community when it spoke to power. They embodied the political link in a vertical system, whether the reticulation of national party and local supporters or the mouthpiece of direct dissent to rejected authorities. Furthermore, despite the premise of generational conflict heard in the *réunions d'information*, these were not the 'rebellious youth'. Even the junior propagandists Minani and Budonderwa were thirty five years old, with five and three children respectively.¹³⁰ But youth joined them. Twenty year-olds gave voice to their rallies, while children climbed trees to listen to their meetings and acted as runners and lookouts for clandestine meetings.¹³¹ The Mparamirundi propagandists pursued their agitation against Baranyanka and the colonial order through marked generational complementarity.¹³²

This focus on leadership must be moderated. Peasant movements are frequently char-

¹²⁸ ANB, AI 6 (68), A. A. Cappuyns, *Mandat d'améner: Nahagere*, 24 July 1961.

¹²⁹ cf. Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals*; Geschiere, *Village Communities*, pp. 263–357.

¹³⁰ ANB, AI 5 (13), P. Cabri, *Interrogations: Feuille d'audience*, 1 June 1961.

¹³¹ Ndakoze Pierre (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 27 April 2011.

¹³² cf. Waller, "Rebellious Youth," p. 90.

acterised as ‘localized, limited in aims and achievements, and deficient in organization and execution’,¹³³ and Uprona in the north fell partially into this category. There were leaders, and certainly signs of cooperation and planning, but Nahagere and his men did not command the population in organised rebellion. It was characteristic of the *Tutelle*’s attitude to *banyagihugu* politics that the population was considered to be led and led astray by fealty to the calls of traditionalists, that elimination of the ringleaders would bring calm to the people. The constant debate of rumours in the community speaks against this, and even in the same interrogations that produced the lists of leaders, expressions of political comprehension and conviction could be found. One man objected that ‘the PDC are preventing [Burundi] from gaining Independence’,¹³⁴ while another fumed that ‘Upronistes want to bring Communists into the country’.¹³⁵ Both claims were distortions, but common currency of national discourse, the latter expression even heard from the *Tutelle* itself. The leaders in the community had a substantial role to play, and are necessary figures to trace the progress of the new forms of dissent in the borderland, but they arose from a popular consciousness and contest. For all that they influenced the struggle in the community, they did not invent or direct it.

State Authorities

The new state system established at the end of 1960 moved Baranyanka into the shadows. His formal power as a chief was abolished, despite the petitions from some of his loyal subjects that he remain in command.¹³⁶ But with the victory of his PDC, his influence was considerable. Most notably his son Ntidendereza was appointed Minister of the Interior in the transitional government, presiding over a new Africanised structure of administrative officials. In the borderland, now the province of Kayanza, Ntidendereza’s local delegates were the *Administrateurs de Province* (AP), who appeared to the population as new colonial chiefs, a sign of considerable regression rather than preparation for Independence. In Mparamirundi

¹³³ Beinart and Bundy, “State Intervention,” p. 271.

¹³⁴ ANB, AI 5 (13), Valère Vandenbulcke, *Interrogations*: Sematuro, Ntawembarira, Ntaganzwa, 9 June 1961.

¹³⁵ ANB, AI 5 (13), Kiburugutu Daniel, *Interrogations*: Buregeya, Bucumi, Nyandwi, 8 June 1961.

¹³⁶ AAB, BUR 79 (2), *Bashingantahe* of various *collines*, assorted letters to Baranyanka, August 1960.

there was an understanding that the new AP, Gahungu Bernard, was Baranyanka's 'replacement',¹³⁷ but he was received tolerably well for his openness, attentiveness and deference to the people, a man who, in the words of an Uproniste under interrogation at the time, 'tried to bring us all together as one'.¹³⁸ His colleague Jean Ntawe, on the other hand, became a new figure of hate in the borderland.

Ntawe had a less than illustrious professional history. In 1960 he had been an Assistant to the *Tutelle* in Muhinga in the east of the country, where he had already elicited the hatred of local Uprona cadres for his clear Pédéciste bias.¹³⁹ In Kayanza the Uproniste population swiftly came to despise him, and he even alienated his Belgian superiors. 'Ntawe is always the same,' sighed a report on his conduct in light of the troubles with which he was associated:

'Not firm enough with his bourgmestres, he prefers to write to [Ntidendereza] to intervene personally ... He even talks of giving his resignation or requesting a transfer. Is afraid of difficult responsibilities. Would rather die than ask my advice. Sometimes tries, with regards to the *Tutelle*, 'to rip our bollocks off'¹⁴⁰ by criticising a police affair ... He tells the guy to come moaning to me. I chucked him out and gave Ntawe a right dressing-down. Can't we replace this freak?'¹⁴¹

Beneath the AP were the new elected representatives, bourgmestres chosen in the spoiled elections of November 1960. With Rwagasore under house arrest and Uprona's consequent boycott, these were almost entirely *Front commun*. 'The Upronistes have lost - that they should lose is completely deserved,' crowed a *Front commun* tract; 'They sing everywhere that they have the majority of votes, now they have none.'¹⁴² In Mparamirundi the new bourgmestre belonged to the populist PP, Ntahorwamiye Joseph. He was a wily character,

¹³⁷ Ntiruvakure Sévérin, interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 21 April 2011.

¹³⁸ ANB, AI 5 (13), Valère Vandebulcke, *Interrogations*: Tungirayo, Nkurikiye, Buhunyeri, 7 June 1961.

¹³⁹ AAB, BUR 79 (5), Upronistes of Muyange-Mwakiro, Letter to mwami, 17 December 1960.

¹⁴⁰ This phrase is in self-censored, dialectal Dutch, 'ons 'ne kl... [kloot] af te trekken'.

¹⁴¹ 'zèbre'. AAB, BUR 74 (4), R. Dethier, *Rapport succinct*, 16 June 1961.

¹⁴² AAB, BUR 65 (1), *Abadasigana bahomvye ni bahombe birakwiye*, 24 November 1961.

secretly tying himself closely to AP Ntawe and to Baranyanka through constant letters reporting close surveillance of the Uproniste Nahagere and his men,¹⁴³ yet managing to maintain tolerably neutral personal relations with these same Upronistes in public. ‘Ntahorwamiye bets a little on two horses,’ considered the *Tutelle*: ‘the Upronistes and the Europeans.’¹⁴⁴ In Busiga, however, there was a rare Uproniste victory. The old teacher Bucumi Côme slipped past the boycott and was elected as a candidate of the *Parti démocrate rural*, which stood as an abortive attempt at a ‘Third Way’ between Uprona and the *Front commun*. But this was a passing costume, Bucumi doubling his duties through election to the national assembly as an Uproniste the following year. He appointed the mason Ntigacika, similarly chosen by Rwagasore in 1959, as his deputy, but the two were an anomaly; the state around them stood antipathetic to Uprona.

For all the changes of personnel, Upronistes feared that little was new. In a letter railing against the abuses of AP Ntawe, Bucumi’s constituents in Busiga begged the government to ‘find an Administrator of initiative and peace, who does not give the orders of the Prime Dictator, ex-chief of our former *chefferie*’.¹⁴⁵ Although he had receded from the main stage, the Upronistes would not lose sight of Baranyanka, ‘*le Premier Dictateur*’, pulling the strings. Ntawe had, it seemed, only extended Baranyanka’s tyranny. ‘People who are not members of his party were threatened this very week that paratroopers would violate their wives and daughters.’¹⁴⁶ Bucumi Côme as bourgmestre stood against his order; in revenge, the plaintiffs said, Ntawe ‘encourages people not to pay their tax¹⁴⁷ ... he invites the people to rebel against every communal authority.’ The interim administration was a malfunctioning hybrid of party hierarchies, not a state. Dissent was not only an act of people towards the powerful,

¹⁴³ ANB, AI 6 (68), Ntahorwamiye Joseph, Letter to AP, 5 May 1961; ANB, AI 6 (68), Ntahorwamiye Joseph, Letter to AP, 29 April 1961; AAB, BUR 75 (5) and ANB, AI 6 (68), Ntahorwamiye Joseph, *Les Insurges de la Commune*, n.d. (1961), *et al.*

¹⁴⁴ AAB, BUR 74 (4), R. Dethier, *Rapport succinct*, 16 June 1961.

¹⁴⁵ AAB, BUR 74 (4), Inhabitants of Busiga Commune, letter to mwami, 30 May 1961.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ The tax receipts for Busiga were indeed notably below the neighbouring *Front commun*-led communes (AAB, BUR 74 (4), R. Dethier, *Rapport succinct*, 16 June 1961).

but a gambit of power itself, popular disobedience a tool to be provoked by one partisan authority against another.

3.4 Revolution on the Border

Upronistes saw no reason to invest in these structures and every reason to topple them before they could take root. The installation of substantially new hierarchies opened a space in which Uprona's previous tactics were all the more effective, as the authority they challenged carried the inherent instability of novelty. Nowhere would this be more apparent than in Mparamirundi, where the two-faced bourgmestre Ntahorwamiye cautiously watched Nahagere and the Uproniste leaders. In a fractious public meeting, Baranyanka's brother Nahimana Antoine was said to have confronted the Uproniste lieutenant Minani Bernard.¹⁴⁸ Apoplectic, Nahimana drew a gun and threatened Minani, who stood firm. Holding a rosary before him he said, 'If you are a man, shoot me. The people will see that you go home safely. If you are a man, do it. Shoot!' Furious but cowed, Nahimana shot downwards at the floor; the crowd fled at the sound of the gunshot. Believing Minani dead, they threw down bridges and blocked the roads of the commune. Brimming with social commentary on Uproniste bravery, Pédéciste arrogance and brutality, and the restive mood of the community, the story encapsulates the direction events were taking. From Baranyanka's threats the year before to his brother's drawn weapon in 1961, it seemed that violence was drawing closer.

Refusing to recognise the authority of the new AP Ntawe, the Upronistes strengthened their investment in the upper levels of their own hierarchy. They made frequent, ostentatious journeys to Kitega and Usumbura to consult with party leaders; bourgmestre Ntahorwamiye spied on them suspiciously, reporting their every movement to Ntawe.¹⁴⁹ Rumours passed

¹⁴⁸ Ndayizeye Pascal (pseud.), interview in Cendajuru (Busiga), 26 April 2011. Nahimana would later be hanged for his involvement in Rwagasore's assassination.

¹⁴⁹ *AAB*, BUR 75 (5) and *ANB*, AI 6 (68), Ntahorwamiye Joseph, Letter to AP, 26 April 1961; *ANB*, AI 6 (68), Ntahorwamiye Joseph, Letter to AP, 29 April 1961; *ANB*, AI 6 (68), Ntahorwamiye Joseph, Letter to AP, 5 May 1961.

around that the Upronistes travelled to visit Mwambutsa himself, that when the propagandists came calling the king would drop everything, opening the door to them in the middle of dinner, or early in the morning dressed only in underpants and vest.¹⁵⁰ The rumour was the prime example of popular political debate; some saw an impressive demonstration of the continuing authority of the defeated party, while others condemned it as an arrogant insult to the mwami.

Amidst such rumours, far worse stories circulated. Pédécistes warned of an impending ethnic war in the style of Rwanda, that the Upronistes had declared ‘that the mwami has given them the authority to enrol in Uprona the Hutu alone, that it is the Hutu who ought to lead the country, that they wish to see Tutsi no more, because the Tutsi are inferior to the Twa.’¹⁵¹ As one man emphasised, ‘There is no insult more grave than that.’ All the accusers except one were themselves Hutu. This was the first occurrence of ethnic vocabulary in the local political conflict in the border region. It remains a curious anomaly. Only the accusations are recorded, and there was no defence, denial, prosecution or repetition of the allegations throughout the troubles that followed.

Nahagere and his prominent leaders were indeed all Hutu.¹⁵² But the ethnic division is an irrelevance in memories today. ‘During that time, there wasn’t any problem between Hutu and Tutsi,’ explains Ndayizeye, the only interviewee to acknowledge a PDC connection today, through his father.¹⁵³ ‘The fight was opposing the people who supported Uprona and the people supporting the PDC. If you were a Hutu or a Tutsi supporting the PDC, Uprona would beat you.’ By contrast, he countered, the Pédécistes were so few they couldn’t hope to

¹⁵⁰ ANB, AI 6 (68), Pié Rurimwindomvyi, *Interrogations*: Barashubije, Mbonimpa, Butoyi, Gatoto, Sematuro, Barasokoroza, 15 April 1961.

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*

¹⁵² ANB, AI 6 (68), A. A. Cappuyns, *Mandat d’améner: Nahagere*, 24 July 1961; ANB, AI 6 (68), A. A. Cappuyns, *Mandat d’améner: Seryobagi*, 24 July 1961; ANB, AI 5 (13), P. Cabri, *Interrogations*: Feuille d’audience, 1 June 1961.

¹⁵³ Ndayizeye Pascal (pseud.), interview in Cendajuru (Busiga), 26 April 2011. Other relatives of known *Front commun* politicians describe them today as Upronistes (e.g. Sibomana Justine (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 20 April 2011; Havyarimana Marie (pseud.), interview in Ngoma (Kabarore), 10 March 2011).

attack the Upronistes. The community was tearing in an unequal power struggle, and it seems that this unique instance of ethnic vocabulary in the contest was a tactical attempt to snatch the attention of the *Tutelle*. The ethnic charges were dropped, but their abiding warning remained. The Upronistes, their enemies charged, were ‘saying that the bell has sounded and that the moment of civil war has arrived, there remain only a few days to exterminate all those who are not Upronistes.’¹⁵⁴ They made their charges in mid-April 1961; within two weeks the first act of ‘war’ would be witnessed, within six the revolution achieved, and within seven, crushed.

30 May–1 June 1961: Advise and Warn

Bourgmestre Ntahorwamiye called a meeting of communal councillors in Mparamirundi on 20 April 1961, and it would prove the staging-ground for a new form of conflict in the commune. For three days beforehand the Upronistes spread throughout the commune to let it be known that AP Ntawe was coming ‘to mistreat the most remarkable members of Uprona’, yet when it came to it Ntawe was nowhere to be seen.¹⁵⁵ Ntahorwamiye found only an angry crowd of armed Upronistes, led by the councillors Minani and Seryobagi, who demanded to know the whereabouts of the AP. A new phase of the struggle had begun, and the new figures of authority were at its heart.

Fed with surveillance information by the bourgmestre, Ntawe plotted his response. In the last week of May he sprung his trap. He caught some of the key Uproniste leaders returning in a truck from Usumbura, including Nahagere, Minani, Budonderwa and Seryobagi.¹⁵⁶ The captains escaped, but Minani and Budonderwa were remanded on charges that defined standard Uprona activity: refusing the calls of authority, holding unauthorised meetings, spreading rumours, and exciting the population ‘against the established powers’.¹⁵⁷ Both were sentenced

¹⁵⁴ ANB, AI 6 (68), Pié Rurimwindomyi, *Interrogations*: Barashubije, Mbonimpa, Butoyi, Gatoto, Sematuro, Barasokoroza, 15 April 1961.

¹⁵⁵ AAB, BUR 75 (5) and ANB, AI 6 (68), Ntahorwamiye Joseph, Letter to AP, 21 April 1961.

¹⁵⁶ AAB, BUR 74 (4), Jean Ntawe, *Rapport Administratif*, 31 May 1961.

¹⁵⁷ ANB, AI 5 (13), P. Cabri, *Interrogations*: Feuille d’audience, 1 June 1961.

to 6 months in prison, and fined at a reduced rate in deference to their restricted financial resources.

To the political audience in the *collines*, Ntawe and the *Tutelle* had proven the rumours of Uproniste persecution true. Minani and Budonderwa had been arrested and prosecuted for conducting party activities, after Ntawe was rumoured to be hell-bent on having them removed. Worse still, the two men had been apprehended on their way back from visiting the mwami. In their absence, anger in the hills reached a new peak. It was, indeed, ‘a veritable Uproniste insurrection’.¹⁵⁸

The day after the conviction, Ntawe visited the heart of enemy territory, Nahagere’s *colline* of Bigera. The population was furious. Ntawe was accompanied by *Territorials* Vandenbulcke and Cabri, but the Upronistes were not cowed.¹⁵⁹ A crowd of up to 400 people were there to meet them, armed with improvised weapons, and shouting threats against Ntawe’s life. All now knew that he arrested members of Uprona for no reason, that he would even seek to prevent Barundi from visiting their king, that he was ‘Baranyanka’s accomplice’.¹⁶⁰ Vandenbulcke, one of the few Belgians to speak Kirundi,¹⁶¹ attempted to talk to the crowd, but it soon became apparent that the officials had no choice but to retreat from the *colline*. In their absence, the party propagandists on either side regrouped. The former *sous-chef* Ntaganzwa gathered a meeting of Pédécistes at his house, which still stands on a ridge just to the south of Mparamirundi,¹⁶² while Upronistes coalesced into small armed bands that roved across the region, each seeking personal targets among their enemies.

The confrontation at Bigera demonstrated the extreme danger faced by the *Tutelle*. While dissent was directed towards Ntawe and the continued shadow of Baranyanka, the presence of

¹⁵⁸ Deslaurier, “Un monde politique,” p. 1021.

¹⁵⁹ ANB, AI 5 (13), P. Cabri, *Interrogations: Nteziryayo, Nyandwi, Nyawigwangaza*, 5 June 1961; ANB, AI 5 (13), Valère Vandenbulcke, *Interrogations: Mashavu, Ndabaherana, Ntabujana*, 5 June 1961.

¹⁶⁰ AAB, BUR 74 (4), Jean Ntawe, *Rapport Administratif*, 31 May 1961.

¹⁶¹ Valère Vandenbulcke, interview in Westrozebeke (Belgium), 21 July 2011; this contributed to an ‘Elite’ ranking in the Administration (*VDB*, M. de Ryck, *letter to Vandenbulcke*, 9 June 1949), but most agents preferred to pick up the accessible Swahili over the forbidding Kirundi.

¹⁶² Bariyuntura Daniel (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 19 April 2011.

Belgian agents barely exerted restraint among the angry populace. In desperation to restore something of the desired order, the mwami himself was summoned to visit the region the next day. Vandenbulcke recalls this connection as the principal means of *rapprochement* and understanding between Belgian authorities and angry populace; encountering a barricade out in the hills alone, he was able to talk peacefully with the men who blocked the road and act as the neutral intermediary by calling Mwambutsa to speak with them, much to their satisfaction.¹⁶³ So long as the *Tutelle* maintained its posture as a partner of the mwami and a servant of the people, a link and not the power, it would not be the target of dissent itself.

Mwambutsa did little to defuse the hatred against Ntawe, however. The complaints about arbitrary arrests and harassment of Upronistes were repeated to the mwami in Bigera, and, according to a partisan report from Baranyanka's son, Minister Ntidendereza, the people declared that since the government was only interim, supposing new authorities would soon be installed by the UN, they would pay no tax until their rightful leaders were in place.¹⁶⁴ But the most dramatic moment was an expression of anger that shocked the authorities unlike any other. A hotheaded, unmarried young man in his early twenties, named Buhunyeri, shouted at the king that if Vandenbulcke had not been there the day before, then Ntawe would not have left Bigera alive.¹⁶⁵ His voice was the closest the protesters came to the 'saboteur' politics of the frustrated young, 'whose politics is to open up discourses on society in its broadest and most specific terms';¹⁶⁶ he went beyond the leaders to open the expression of violent dissent even to the ears of sovereign authority.

Now alert to the problems faced in the north, the *Tutelle* set about seeking to amend its ignorance of the population. The Resident ordered the complete disarmament of the region,¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Valère Vandenbulcke, interview in Westrozebeke (Belgium), 12 September 2011.

¹⁶⁴ AAB, BUR 74 (4), J. B. Ntidendereza, *Rapport sur les incidents en Province de Kayanza*, 28 June 1961.

¹⁶⁵ ANB, AI 5 (13), Valère Vandenbulcke, *Interrogations: Tungirayo, Nkurikiye, Buhunyeri*, 7 June 1961. Buhunyeri was personally identified by Vandenbulcke, but denied making this threat.

¹⁶⁶ Deborah Durham, "Youth and the Social Imagination in Africa: Introduction to Parts 1 and 2," *Anthropological Quarterly* (2000): 113–120, p. 118.

¹⁶⁷ AAB, BUR 74 (4), H. Jacques, *Rélation des événements*, 1 July 1961, Règlement no. 26/61.

while the *Territorials* spread out throughout the borderland to interrogate the population on the causes of the troubles and the leaders that inspired them. *Ex-sous-chef* Ntaganzwa used the platform of interrogations to report that the Upronistes had ‘displayed a letter which they said they had received from the mwami and that authorised them to kill the people of the PDC; they had drawn up lists of our names, and the date on which each of us would be caught and beaten.’¹⁶⁸ Upronistes in return argued that the Ntaganzwa was on a violent campaign to convert them all to the PDC.¹⁶⁹ ‘He wants to continue to make the law among us,’ objected one man.¹⁷⁰ Others simply gave evidence that normal borderland life continued, people travelling to Rwandan markets every week.¹⁷¹

But an ominous theme emerged in Vandenbulcke’s interrogations. Several Upronistes told how they had gone to ‘advise’ their PDC neighbours. ‘Advise them how?’ the *Territorial* asked. ‘By beating them up a little bit,’ came the reply, again and again.¹⁷² The euphemism appeared with surprising regularity, denoting a shared discourse on the practices of political communication and violence in Mparamirundi. The word in Kirundi was *guhanura*; it carries connotations of warning, admonishing, as well as simply advising,¹⁷³ and it would reverberate throughout the troubles to come.

18–27 June 1961: Making Independence

Neither the PDC nor Uprona had been decapitated or immobilised by the events of May. With the leaders, Nahagere and Seryobagi, still at large, their PDC equivalents as free as ever,

¹⁶⁸ ANB, AI 5 (13), Valère Vandenbulcke, *Interrogations*: Sematuro, Ntawembarira, Ntaganzwa, 9 June 1961.

¹⁶⁹ ANB, AI 6 (69), Willy Belle, *Interrogations*: Kanyeshamba, Busangoye, Ntawigaya, Muhanda, 8 June 1961.

¹⁷⁰ ANB, AI 6 (69), P. Cabri, *Interrogations*: Sikubwabo, Bahigwa, Ndabumviye, Singurumukunzi, 8 June 1961.

¹⁷¹ ANB, AI 6 (69), Willy Belle, *Interrogations*: Kanyeshamba, Busangoye, Ntawigaya, Muhanda, 8 June 1961.

¹⁷² ANB, AI 5 (13), Valère Vandenbulcke, *Interrogations*: Mashavu, Ndabaheana, Ntabujana, 5 June 1961; ANB, AI 5 (13), Valère Vandenbulcke, *Interrogations*: Tungirayo, Nkurikiye, Buhunyeri, 7 June 1961.

¹⁷³ Rodegem, *Dictionnaire*.

and popular opinion finding Uprona's claims of governmental bias and aggression all the more plausible as more and more Upronistes ended up in prison, the countryside was primed for combustion.

It appeared that Mparamirundi was contagious. In areas around Ngozi town, noted the Belgian agent Dethier, Pédécistes were anxious at the idea of seeing members of Uprona under arrest, for fear of the consequences.¹⁷⁴ Westwards across the Kigali road in Ijene commune, a dynamic Uproniste named Furuguta was trying his best 'to fuck everything up';¹⁷⁵ he was gaining a reputation amongst the population for his daring smuggling runs, bringing Uproniste tracts across the border from Rwanda.¹⁷⁶ But in Busiga, Minister Ntidendereza reported the most alarming spark of contention. On the way out of mass at the mission church at Busiga, the local leaders of Uprona held an impromptu, illegal public meeting. They distributed small tracts that displayed the photograph of Rwagasore, and, according to Ntidendereza, declared, 'Prepare yourselves, arm yourselves, soon we are going to begin.'¹⁷⁷ Bourgmestre Bucumi Côme stood nearby, but maintained a studious silence.

This was the first appearance of the photo tract in the north, a remarkable and powerful innovation in Uprona's propaganda arsenal.¹⁷⁸ Echoing the form and power of Mwambutsa's public letters, it presented Rwagasore with unsurpassed authority and prestige, *imfura y'Umwami y'Uburundi*, first-born son of the king. Without mentioning his name, the tract ridiculed Baranyanka as the man who would only ever say *Ndiyo Bwana*, 'Yes, sir' in Swahili, to the Whites. Baranyanka had once been nicknamed 'The Interpreter', *Musemyi* in Swahili, for his linguistic ability,¹⁷⁹ and now the language of communication between collaborating chiefs and Europeans was made a matter of political alienation for the *banyagihugu*, a mat-

¹⁷⁴ AAB, BUR 74 (4), R. Dethier, *Rapport succinct*, 16 June 1961.

¹⁷⁵ 'foutre de la pagaille', perhaps a stronger translation than he intended, although note Dethier's colourful description of Ntawe above, p. 119.

¹⁷⁶ Bahimanga Paul (pseud.), interview in Ruhororo (Kabarore), 27 April 2011.

¹⁷⁷ AAB, BUR 74 (4), J. B. Ntidendereza, *Rapport sur les incidents en Province de Kayanza*, 28 June 1961.

¹⁷⁸ Also mentioned in Karuzi province in January 1961 (AAB, BUR 65 (1), *BI 3*, (Kitega), 5 January 1961).

¹⁷⁹ Chrétien, "Le métier d'historien," p. 454.



Figure 3.4: The 'Photo Tract' of Rwagasore distributed in Busiga in June 1961. *AAB*, BUR 65 (1).

ter of contemptuous absurdity; the association of Swahili and power in Belgian colonial rule, extended perforce into Burundi as Belgian agents struggled with the forbidding Kirundi, was exposed as a weakness of authority in Uproniste ridicule.¹⁸⁰ 'The greatest enemy of authority ... is contempt,' notes Arendt, 'and the surest way to undermine it is laughter.'¹⁸¹ Glorifying Rwagasore and mocking Baranyanka, the powerfully visual tract was a potent weapon of political communication, the sight of it today bringing back smiles and laughter to those who treasured it at the time. Upronistes began to affix the tract to their doors, marking homes,

¹⁸⁰ cf. Johannes Fabian, *Language and Colonial Power: The Appropriation of Swahili in the Former Belgian Congo, 1880–1938* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

¹⁸¹ Arendt, "What is Authority?" p. 45.

and soon districts, as collectively for Uprona. Social pressure spread its acceptance like a widely-accepted rumour, and the brewing dissent of the north blossomed in a powerful visual display.

The Upronistes took to the roads, challenging passers-by to produce Uprona membership cards; they set up checks at major junctions, attacking those who came up from the Belgian provincial centres, preventing others from heading to Baranyanka's palace or the Territorial offices.¹⁸² Roadblocks appeared across the region.¹⁸³ Clashes were reported in Busiga, in areas close to Bigera *colline*, when on the evening of 21 June a lone Uproniste foolishly threatened a group of armed Pédécistes that they would all be killed after Independence;¹⁸⁴ they attacked, leaving him with a cracked skull and a spear blow to the lung, before other Upronistes retaliated. The partisans on either side began to form into roving groups, passing through the hills armed, and running at the sight of Europeans.¹⁸⁵

The next day, violence spread across the three communes of Busiga, Mparamirundi and Ijene. According to Minister Ntidendereza, 'Without any reserve the leaders of Uprona announced their intention to take action without delay, systematically attacking pre-determined individuals.'¹⁸⁶ He claimed a concerted regional campaign was being orchestrated, with the Ijene agitator Furuguta travelling to confer with Nahagere's cadres in Mparamirundi and returning with a declaration for the population: 'War is about to break out.' That day, in the Ijene border *colline* of Manga, a family affiliated with the PDC was attacked at home. The assailants directed by their commanders with whistles; one of the family was reported killed, another gravely injured.¹⁸⁷ To Ntidendereza, the militants of Mparamirundi were actively exporting their violence to their neighbours, retaining their central strongholds as bases for

¹⁸² AAB, BUR 74 (4), J. B. Ntidendereza, *Rapport sur les incidents en Province de Kayanza*, 28 June 1961.

¹⁸³ AAB, BUR 75 (5), Igor Reisdorff, letter to Résident Général, 3 July 1961.

¹⁸⁴ AAB, BUR 75 (5), P. de Fays, *Province de Kayanza*, 23 June 1961.

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.*; AAB, BUR 74 (4), H. Jacques, *Rélation des événements*, 1 July 1961.

¹⁸⁶ AAB, BUR 74 (4), J. B. Ntidendereza, *Rapport sur les incidents en Province de Kayanza*, 28 June 1961.

¹⁸⁷ AAB, BUR 75 (5), P. de Fays, *Province de Kayanza*, 23 June 1961; *Rudipresse* (Usumbura), "Incidents en Territoire de Ngozi," 1 July 1961, pp. 4–5.

military training.¹⁸⁸ But it was not all one way; in Busiga Bamboneyo Thaddée, a proud old Uproniste, tells of how he was forced to flee to the wilds, living for the next three months in the forests while Pédécistes sought to kill him.¹⁸⁹ Tension and fear reigned throughout the community. ‘Someone would whistle and all the people would be out in the road,’ recalls the Pédéciste’s son Ndayizeye.¹⁹⁰ It was bad, he considered, but the people still knew restraint; if it happened today the battle would have rivalled the civil war.

The Uproniste *banyagihugu* of the borderland were Fanon’s ‘new men’, albeit far more restricted in their use of violence than he diagnosed.¹⁹¹ They attempted to make Independence a reality, while their national leaders wrestled with the procedure of roundtable negotiations and electoral politics. Roadblocks were overt strikes against the authority of the rejected, colonial order, breaking the lines of communication to chief and *Tutelle* centres. The Upronistes sought to reorder the geography of power in the rural world according to their conceptions of rightful authority, which neither Baranyanka nor the Belgians possessed. The power that the barriers therefore illustrated, the ability or even right to control the population, stood in imitation and rejection of the state authority. The roadblock gave power to command and define order in society and geography. And as they had themselves been targeted and harassed by power, they listed their Pédéciste enemies for violent reprimand. Uprona was exerted as the definition of social order, set in profile by the exclusion of Pédécistes.

The governmental response was startled and weak. Ntidendereza held a meeting with the bourgmestres and communal councillors of the region, but the bourgmestres of the communes in crisis, including Bucumi and Ntahorwamiye, sent their excuses and remained at home.¹⁹² The *Tutelle* sent Belgian paratroopers on patrol, but with no great strength of numbers the violence continued. The next day Bucumi’s deputy Ntigacika went hunting for their local *sous-chef* Nkurikiye, but he was already in hiding; another man was killed in Ijene, allegedly

¹⁸⁸ AAB, BUR 74 (4), J. B. Ntidendereza, *Rapport sur les incidents en Province de Kayanza*, 28 June 1961.

¹⁸⁹ Bamboneyo Thaddée, interview in Mihigo (Busiga), 23 February 2011.

¹⁹⁰ Ndayizeye Pascal (pseud.), interview in Cendajuru (Busiga), 26 April 2011.

¹⁹¹ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin Classics, 2001 [1961]), p. 28.

¹⁹² AAB, BUR 74 (4), H. Jacques, *Rélation des événements*, 1 July 1961.

by infiltrators from Mparamirundi.¹⁹³

The dawn of 24 June saw the tendrils of violence spreading further, as militancy compounded militancy. Set afire with help from Mparamirundi, Ijene now sent its own cadres west to target Kabarore Pédécistes, including the local *ex-sous-chef*.¹⁹⁴ The disarmament order was extended, weapons now outlawed in Ijene, Busiga and Kabuye communes as well as Mparamirundi.¹⁹⁵ Police posts were installed at the communal centres in Ijene and Busiga, Belgian paratroopers patrolled the region, and a detachment of just fifteen territorial police, under the command of a Belgian Commissioner but with the unfortunate presence of Ntawe himself, was assigned to ‘reestablish order’. ‘Kamina is coming!’ became the call of alarm for the population in the hills, the nickname denoting the continued association of the colonial police with the old *Force publique* base in Congo.¹⁹⁶

The troubles of the north were drawing national and international attention. The President of the UN Commission in Ruanda-Urundi urged calm, while the *Groupe d’Elite Murundi*, a council intended to be representative of the nation and of all the parties, resolved to send a commission of inquiry to inspect the region. ‘The Elites of the country note without surprise,’ the resolution declared, ‘that the quarrels that oppose the poor people of our *collines* pivot on two great antagonists of the Aristocracy.’¹⁹⁷ Baranyanka and Rwagasore were thus pre-emptively censured, the barbed remark reflecting the influence of the *Groupe’s* chairman Nigane Emmanuel, Minister for Social Affairs and president of the PP. But the *Groupe* equally revealed their attitude as fully in line with that of Ntidendereza and the *Tutelle*; they looked for rogue leaders who directed the people, rather than examining the expression of the people at large.

Trying to catch up to events beyond its control, the *Tutelle* extended for the second time its emergency order forbidding the population carrying ‘firearms, spears, javelins, bows,

¹⁹³ AAB, BUR 74 (4), J. B. Ntidendereza, *Rapport sur les incidents en Province de Kayanza*, 28 June 1961.

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ AAB, BUR 74 (4), H. Jacques, *Rélation des événements*, 1 July 1961.

¹⁹⁶ Ndayizeye Pascal (pseud.), interview in Cendajuru (Busiga), 26 April 2011.

¹⁹⁷ AAB, BUR 75 (5), Groupe d’Elite, *Recommandations de l’élite du Burundi*, 25 June 1961.

arrows, axes, machetes, any sort of knife, slings, cudgels or clubs', so that the regulation now encompassed the whole of Kayanza Province.¹⁹⁸ A reiteration of the *réunion d'information* campaign was launched, this time as a means of repression. Results, as in the first operation, were mixed. In Ijene, with Ntawe calling for calm and Vandembulcke explaining the ban on weapons, 1,500 people apparently listened attentively and without incident, yet in Kabuye, with up to 2,000 attendees, 'the meeting was stormy and the dispersion of the crowd was achieved with difficulty'.¹⁹⁹ Vandembulcke today reflects on the rather sensationalist tone of such numbers in many of the *Tutelle's* documents, suggesting that the crowd of 2,000 angry Barundi is quite the exaggeration.²⁰⁰

But while persuasion was being attempted in the north, further southwards the *Tutelle* tried to exert its power. In the commune of Katara, an arrest warrant was issued for a particularly difficult Uprona leader named Ciza Pacifique. The local bourgmestre arrived at his home accompanied by five communal police, but upon seeing them Ciza began whistling; 'soon, numerous whistles replied,' and 300 armed men assembled to free him.²⁰¹ Three of the police were wounded, while the bourgmestre fled to take refuge at the Katara mission. In the hills surrounding Ciza's home, shouts of rebellion terrified the *Tutelle*. 'Go with your axes to destroy the tyres of their vehicles,' they heard the people cry; 'Go and 'advise' them all.'²⁰² *Guhanura*, the warning 'advice' of assault, was spreading. Three men were caught distributing arms in the hills, 'saying to the population that it was time to carry out the *uguhanura*'; they were inspired by an unknown man from the commune of Busiga, 'where they did good *uguhanura* work. He said the work must be extended into the Province of Ngozi'.²⁰³ The north was unilaterally withdrawing from the colonial order. Liberating a

¹⁹⁸ AAB, BUR 75 (5), Igor Reisdorff, *Réglement no. 53/61*, 26 June 1961.

¹⁹⁹ AAB, BUR 74 (4), H. Jacques, *Rélation des événements*, 1 July 1961.

²⁰⁰ Valère Vandembulcke, interview in Westrozebeke (Belgium), 12 September 2011.

²⁰¹ *Rudipresse*, "Les incidents de Kayanza," 8 July 1961, p. 4; AAB, BUR 74 (4), H. Jacques, *Rélation des événements*, 1 July 1961.

²⁰² *ibid.*

²⁰³ AAB, BUR 74 (4), Bandy Urbain, *Notes sur les faits constatés dans la Province de Kayanza*, 29 June

local Uproniste propagandist from out of the hands of twelve territorial police, fifty men and women gathered to withdraw their children from the mission school in Kabuye.²⁰⁴ The ‘personalisation’ of dissent in 1960 had swung completely in the opposite direction, and whole communities committed to an entirely Uproniste order.

Prominent Pédécistes began defecting.²⁰⁵ The whole area was becoming dangerous for the government to enter. Attempting to conduct an arrest in Kabuye commune, the territorial police were at first resisted, then driven off by, they claimed, 600 men armed with spears and clubs.²⁰⁶ The reaction of thwarted authority then took a military turn. Gun cartridges and grenades were distributed, and a pitched battle was fought on the road. Stones were thrown at the police, who retaliated with four grenades, but in the end they could only retreat, breaking through a roadblock of trees and stones that had been erected to prevent their escape. They left with taunts ringing in their ears: ‘Release our prisoners, give back our weapons, and above all, never come back.’²⁰⁷

Dissent had graduated to wholesale rebellion. Facing off against police, people in Katara commune tore off their shirts and jeered, ‘Fire, the Barundi are many, and there will always be enough to fight you.’²⁰⁸ Upronistes rejected the new authorities and manifested their ability to resist the power of the Administration. Facing mass opposition even on the edges of the rebellion in Kabuye and Katara, the government withdrew entirely from the heartland in Ijene, Mparamirundi and Busiga, retreating ‘to gather force and avoid being taken unarmed like in Kabuye’.²⁰⁹ The Uproniste rebels were in complete control of the borderland.

1961.

²⁰⁴ AAB, BUR 74 (4), Bandy Urbain, *Notes sur les faits constatés dans la Province de Kayanza*, 29 June 1961; AAB, BUR 74 (4), H. Jacques, *Rélation des événements*, 1 July 1961.

²⁰⁵ AAB, BUR 74 (4), Bandy Urbain, *Notes sur les faits constatés dans la Province de Kayanza*, 29 June 1961.

²⁰⁶ AAB, BUR 74 (4), H. Jacques, *Rélation des événements*, 1 July 1961.

²⁰⁷ *ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *ibid.*

28 June–1 July 1961: Police Action

On 28 June, the government struck back. Forty metropolitan soldiers, forty territorial police, and seventeen Territorial agents, under the command of Vandembulcke, returned to the hill of the Katara Uproniste Ciza in the early hours of the morning, establishing a cordon around his house.²¹⁰ But news swiftly spread of the mission, and outraged neighbours gathered on the slopes. Still in the twilight before dawn, not yet 6 o'clock, they began pelting the soldiers with stones, forcing a retreat. With more people coming and the atmosphere of violence growing, Vandembulcke warned the crowd three times in Kirundi; when they would not back down he gave the order to fire.²¹¹ The crowd attacked with spears, stones, arrows and machetes in the face of bullets and grenades, but soon they fell back for good.

In the aftermath, it was revealed that the troops had killed at least two of the crowd, possibly as many as four.²¹² The troops themselves had escaped with light injuries, two receiving blows from machetes and one police officer bitten on the finger.²¹³ By half past six in the morning, with the sun rising, the battle was over. But Ciza, now terrified by the sounds of death and battle outside his house, was certain he would be shot the moment he set foot outside. Speaking through a megaphone, Vandembulcke cut a deal; the *Territorial* would come as close as the doorway, and reach through to take his hand. Led out by the senior Belgian officer in the Territory, he could be reassured that the paratroopers would not shoot. Through the smoke of grenades, hand in hand with the *Territorial*, Ciza was brought out of his home and into custody.²¹⁴

²¹⁰ AAB, BUR 74 (4), H. Jacques, *Rélation des événements*, 1 July 1961.

²¹¹ Valère Vandembulcke, interview in Westrozebeke (Belgium), 21 July 2011; *Rudipresse*, “Les incidents de Kayanza”; AAB, BUR 74 (4), H. Jacques, *Rélation des événements*, 1 July 1961.

²¹² The official tally was two dead, five seriously wounded (*ibid.*); the *Groupe d'Elite* reported three dead, and a fourth gravely wounded (AAB, BUR 74 (4), Bandy Urbain, *Notes sur les faits constatés dans la Province de Kayanza*, 29 June 1961); after Independence, four were remembered killed in Katara by Belgian paratroopers (ANB, BI 6 (75), Bizimana Septime, Letter to Prime Minister, 21 August 1962).

²¹³ AAB, BUR 74 (4), H. Jacques, *Rélation des événements*, 1 July 1961.

²¹⁴ Valère Vandembulcke, interview in Westrozebeke (Belgium), 21 July 2011.

For the next hour, Vandembulcke and his assistant held an impromptu *réunion d'information* intended to bring peace to a violent morning, as Ciza's defenders set down their weapons and sat on the grass. 'Calm was complete throughout,' the report claimed.²¹⁵

The Belgian response to the rebellious region illustrated Benjamin's suggestion that 'violence, when not in the hands of the law, threatens it not by the ends that it may pursue but by its mere existence outside the law.'²¹⁶ The ability of the Upronistes to apply violence within society implied the weakness, even the non-existence of the state to those within the rebel areas. The treatment of the repression as a police action, however violent and militarised, was crucial; the Belgians were not to reconquer the territory, but to apply the rule of their law. The scale of the military operation, however, sent a different message, and to a population already breaking free of Belgian control it appeared an invasion.

In the wake of the violence the *Groupe d'Elite* cut their inspection short with a deferential visit to Baranyanka. The ex-chief laid all the blame on Rwagasore, and described the rumours of *uguhanura* as if such 'advice' was a sinister cult.²¹⁷ He claimed the photo tract had announced that Rwagasore was going to be king; bizarrely, he argued that the tract's mockery of the man who always said '*Ndiyo Bwana*' was aimed not at himself, but at Mwambutsa. This preposterously skewed account was recorded, and the rest of the inspection called off. The *Groupe* had not entered the heartlands of Ijene, Mparamirundi and Busiga as planned, but now decided to return to give their report. Only the Uprona Secretary Appollinaire Siniremera, the party's representative in the *Groupe* mission, objected, but 'it was replied to him that all the information that the commission had received was amply sufficient to inform the authorities'.

The next day, the national committee of Uprona sought strenuously to distance itself from the violence in the north. A special tract was released, formally addressed to 'all the Upronistes of the province of Kayanza', but clearly targeted more pertinently at those to whom it was

²¹⁵ AAB, BUR 74 (4), H. Jacques, *Rélation des événements*, 1 July 1961.

²¹⁶ Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," in *Reflections* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace, 1978), p. 283

²¹⁷ AAB, BUR 74 (4), Bandyia Urbain, *Notes sur les faits constatés dans la Province de Kayanza*, 29 June 1961.

copied: the mwami, the Belgian authorities and the UN.²¹⁸ The party ordered its members to ‘take care that this disorder does not derive from you, otherwise you violate the law of the mwami, SEBARUNDI [‘Father of the Nation’]’. The tract commanded the Upronistes to be Christlike, to turn the other cheek, since ‘vengeance is wrong’. Rural activists proved themselves willing to create Independence through violence; the party’s official disownment of the rebellion only came as it became clear that it was doomed.²¹⁹

With even Uprona backing away from the northern rebels, the *Tutelle* could finally turn its attention to the heartlands of the uprising. The Katara battle was judged a success; in the official estimation, ‘the population’s smouldering anger turned against the ringleader Ciza, whom they held responsible for the events of the day before.’²²⁰ This cleared the way for a final crackdown on the territories at the heart of the rebellion. 29 June 1961 saw a military operation launched in Busiga that far exceeded any other conducted in Burundi during the late colonial period in terms of logistics and weaponry, yet one that resulted in no casualties. It was overwhelming force of the most absolute degree, and asserted the total power of the *Tutelle* in northern Burundi. Authority was no longer the primary concern.

Once again, the operation began before dawn. Nineteen *Territorials* led sixty police, two squads from the Fifth Regiment of the Belgian army and another of paratroopers. Heavier trucks were left on the main road as the troops wound their way through the low depression of central Busiga, hoping to catch three men ‘wanted for death threats and rebellion’ still asleep in bed; the bourgmestre Bucumi was spared, but his second-in-command, the mason Ntigacika, was on the wanted list. The advance of the force was drawn out with combat in mind. A swift-moving wing arced round two *collines*, while the *Territorials* and two metropolitan squads penetrated the centre and plucked their targets from their beds. Ntigacika and another were taken, although the third man was nowhere to be found. The secondary aims of the mission now came into play, and the troops began a general check on the identities and tax status of

²¹⁸ AAB, BUR 65 (1), Uprona, *Ku Badasigana ba Province ya Kayanza*, 29 June 1961.

²¹⁹ cf. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 47–54.

²²⁰ AAB, BUR 74 (4), H. Jacques, *Rélation des événements*, 1 July 1961. The following narrative is substantially drawn from this report.

all the other people caught within the military cordon.

The sun was rising. With the dawn, ‘cries came from all sides’.²²¹ A truck that had been left waiting on the main road was called up, but found that a roadblock had been thrown down behind the troops. The barrier was not guarded and was quickly disassembled, but as soon as the truck had passed the local people rolled the stones back into place; demolished once more, it was again promptly restored as soon as the government troops were out of sight. ‘The saboteurs remained nearby, shouting and gesticulating’; as the troops pulled apart the roadblock for a third time, the mischievous rebels laughed derisively, but were met with a grenade. They fled, and the curious game of the roadblock, its practical nuisance and symbolic challenge, was over.

‘Down below, in the marsh, the perimeter cordon of metropolitan soldiers was faced with natives armed with spears and overwhelmed with excitement,’ recorded the official report, replete with the resonant tropes of colonial conquest mythologies; ‘the situation could explode at any moment.’ Here in the lowest reaches of Busiga commune the ground was marshy, but dotted with close-set banana plantations and coffee trees, a poor battleground for the soldiers. As the day rose, more people from the neighbouring hills began to gather amongst the coffee trees. ‘You police, Barundi like us,’ the report claimed the hidden combatants taunted, ‘why do you work for the Europeans? Leave them, and come to our side.’²²²

Fearing another bloody confrontation, the expedition called on air support. Two helicopters scoured the valleys, pouncing on groups of Barundi who had gathered in the marsh or sheltered in the plantations. No casualties were reported, and the people scattered; the invasion turned to policing by strength. The column returned by a roundabout route to Kayanza, declaiming political information by loudspeaker along the road. Along the way, marijuana was discovered in the cultivations of local Twa farmers, while a box of ‘Photo Rwagasore’ tracts was seized. In all the houses caught within the cordon, Rwagasore’s image was displayed in abundance, affixed to every doorpost; wads of the tracts now litter the files of the archives in Brussels.

²²¹ AAB, BUR 74 (4), H. Jacques, *Rélation des événements*, 1 July 1961.

²²² *ibid.*

The next two days saw the final sweep of the region, pushing at last towards Mparamirundi commune. The same huge strength was assembled, with a single helicopter accompanying the column as it was arrayed in military formation. The *Territorials* sifted through the population, checking identities, inspecting tax payments. Twenty three unplanned arrests were made for tax infractions, weapons possession and marijuana cultivation. Having cleared the route through Busiga, Kabuye and Mparamirundi, the column finally descended on Bigera *colline* to arrest Nahagere, Seryobagi and another two leaders, but the military occupation of the northern communes had done its work; the propagandists had fled to Usumbura. Arrest warrants were issued to pick them up at ease,²²³ and attention settled on the remaining community and its sullen silence. Women and children came out to watch the armed procession, and people volunteered their tax booklet as soon as the police approached. The rest of the commune now appeared thoroughly suppressed; ‘the natives are no longer anxious,’ the report recorded; ‘they reply to the calls that are made on them.’²²⁴ Obedience was peace, and the mission judged a success,²²⁵ the *Territorials* praised for the ‘speed and firmness’ of their restoration of Belgian order.²²⁶ The border rebellion was over.

3.5 *Uguhanura*: Dissent, Violence and Authority

Dissent against the totalising implications of Baranyanka’s structural authority had become, by the end, a practical and violent installation of limited independence in the borderland. Reflecting on Uprona’s final disownment of the insurrection and the unceasing anger expressed even after Mwambutsa’s personal intervention, Deslaurier considers that the rebels ‘recognised almost no authority.’²²⁷ Yet this was no exit option; rather, dissent was expressed within the hierarchy of authority, not against it. The rebels invested in the subversive authority of

²²³ Warrants collected in *ANB*, AI 6 (68).

²²⁴ *AAB*, BUR 74 (4), H. Jacques, *Rélation des événements*, 1 July 1961.

²²⁵ *AAB*, BUR 75 (5), Igor Reisdorff, letter to Résident Général, 3 July 1961.

²²⁶ *VDB*, Igor Reisdorff, letter to Vandembulcke, 4 July 1961.

²²⁷ Deslaurier, “Un monde politique,” p. 1028.

the sovereign, strengthened their affiliation to the summit of hierarchy in order to challenge and reconstitute the levels in between, displacing the middle hierarchy with one of their own construction. Rebels in the name of the king, or at least the king's son, they invoked the myth of the sovereign in order to arrogate to themselves the power to displace those who lay between them and the summit. 'The myth taught hostility and at least passive resistance to officials,' wrote Field, of a monarch far removed in culture and circumstance yet remarkably similar in function.²²⁸ Just as in the Tsarist Russia he explores, once rebellion broke out, 'it took force and intimidation to restore submission, and officials could not subdue peasant monarchists by invoking the monarch they served.' The community reached beyond the immediate state representative and made a claim on the sovereign. It was precisely the act that the communal meeting, Baranyanka's self-presentation as the immediate authority in the community, sought to prevent.

The act of dissent confirmed that authority was within the gift of the subject. It could be withheld from one claimant and granted to another. Yet the one to whom authority was attributed did not entirely wield the power of command; contrary to Arendt's delineations, authority did not always entail obedience.²²⁹ For the Barundi rebels, even the monarch himself could not overrule the myth they made of him. When Mwambutsa urged calm, the population neither obeyed him nor abandoned their monarchism. The rebels may have invested in their own Burundi *Kabaka Yekka*,²³⁰ in which the king stood not alone but alongside his son, yet this was not entirely a case of naiveté.²³¹ Rather, they demonstrated that the attribution of authority could be a liberating act, and the sovereign partially constructed

²²⁸ Daniel Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar* (London and Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1976), p. 209.

²²⁹ Arendt, "What is Authority?" p. 92.

²³⁰ The Buganda 'King Alone' movement, founded in May 1961, by which time the ideology of the Mparimirundi rebels was fully formed. See Cherry Gertzel, "How Kabaka Yekka Came to Be," *Africa Report* 9, no. 9 (1964): 9–13; I. R. Hancock, "Patriotism and Neo-Traditionalism in Buganda: The Kabaka Yekka ('The King Alone') Movement, 1961–1962," *Journal of African History* 11, no. 3 (1970): 419–434.

²³¹ cf. Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar*, pp. 210–211.

by the subjects. They urged the image of the subversive king,²³² an archetype split hazily between the mwami and his son, and so could act in ‘obedience’ to their own imaginings of a revolutionary sovereign’s purpose. Thus it seemed that one could be both citizen and subject. Since it was the subject that defined the authority of the sovereign, even in subjecthood there was the premise of engagement and reciprocity that laid the groundwork for citizenship.

Dissent saw the rural population approach the state and seek to change it, through the dual power of direct action and submission to the partially imagined sovereign. The rule of the decentralised despot did not suppress the spread of the ideas of a citizenry, although it tried; Baranyanka’s insistence that the people vote for his party because they lived in his territory was only challenged with the intrusion of an alternative figure of higher authority. Dissent against the obligation to bow only to Baranyanka opened up the question of what the substance of the relationship with power should be, if obedience was no longer the only option; dissent was the beginnings of citizenship. But it was only permitted through the invocation of the ‘subject-position’,²³³ drawing power to alter the state through submission to the revolutionary king.

While fundamental, however, such focus on the vertical hierarchy of authority bypasses an inescapable aspect of the Mparamirundi rebellion. Dissent against a figure of power within the hierarchy of authority would inevitably divide the community, as others chose the path of loyalty.²³⁴ Physical violence began not between people and state, but among the people, as lists of targets were assembled, arguments and threats between equals grew brutal, and barricades were placed across the roads to check and control the community. The violence of *uguhanura*, the Upronistes’ alarming ‘advice’, was unequivocally coercive, intended to produce a result other than the physical impairment of the recipient. The latter was simultaneously target and victim, according to the definitions summarised by Kalyvas; victims of the assault,

²³² Chrétien, “Pouvoir d’état.”

²³³ Sam Hickey, “Caught at the Crossroads: Citizenship, Marginality and the Mbororo Fulani in Northwest Cameroon,” in *Making Nations, Creating Strangers: States and Citizenship in Africa*, ed. Sara Dorman, Daniel Hammett, and Paul Nugent (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 83–104, p. 101.

²³⁴ cf. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, pp. 183–217.

they were also the targets who were to learn from their victimisation, to be coerced by violence to change their ways and rejoin society.²³⁵

Controlling barricades, inspecting membership cards and exacting ‘advice’ on neighbours who attributed authority to the wrong external figure were acts that claimed for the attackers the role of ‘community policing’, the self-designation of vigilantes.²³⁶ The violence was bureaucratic, policing, corrective; it was, in short, a demonstration of the ‘lawmaking function’ of violence, establishing a new order, enforcing its boundaries and defining its laws of inclusion and criminality.²³⁷ In the use of a methodological, bureaucratic form of violence dependent on classification and control, sanitised by connotations of law and policing, the Upronistes attempted to reconstruct the state from the margins, in their own image. By virtue of their party and their sovereign they claimed public authority.

They were thus something of a ‘twilight institution’ between state and not-state,²³⁸ their ‘advice’ manifesting as vigilantism against their neighbours and conducted through invocation of the idea of the state, if not the institutions of state themselves.²³⁹ In a distinctly unromantic ‘democratic moment’ of intra-communal violence,²⁴⁰ the Uproniste rebels sought not only to ‘engage in sovereign acts that mimic the state’s monopoly on violence, but engage in sovereign acts that are constitutive of a whole range of forms of identification’.²⁴¹ The violence of *uguhanura* went some distance to defining the identity and behaviour of the Uproniste citizen, or at least the political community to which the citizen should belong. Where Reno finds

²³⁵ Stathis N Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 26.

²³⁶ cf. e.g. David M Anderson, “Vigilantes, Violence and the Politics of Public Order in Kenya,” *African Affairs* 101 (2002): 531–555.

²³⁷ Benjamin, “Critique of Violence,” p. 283.

²³⁸ Christian Lund, “Twilight Institutions: Public Authority and Local Politics in Africa,” *Development and Change* 37, no. 4 (2006): 685–705.

²³⁹ cf. the distinction of Abrams, “Notes on the Difficulty.”

²⁴⁰ cf. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, p. 213.

²⁴¹ Lars Buur, “Reordering Society: Vigilantism and Expressions of Sovereignty in Port Elizabeth’s Townships,” *Development and Change* 37, no. 4 (2006): 735–757, p. 755.

modern rebels seeking citizens to endorse their legitimacy as rulers,²⁴² the Upronistes behaved rather as citizen-rebels, seeking to create fellow citizens, and give form to a central state above them. With the legitimate political community in formation as an Uproniste order, belonging to this community required Uproniste conviction in the locally-defined terms of authority and hierarchy, and violence was applied to discipline those who deviated from the strictures of this belonging, ‘advising’ that they join the consensus community; Uprona orthodoxy was the ‘regulating idea’ of the new political community, delimited by force.²⁴³ Yet to the victim it would scarcely appear different from the subject-making, quotidian violence of Baranyanka’s decades in power, and such paradoxical ‘citizen-making’ violence lay the foundation for a tyranny of political orthodoxy that would blossom when the same Uprona hierarchy that abandoned the rebels in 1961 overtook the state at Independence.

While culminating in such enforced consensus, the idea of dissent against the existing local political cosmology grew from its first expression of civil disobedience to become a violent demonstration of the political vibrancy of the borderland community. The Mparamirundi rebellion offers thus the same possibilities for analysis as other rural revolts; the covert, overt and eventually violent expression of dissent challenges ‘entrenched beliefs amongst dominant groups ... that rural Africans had no conception of wider political issues and hence lacked the capacity to participate in ‘modern’ or ‘European’ political processes and institutions.’²⁴⁴ Such beliefs were unquestioned by both Belgian and Barundi elites even during the unfolding of the rebellion, each pursuing only leaders and assuming only obedience even among those in full insurrection. Yet the imprisonment of leaders such as Minani and Budonderwa encouraged mass rebellion rather than thwarting it. The rebellion was not crushed by the final removal of

²⁴² William Reno, “African Rebels and the Citizenship Question,” in *Making Nations, Creating Strangers: States and Citizenship in Africa*, ed. Sara Dorman, Daniel Hammett, and Paul Nugent (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 221–236.

²⁴³ cf. Dominique Schnapper, *La communauté des citoyens. Sur l’idée moderne de la nation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), pp. 101–108.

²⁴⁴ William Beinart and Colin Bundy, *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa: Politics and Popular Movements in the Transkei and Eastern Cape, 1890–1930* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), p. 25.

the 'ringleaders', but by the colossal force, the overwhelming power, by which these arrests were achieved. At Ciza's arrest his neighbours only backed down when several of their number were killed; in Busiga, the crowds only fled when helicopters drove them from the banana groves.

But if action were insufficient to prove political investment, we might turn to discourse. Laely has argued that since those in power within 'traditional' society in Burundi 'cultivated an aura of mystery and elevation,' a phenomenon certainly applicable to Baranyanka's self-presentation, 'a public political discourse hardly existed.'²⁴⁵ Yet in the crescendo of political activity in the hills this was profoundly challenged. Every twist of the political game was signalled by rumour, an exchange of news and careful evaluation of truth that carried a perspective of public opinion. The relative authority and prestige attributed to Rwagasore and Baranyanka was not instinctive; it was balanced in the exchange of news over the movements of each great man, and in discussion over their response. People clustered at the hint of Rwagasore's presence; at Baranyanka's arrival, they fled or stayed silent. It was a dramatic change from their behaviour in his presence for years beforehand, as meetings turned from confirmations of the chief's authority to its abrogation. In turn, popular engagement in the 'modern' political process was loudly proclaimed when its European architects tampered with it. The rural community abandoned tainted democracy in disgust and frustration, speaking of the rigged process precisely for its hypocrisy in imposing representatives and limiting choice. Questions of the legitimate behaviour of legitimate authority were tested in communal news. Upronistes claimed they were under harassment, encouraged the rumour that Ntawe sought to imprison them unjustly; the community considered and acknowledged the saliency of such a definition of harassment and justice by sustaining the story, and when it was proved true the response was fury.

As the propagandists were eliminated and overwhelming force exerted to quiet the population, the expression of popular dissent directly to the state faded; the loss of local intellectuals as the confrontational means of political linkage blunted the vocalisation of dissent, but the political debate continued. At the national elections of September 1961, the borderland voted

²⁴⁵ Laely, "Peasants, Local Communities," p. 705.

in the same massive numbers as the rest of the nation for Rwagasore's party. With an 80% turnout rate, Uprona candidates in the borderland received 95% of the vote.²⁴⁶

The assassination of Rwagasore would be the final catastrophic act that closed the consensus of communal debate in the aftermath of the rebellion. Formal power, prestige and influence abolished or eroded, Baranyanka's family and his party were now politically destroyed. His son Biroli, one of those hanged for Rwagasore's murder, became satirised and demonised after death as *Birozi*, denoting *ibirozi*, 'witchcraft';²⁴⁷ his true name means 'spectacle', 'ceremony', 'grandeur'.²⁴⁸ Much like the discourse of rumour, such nicknames, *amazina z'amanegurano*,²⁴⁹ became a matter of social cohesion and political censure as the *banyagihugu* expressed their unanimous view on the exile of the criminal powerful from the community, marking the line between 'people and non-people'.²⁵⁰

But for Baranyanka himself the fear and resentment of the population turned to pity. The tragedy of the former chief is a common coda to his memory today. 'His life ended sadly,' remembers Magenge Patrice, counting out how many of the chief's relatives were hanged, but he tells that when they came to arrest Baranyanka himself the chief cut a pathetic figure that still evoked his old wiles: he faked malaria, Magenge says, and had himself taken to hospital instead of prison.²⁵¹ Baranyanka was indeed an old and poorly man, found suffering in the *Clinique Prince Louis Rwagasore* three years later.²⁵² Pity and mockery, the greatest enemies of authority, shattered what remained of the family's hold on the borderland, and

²⁴⁶ Figures collected in Deslaurier, "Un monde politique."

²⁴⁷ Sibomana Justine (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 20 April 2011; Ntiruvakure Sévérin, interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 21 April 2011; Bahimanga Paul (pseud.), interview in Ruhororo (Kabarore), 27 April 2011.

²⁴⁸ Rodegem, *Dictionnaire*, s.v. *ibirori*.

²⁴⁹ Alexandre Kimenyi, *Kinyarwanda and Kirundi Names: A Semiolinguistic Analysis of Bantu Onomastics* (Lewiston, N.Y: Mellen, 1989), pp. 96–97; not, as he has it, *amazina z'amagenurano*.

²⁵⁰ Jane Morgan, Christopher O'Neill, and Rom Harré, *Nicknames: Their Origins and Social Consequences* (London: Routledge / Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 46.

²⁵¹ Magenge Patrice, interview in Cendajuru (Busiga), 26 April 2011.

²⁵² René Lemarchand, personal communication.

Burundi entered Independence under a dominant, yet uncertain Uproniste state. In the new world, a poor echo of the Uproniste order the borderlanders had sought on their own, dissent would be a path less taken; new modes of interaction with power would be pursued, and the reconstituted international border would be the playing field for their performance.

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It was a borderland revolt, but the role of the border itself in this complex story of dissent and uprising is peculiar. Despite the long and consistent perception of the state that contagion from Rwanda drove the unrest on the frontier, there is little in the rebellion that can be directly connected to the Rwandan war. It was inescapably a national and local struggle in its form and expression, centred on the person and politics of Baranyanka and the question of central authority in the nation and emerging state of Burundi. The Rwandan politicians suspected by the *Tutelle* of collaboration with Uprona never surfaced in the local conflict; they passed through and used the borderland, but had little interaction with it. Few today will substantiate the state fears of Rwandan political evangelism. The neighbours who visited their markets rarely spoke of politics, people say, and if so only discussed their own respective troubles.²⁵³ Only in one *colline* does the story vary; right by the main road, near the border in Ruhororo, they recall a single Rwandan named Biyara who would tell them to vote for Rwagasore.²⁵⁴ The reverse journey appeared more productive, Barundi Upronistes exploiting the border to smuggle in their propaganda. The ethnic or republican terms of violence north of the border did not reappear to the south, except in the fleeting accusations of the Pédécistes. The appearance of lists of targets, the shift of communal politics to communal vigilantism, had its concerning precedent in the Rwandan civil war,²⁵⁵ but this was not so extraordinary a phenomenon that a line of inspiration, of cause and effect, could reliably be traced, and

²⁵³ Bamboneyo Thaddée, interview in Mihigo (Busiga), 23 February 2011; Nyamuhashi Sabène, interview in Nyanza-Tubiri (Busiga), 20 April 2011.

²⁵⁴ Bahimanga Paul (pseud.), interview in Ruhororo (Kabarore), 27 April 2011.

²⁵⁵ Hubert, *La Toussaint rwandaise*, p. 181.

it is notable that no observer at the time thought it a Rwandan characteristic, despite their willingness to see everything else in that light.

Yet the war beyond the border ensured that violence was, indeed, ‘in the atmosphere’ in Mparamirundi.²⁵⁶ The acuity of the political contest in the borderland, the realisation of the possibility of changing the state and acting against a local power holder, the eventual resort to violence, may well be attributed to the constant exchange across the border that continued throughout the conflict on both sides, and awareness of the war next door. But it remained a question of local and national politics, played out on the stage of the frontier.

It may better be said that the rebellion made the border, more than the other way around. During the entire period of conflict, the frontier was informal; it was an administrative boundary within the *Tutelle*, not an international division. Belgian military control in northern Burundi, intended to stop the spread of Rwandan violence, saw the first state embodiment of the border since pre-colonial times. The frontier was put into action by the state before it was given recognition in law. The state discovery of the border was not so much in border controls, a reaction to smuggling, migration or incursion seen so often elsewhere,²⁵⁷ but in borderland control; military occupation of both sides of the border clamped down on the respective borderland populations, and thus established the political reality of the line between them.

To figures of government the Mparamirundi revolt seemed to prove that the border community melded a rebellious heritage with political weakness, an inherent susceptibility to foreign infection. ‘It must be remembered first of all that the political climate of this region which marks the frontier with Rwanda has been troubled for a long time,’ Minister Ntindereza argued, 18 months before he too was hanged for Rwagasore’s murder.²⁵⁸ ‘The region of Mparamirundi/Busiga has never been the object of a politics of authority.’ It was a strange verdict from a son of Baranyanka, but it reflected the emerging policy rather than the existing attitude to the borderland. The community on the frontier was fundamentally suspect,

²⁵⁶ cf. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 55.

²⁵⁷ e.g., Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists*.

²⁵⁸ AAB, BUR 74 (4), J. B. Ntindereza, *Rapport sur les incidents en Province de Kayanza*, 28 June 1961.

politically unwieldy, and in need of control. By the time that Independence came and the border was officially restored, a powerful state narrative had already been established. Ntindereza and his fellows would not be the ones to see it through, but the Uprona hierarchy that abandoned its embarrassing little revolt on the border would take up the suspicions and hostility immediately. The borderland had been central to Burundi for centuries, but both Baranyanka's control and the revolt against him would mark it out as a doubtful periphery for the new Uprona state.

Collaboration: Defending the Border

The victory of Uprona denigrated dissent as a viable mode of approaching the state. While in Rwagasore's absence the party itself fractured, and leading politicians struggled for dominance within its structures, popular discourse left little room for outright challenge to the Uproniste state itself. Successive governments drew deeply on the mythology of mass consensus to delegitimise those who attempted to disagree with those holding power in Uprona's name. The rhetoric of solidarity triumphed. On the border, once more imbued with political and legal reality as a division between separate nations, this imaginary of political cohesion between people and state was put to the test. Juxtaposed to the Rwandan Republic that epitomised everything orthodox Burundi wished not to be, the population had a choice of investment that might either undermine or substantiate the state claims of national identity.

In this space of political tension it was the choice of conformity that proved the most powerful course of action for the borderland population in the first years of Independence. Under pressures of border paranoia from the state, and repeated border incursions from the north, members of the local population developed a language of expression that suggested total submission to the state, yet made a claim on its duties of protection. In an atmosphere of conflict, to collaborate with the state in guarding the frontier emerged not as a matter of simple obedience, but as a vital, dangerous tool of power for those willing to perform this collaboration.

This chapter examines this contrastive mode of addressing the state, a taut exchange of loyalty and obligation that underpinned political relations along the frontier. The geographical

focus shifts somewhat; where Mparamirundi and Busiga were the heart of the 1961 rebellion, the most intriguing border tensions in following years occurred in Ijene and Kabarore to the west. Analysis begins with an exploration of the amplification of tensions along the frontier in the first years of the 1960s, leading to the eruption of violence in 1964. A brief moment of violent dissent, this new border uprising prompted the crystallisation of an alternative mode of interaction between society and state on the frontier. From this crisis, the chapter proceeds to explore this collaborative relationship across the following years. Curious moments of lesser border tension in the early Republican years show how border loyalty provided the opportunity for borderlanders to shape state reaction to their own interests. Finally, the chapter concludes with a consideration of this collaboration as a most particular conception of citizenship, as loyalty and subjection to the state's obsessions permitted patrimonial claims on the reciprocal obligations of power.

4.1 Burnings and Insurrection

The Border, 1962–1964: Incapacity, Fear, Incursion and Flight

At Independence, the border between Rwanda and Burundi was reborn in an atmosphere of opposition. As the belligerence of the Rwandan nation was apparently underscored in its civil war, and politicians in both countries strongly resisted the Belgian and UN pressure to federate, in the weeks before their separation even *Ndongezi* cast the border as the marker of conflict. In times gone by, an editorial recalled, 'He who traversed the Kanyaru ... sought only to provoke war, and the Barundi responded.'¹ An uncomfortable monetary union was maintained, but formally and politically the two countries parted in mutual distrust, watching the border with concern.

For a brief time, military posts protected the border and controlled passage, but total incapacity saw them disbanded only three months later.² In their short career on the border

¹ *Ndongezi y'Uburundi* (Gitega), "Uburundi n'Urwanda vyafatanijwe n'intwaro y'Abazungu," 1 March 1962, p. 1.

² ANB, B 7 (1), A. Verwayen, Letter to Commandants, 26 September 1962.

the nascent army nevertheless managed to instigate the first recorded instance in the long and considerable tradition of border corruption at Kanyaru-haut, the main crossing between Bujumbura and Kigali, only a few weeks after Independence, as a European businessman objected to having to pay a 100 franc bribe.³ The permanent posts were replaced by regular patrols, supplemented by military exercises, so that activities ‘that will be planned outside of the garrison will permit the company to manifest its presence on the border’.⁴ The patrols were augmented by a detachment of sixteen gendarmes stationed in Kayanza town; they were woefully undersupplied, all sixteen sleeping on the floor in the same one-room building, lacking equipment and provided with six firearms between the entire company.⁵ Finally there were the officers of the Immigration authority, checking the documents of those crossing by the main roads; the relief must have been considerable in October 1963 when the Minister of Immigration sent a telegram to announce his decision, prompted by a complaint from the border officer himself,⁶ that ‘a single immigration officer cannot work day and night’.⁷ The border would from then on be closed at nightfall.

A single border officer, and roving patrols of soldiers, were scarcely sufficient for the problem of the border as the state saw it. A few weeks after Independence a helicopter, flown by a Belgian pilot, reportedly landed near Kayanza to deposit a Rwandan man, who was swiftly apprehended by the local population as a spy.⁸ Less than a month after the Belgian departure, the unstable Uprona Government issued a tract reiterating the mwami’s warning against *ibigendajoro*, the ‘nightwalkers’ who spread propaganda and lies. Signed by the feuding Prime Minister Muhirwa and his internal challenger Paul Mirerekano, among other key Uprona luminaries, the tract was a self-conscious exertion of unity. It was framed as a tactic

³ ANB, BI 6 (75), Bizimana Septime, Letter to Captain of Ngozi, 1962; ANB, BI 6 (75), G. Van Dyk, Complaint of corruption at Kanyaru-haut, 29 August 1962.

⁴ ANB, B 7 (1), J. Ntungumburanye, Letter to Governors, 2 October 1962.

⁵ ANB, BI 11 (3), Stanislas Sebasita, *Le détachement de Kayanza*, 22 January 1963.

⁶ ANB, BI 6 (94), Bizimana Septime, Telegram to Mininter, 15 October 1963.

⁷ ANB, BI 6 (79), Immigration, Telegram to Progou Ngozi, 18 October 1963.

⁸ ANB, BI 6 (75), Bizimana Septime, Letter to Minister of the Interior, 20 August 1962.

‘to dissipate the false rumours, enlighten the population, and educate them’;⁹ its text railed against those who criticised the Government.¹⁰ Meanwhile, the great numbers of Rwandan refugees in the borderland inspired fears that they concealed a political infiltration of the Barundi population. ‘The problem of Rwandan refugees poses grave problems for the government of Burundi,’ the provincial Governors were informed. ‘Since this charge has become too great, a definitive solution is imperative.’¹¹ The solution was to remove all refugees from the borderland, encourage them to return to Rwanda or, if necessary, transport them across the country to new, UNHCR-run settlements in the Ruvubu Valley of Cankuzo province. Almost all chose to remain in Burundi.¹²

Under the influence of this refugee presence, Ijene and Kabarore came to be considered the ‘*foyers de troubles*’ of Kayanza.¹³ In April 1962 three Rwandan exiles came to the *Commissaire aux Réfugiés* to reveal that the border communes were in the grip of a conspiratorial infection of Parmehutu ‘racism and violence’, the ruling party of Republican Rwanda rumoured to be powerful among the Barundi borderlanders.¹⁴ This spoke directly to the paranoia of the state. ‘Must it not be feared that these fanatics are trying to export this poison into our peaceful Burundi?’ questioned the *Commissaire*. The Governor of Ngozi was promptly commanded to ‘take immediate action, without delay, to stop the chaos which may be in the process of creation in your Province.’¹⁵ The informants named specific individuals in the borderland, including the local bourgmestres and the pastors at the protestant mission at Rubura, as hubs in a cross-border conspiracy. ‘The tactics would be these: provoke battles between refugees,

⁹ ANB, BI 6 (72), Charles Kabunyoma, letter to Governor, 7 April 1962.

¹⁰ ANB, BI 6 (91), André Muhirwa et al., *Barundi mwese*, 27 July 1962.

¹¹ ANB, AI 13 (12), Nkishimana Gaspard and Marc Marusu, *Instruction: Réfugiés Banyaruanda*, 21 December 1961.

¹² Registers of refugee removals compiled in ANB, AI 13 (12). See also Holborn, Chartrand, and Chartrand, *Refugees*, p. 1123, and the report on their reception in Cankuzo, Betts Collection, Box 20, Government of Burundi, *Rapport sur les réfugiés au Burundi*, 1 September 1965.

¹³ ANB, BI 6 (73), Isidore Rwamavubi, letter to the Interior Ministry, 7 April 1962.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ ANB, BI 6 (72), Charles Kabunyoma, letter to Governor, 7 April 1962.

who would begin to burn both the houses of [Rwandan] Unar members and the houses of Upronistes, Parmehutu camouflaged in the ranks of refugees; thanks to these troubles, the paratroopers would enter into action, supposedly to restore calm, and the game would be over.¹⁶ The warning was taken seriously, and urgent surveillance ordered the very same day.¹⁷

Such were the anxieties and incapacities of the state on the border in its early months, but it was in 1964 that the fear of the frontier would be truly realised. As Rwandan exiles launched their first major ‘*inyenzi*’ invasion from eastern Burundi at the end of 1963, and internal reprisals against Rwandan Tutsi sent many more thousands in flight, the atmosphere of impending war enveloped the borderland.¹⁸ Rwanda unilaterally ended the monetary union, and the countries’ separation was confirmed. But if it was the refugees that inspired initial suspicion and fear of the border in the state, it was Burundi’s internal divisions that raised this concern to a level of urgency. Given its simultaneous centrality and remoteness, a mountainous region that nevertheless was not so far out of the way for those wishing to cross the border unnoticed, a short stretch marked only with young ficus trees, Kabarore became noted as the prime corridor of escape for prominent political exiles.¹⁹ It was through the mountains that Nigane Emmanuel, the president of the PP, was believed to have fled the country after Uprona’s victory, while in his regular periods out of favour, the great Hutu Uproniste and propagandist Paul Mirerekano was reported to have been seen driving his notorious ‘Véwé’ jeep through the region, in flight or infiltration.²⁰

Trodden by the state’s enemies and its subversive threats, the local politics of Kabarore were bubbling with the terms of the state’s dread. The bourgmestre, a PDC man named Buzubona Julien, had been named in allegations of Parmehutu conspiracy for years, and in April 1964 members of his local community alleged that in any cross-border dispute, arbitrat-

¹⁶ ANB, BI 6 (73), Isidore Rwamavubi, letter to the Interior Ministry, 7 April 1962.

¹⁷ ANB, BI 6 (70), Mininter, Telegram to Progou, 7 April 1962.

¹⁸ cf. above, p. 73.

¹⁹ ANB, BI 6 (186), *RA Kayanza*, 1964.

²⁰ ANB, BI 6 (85), Kazohera Gaspard, *Interrogations: Buzubona, Ncutininka*, 27 April 1964.

ing claims of cattle theft and other cases, he preferred Rwandans over Barundi. One man, imprisoned by Buzubona for attacking Rwandans who were returning to their country, appealed to the *Commissaire* of Kayanza and described how the bourgmestre came to him in prison to assault and threaten him. 'I can beat you to death,' the man described Buzubona shouting; 'If you ever try to present a case to the authorities I will kill you, or I will send you to Rwanda and the Rwandans will cut you to pieces.'²¹ And in a reemergence of the abortive Pédéciste allegations of 1961, explicit plots of ethnic violence were rumoured in the hills. The Tutsi of Kabarore, it was claimed, were already on a list of names held by the bourgmestre, awaiting the time when they would all be killed. This appears to be the first recorded appearance of the death list, '*urukaratasi rwo gupfa*', in terms of ethnic elimination in Burundi; the tropes of violence in the Mparamirundi rebellion converged in the fear and conspiracy of the independent borderland, and tensions were mounting to crisis levels.

In June 1964, reports came in that a foreign aeroplane, believed to be military in appearance, had been seen circling low near Ngozi.²² Wanted political exiles were smuggled out of the country to the east in Gatsinda commune,²³ the Deputy Prime Minister Mpozenzi prepared a speech to denounce the *ibihuha*, the false rumours infesting the nation,²⁴ and Prime Minister Nyamoya spoke at the second anniversary of Independence, denouncing 'trouble-makers, thirsty for power, who want to destroy the heritage of our hero Prince Rwagasore . . . [They] preach hatred, fire, blood and death.'²⁵ In a meeting of the provincial Governors Mpozenzi berated them for the 'divisionists' allowed to roam the country, making the cutting remark that 'some of these criminals are well known to [the Governors], but they do nothing to seize

²¹ ANB, BI 6 (85), Kazohera Gaspard, *Interrogations: Buzubona, Ncutininka*, 27 April 1964.

²² ANB, BI 6 (94), Progou Ngozi, Telegram to Prime Minister, 12 June 1964.

²³ ANB, BI 6 (94), Progou Ngozi, Telegram to Deputy Prime Minister, 26 June 1964; ANB, B 10 (1), Bizimana Septime, *Interrogations: Rugata, Kobero, Ntabomenyereye*, 26 June 1964. A certain Ciza Gervais, accused of murdering Prince Kamatari, Mwambutsa's brother, was slipped over the border by his father and uncle; Weinstein records that the death was an accident, manipulated for political ends (Warren Weinstein, *Historical Dictionary of Burundi* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1976), s.v. Kamatari).

²⁴ ANB, BI 6 (220), Pierre Mpozenzi, *Ijambo nyakubahwa*, 19 June 1964

²⁵ ANB, BI 6 (220), Albin Nyamoya, *Discours*, 1 July 1964

them and deliver them to authority'.²⁶ Simmering with anger, he asked the Governors 'why the jeep of Mirerekano had not already been stopped, since it circulates every day in the Country'.

There was a sense that something was coming. 'Situation is alarming,' telegraphed the Governor of Ngozi in early August,²⁷ and on cue three soldiers from Rwanda, two of whom were said to be European, crossed the barrier at Kanyaru-haut at one o'clock the next morning, the lone border guard left cowering in the customs post.²⁸ They were followed by two gendarmes skirting a hill a little further along the river in daylight a few hours later.²⁹ The world's attention was fixed on Congo, as Mulele's rebel *simbas* took Stanleyville, and the possibility that the war would overrun the borders of the region was dangerously apparent;³⁰ Nyamoya's government broadly supported Mulele, while Kayibanda in Rwanda was fully behind Tshombe as Prime Minister of Congo. '*Uburundi n'abarundi buri mu menyo y'ingwe*', read the headline of *Ndongezi* at the beginning of September: Burundi and the Barundi between the leopard's teeth.³¹ The story dwelt on the political troubles of the government and the flood of white refugees, Belgians and Americans, that Burundi was now receiving out of Congo, but it was published on the same day that Kabarore and the other border communes went up in flames.

Invasion

On 1 September 1964, bands of men arose throughout the borderland, from Kabarore to Mparamirundi, and set to burning the huts of the local people. After several days of attacks and burnings, the state believed it had found the true the nature of the chaos: 'Invasion from Rwanda has burnt huts and pillaged the borderland region in Kabarore commune,'

²⁶ ANB, BI 6 (216), Jean Masabo, *Réunion des Gouverneurs*, 6 July 1964.

²⁷ ANB, BI 6 (94), Progou Ngozi, Telegram to Minijustice, 11 August 1964.

²⁸ ANB, B 10 (1), Bizimana Septime, *Interrogation: Misigaro*, 12 August 1964.

²⁹ ANB, BI 6 (94), Progou Ngozi, Telegram to Prime Minister, 12 August 1964.

³⁰ Clyde Sanger, "Threatened overspill of Congo fighting. Burundi, Rwanda and Tanganyika alarmed," 31 August 1964.

³¹ *Ndongezi y'Uburundi* (Gitega), "Uburundi n'abarundi mu menyo y'ingwe," 1 September 1964, p. 1.

reported an urgent telegram.³² ‘The inhabitants of Ijene commune under threat, fled to the interior, gendarmes totally spent, grave matters.’ A Rwandan gendarme was caught ferrying ammunition across the border.³³ The border population fled to the Kabarore commune offices, or even all the way to Kayanza.³⁴ It seemed as if the regional conflagration feared had finally come about. But only a brief, hazy report of violence along the border, spreading into the Ndora region of Cibitoke on the other side of the Kibira forest, reached the ears of an *Agence France Presse* stringer in Bujumbura. It was appended as a supplementary note of curiosity in the background of the gripping disasters in Congo, and forgotten.³⁵

The initial bout of violence lasted about a week, but repeated incursions and panics marked much of the following two months. Skirmishes between Barundi and Rwandans were reported in Gatsinda, to the east of Busiga, where it was alleged that the Rwandans were attempting to invade in pursuit of ‘*inyenzi*’.³⁶ The provincial Governor closed the border, only to be ordered by the Deputy Prime Minister to permit the movement of heavy goods into the country; security measures for the local population were crippling the nation’s meagre economy.³⁷ More huts were burnt on the Kabarore border in Buvumo *colline* exactly a month after the first attacks,³⁸ and the position of this borderland in the centre of a conflict that spanned the Great Lakes was underscored. Six Congolese soldiers under the command of a local Murundi were arrested in Busiga; under interrogation they were discovered to have been mercenaries hired to train Rwandan exiles.³⁹ The Unar ‘Minister of Defence’ in exile, Hamoudu bin Salim,

³² ANB, BI 6 (94), Bizimana Septime, Telegram to Deputy Prime Minister, 7 September 1964.

³³ ANB, BI 6 (94), Progou Ngozi, Telegram to Deputy Prime Minister, 11 September 1964.

³⁴ Munose Venant, interview in Ryamukona (Kabarore), 9 March 2011.

³⁵ *Le Soir* (Brussels), “Troubles graves au Burundi,” 7 September 1964, p. 3.

³⁶ ANB, BI 5 (19), Cyprien Ntahomereye, *Interrogations: Congera, Baritoya, Ndabirabe, Kabwa, Nankwa*, 11 September 1964.

³⁷ ANB, BI 6 (79), Deputy Prime Minister, Telegram to Progou, 23 September 1964; ANB, BI 6 (79), Deputy Prime Minister, Telegram to Progou, 23 September 1964. The border with Congo had been closed the week before (*Le Soir* (Brussels), “Le Burundi ferme sa frontière avec le Congo,” 13 September 1964, p. 3).

³⁸ ANB, BI 6 (94), Progou Ngozi, Telegram to Deputy Prime Minister, 1 October 1964.

³⁹ ANB, BI 6 (94), Progou Ngozi, Telegram to Deputy Prime Minister, 7 October 1964; ANB, BI 5 (19), Cy-

had allegedly planned the December 1963 ‘inyenzi’ invasion as a cover for his own misuse of party funds,⁴⁰ and now he had failed to pay his mercenaries. Now they were on their way back to join with the *simbas* and fight for the memory of Lumumba.

The attacks continued, and in November it was reported that around 300 men attacked the border once again.⁴¹ An itemised 427,347 francs of damage were claimed by those whose homes had been attacked, with many uncosted losses listed alongside (see Figure 4.1 for a map of the distribution of these claims).⁴² Martial law was imposed across the borderland, civilian authority reduced to an advisory role and command taken by an official *Conseil de Guerre*.

Gendarmes swept through Kabarore and neighbouring regions, systematically arresting every individual found on the roads or in any public place.⁴³ The PDC bourgmestre Buzubona was swiftly apprehended on a ‘preventative arrest’.⁴⁴ But among the many arrested by the army were leading Upronistes, most notably those who had distinguished themselves as natural rebels in the 1961 anti-colonial revolt. Ciza Pacifique of Katara commune, whose dramatic arrest by the Belgians in 1961 had been accompanied by the deaths of several of his companions, was perhaps the most striking victim of the army’s overenthusiasm. The Governor intervened to order his release, reminding the Minister of Justice that Ciza had ‘miraculously escaped’ the bullets of the Belgian paratroopers, and as President of the local committee of Uprona his ‘shameful’ detention was alarming the population.⁴⁵ In Ijene the old pioneer Furuguta, similarly sainted during the 1961 rebellion for his industry in smuggling Uprona propaganda across the border, was also taken by the military despite the governor’s repeated insistence. In prien Ntahomereye, *Interrogations: Karega, Yumba, Mande, Baruwani, Ibrahim, Mwamba, Hamoudu*, 10 October 1964.

⁴⁰ Reyntjens, “Rencontres burundaises,” p. 135.

⁴¹ ANB, BI 6 (94), Progou Ngozi, Telegram to Deputy Prime Minister, 20 November 1964.

⁴² ANB, B 10 (1), Bizimana Septime, *Liste des victimes en communes Kabarore et Jene*, 8 October 1964; ANB, BI 6 (34), *Recensement des sinistrés Ijene*, n.d. (1964).

⁴³ ANB, BI 5 (19), Cyprien Ntahomereye, *Interrogations: Nsabuwanka, Ntirumveko, Sebiganiro, Sebihehero, Mbitse, Kavamahanga*, 17 September 1964.

⁴⁴ ANB, B 20 (3), Bizimana Septime, *Suspension de mandat*, 6 September 1964.

⁴⁵ ANB, BI 6 (94), Progou Ngozi, Telegram to Minijustice, 16 September 1964.

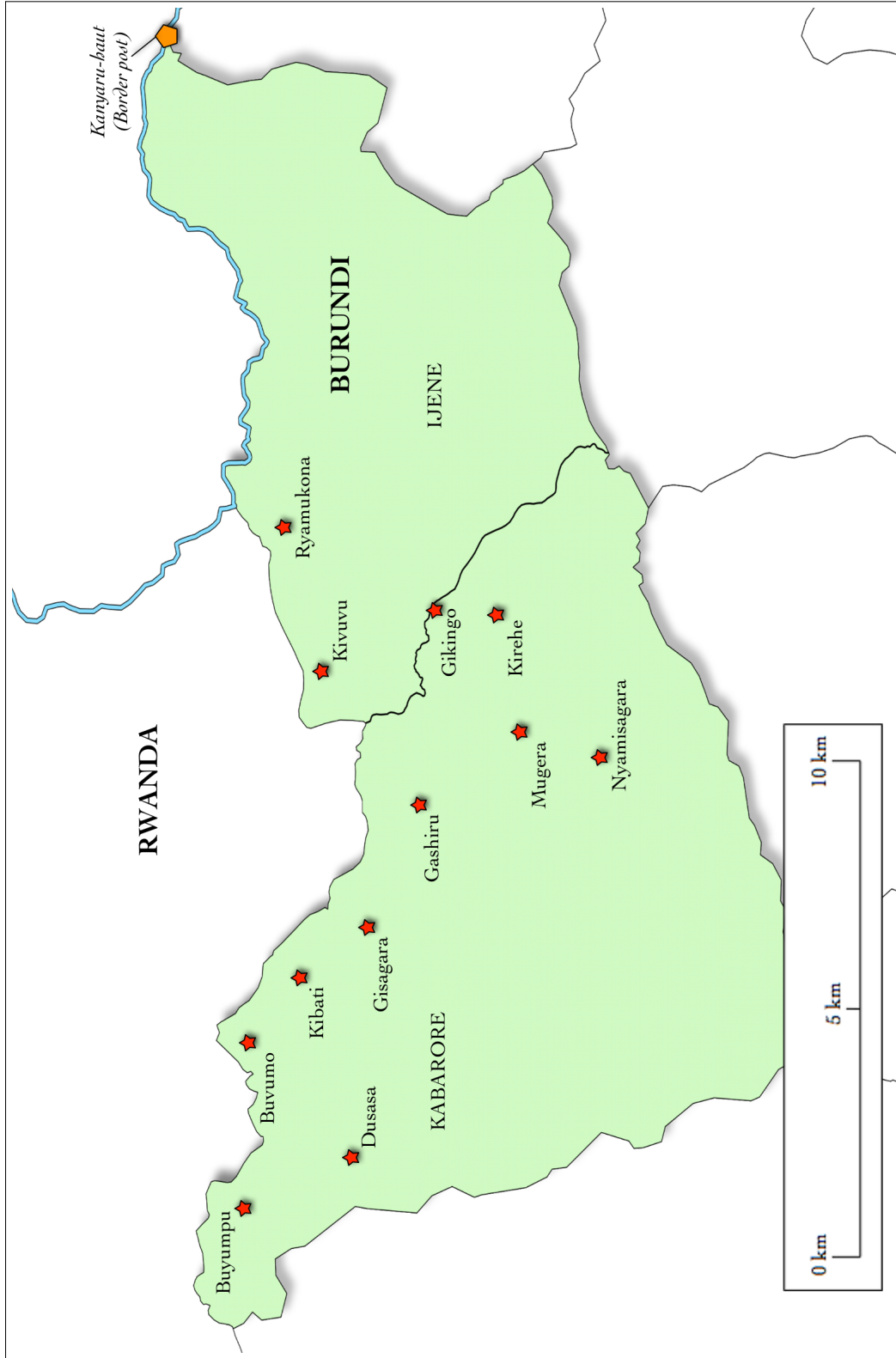


Figure 4.1: Collines in which claims for compensation were made for hut burnings between September and October 1964. Compiled from ANB, B 10 (1), Bizimana Septime, *Liste des victimes en communes Kabarore et Jene*, 8 October 1964, and ANB, BI 6 (34), *Recensement des sinistrés Jene*, n.d. (1964).

civilian eyes, the men under arrest were ‘the only ones who located the troublemakers in the most obscure locations and maintained the morale of the population in these circumstances’.⁴⁶ The danger to Uprona of permitting the military complete control was amply demonstrated.

Yet the heavy-handed response of the army achieved some success. The burnings and raids tailed off, the arrested population surrendered claims of substantial intelligence about the identities and purposes of those they held responsible, and most of these witnesses were released back to their smouldering homes. By November some forty six individuals remained in custody, another 117 named as wanted fugitives.⁴⁷ Bourgmestre Buzubona stood as the *Conseil de Guerre*’s prize, held as a ‘moral culprit’ for supposedly having advanced knowledge of a plot and giving tacit consent for his commune to burn. Among his co-accused was an eleven year-old boy, sentenced to five years in prison; almost all the rest, both those in custody and those tried in absence, were given between ten and twenty years for ‘*Atteinte sur la sûreté intérieure d’état*’, assault on the internal security of the state. There were three variants of the crime: rousing the population against the established powers (by public meetings), organising hostile bands, and knowingly spreading false rumours;⁴⁸ it was the same law that had once been used by the *Tutelle* to convict Upronistes. Buzubona and most of his co-accused were charged with all three.

The border crisis was over. In the shadow of the bloody events of 1965 and 1966 elsewhere, from the Muramvya ethnic massacres to the murder of Hutu parliamentarians, and the proliferation of coup attempts, the Kabarore burnings would be swiftly forgotten by the sparse histories of Burundi. But in their procedure, response and repression, vital themes of obsession surrounding the border, its inhabitants and the state that watched it fearfully would be realised, crystallised in the collaboration that surrendered evidence against the outcasts.

⁴⁶ ANB, BI 6 (94), Progou Ngozi, Telegram to Gendarmerie, 5 October 1964.

⁴⁷ ANB, BI 5 (22), Conseil de Guerre, *Audience publique*, 10 April 1965.

⁴⁸ ANB, BI 5 (9), Sixte Rurakokoye, Letter to Governor, 25 June 1962, explaining Article 186, CP Livre II.

External Conspiracy and Internal Collusion

The first instinct had been to call the attacks an ‘invasion’, and the military commanders soon found grounds to justify this presumption. The Kabarore burnings were perceived as the final realisation of the perfidious plot the Casablanca faction of Uprona, now in power, had long suspected: a grand Hutu alliance between the Rwandan Parmehutu government, the exiled PP leadership under Nigane, and Uprona’s own dissidents, especially Paul Mirerekano. The most prolific informant on this ‘conspiracy’ was a man named Kabanda Samson from Buvumo *colline*, right on the border. He had seen his own house burn, but told the authorities that he had been involved in a series of meetings on Rwandan soil in which the full plot had been formed. ‘The orders come from Kigali,’ Kabanda explained, ‘given by Mirerekano, and Nigane receives them as well.’⁴⁹ Their principal delegate on the border was Kayabo Siméon, a former Uprona representative in the national assembly; he had represented the Ndora region, just west from Kabarore, and had been rumoured to have led the simultaneous attacks there personally.⁵⁰ But Barundi traitors were just part of the conspiracy that the informant portrayed. He implicated Gitera Joseph, the founder of Aprosuma, as the key go-between that linked the Barundi exiles with Rwandan officials. Kabanda described numerous assemblies in which specific targets were discussed. According to the *Conseil*’s prosecution, Mirerekano and Nigane were ‘the inhuman masters of the insurgents’, gathering a grand coalition of Barundi political exiles from Ngozi, Bubanza, Muyinga and Muramvya; in their conspiratorial assemblies, they ‘preached a malicious doctrine, of which the design was as fatal as the product was destructive’.⁵¹ Mirerekano, Nigane and Kayabo were all convicted in absence. According to Lemarchand, the conviction of Mirerekano was the sole purpose for the *Conseil*’s creation;⁵²

⁴⁹ ANB, BI 6 (34), Bizimana Septime, *Interrogation: Kabanda*, 1 October 1964.

⁵⁰ *Le Soir*, “Troubles graves au Burundi.” Kiraranganya counts Siméon as one of the most promising Upronistes of the decolonisation period (Kiraranganya, *La vérité*, p. 30), while later President Ntibantunganya found him running viciously anti-Tutsi meetings in Kigali ten years later (Ntibantunganya, *Une démocratie* vol. 1, p. 153).

⁵¹ ANB, BI 5 (22), Conseil de Guerre, *Audience publique*, 10 April 1965.

⁵² Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p. 412.

the border violence ought not to be overlooked as a proximate cause, but the political exploitation of the crisis was unmistakable.

The imputation of Rwandan conspiracy entailed a presumption of ethnic politics. ‘They openly said that every Tutsi, even though he may have done good things in Burundi, must be put to the fire with his wife and children,’ Kabanda wrote in a rough, hand-scrawled note requesting permission to speak directly to the mwami.⁵³ ‘This will be regarded as treasure to Parmehutu. On the other hand, a Hutu, even though he may have done extremely bad things, must not be killed, even when he is a member of the PDC.’ In the *Conseil*’s verdict, this was ‘a war of extermination against the ‘Tutsi’ masses and their generation, the devastation and pillage of their goods, and the elimination of ‘Hutu’ leaders who remained loyal to the royalist institutions and to the Uprona party’;⁵⁴ by such devastation, a Republic of Burundi would be founded, with Mirerekano as its President and Nigane and Kayabo as his deputies.⁵⁵ No mention was made of the fact that Mirerekano had written to the mwami himself with deference just three days before the burnings to urge Mwambutsa to exert his royal authority and dismiss the Nyamoya government.⁵⁶ Rather, the *Conseil* considered that a snowballing revolution had been thwarted:

[The leaders of the plot] had promised highly important places in the heart of the government that would issue from the future victorious Republic, of which the Capital would be fixed at Kayanza, in order to conquer the extent of the Kingdom of Burundi . . . The goal that drove the guilty was to ‘provoke a civil war’ . . . they had thus excited certain Barundi citizens, a class of people in the communes of Kabarore and Ijene, to arm themselves against others, to settle their differences by force . . . It was not necessary that the entire country should be desolated by civil war . . . it sufficed that the war should exist, or that it should be incited in a

⁵³ ANB BI 6 (34), *Inama y’ukuri*, 29 October 1964.

⁵⁴ ANB, BI 5 (22), Conseil de Guerre, *Audience publique*, 10 April 1965. ‘Scare quotes’ in original.

⁵⁵ ANB, BI 6 (34), Bizimana Septime, *Interrogation: Kabanda*, 1 October 1964.

⁵⁶ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, pp. 397–398.

part of the country, in a commune or even in a fraction of a commune, from which it could spread out across the rest of the country.⁵⁷

The authorities were most alarmed by the question of internal collaboration in the plot. Lieutenant Bernard Rubeya, an army officer stationed in Ngozi, scrawled some rapid notes on an unknown interrogation that reflected the fear of uprising, not invasion: 'Kabarore in general Parmehutu,' the notes begin; 'Extermination Tutsi.'⁵⁸ Rubeya summarised the information he received in a dark inversion of Voltaire, reporting an injunction to keep the death of any Hutu during the planned invasion quiet '*pour ne pas décourager les autres.*' The protestant mission at Rubura was the reputed heart of the insurgency, its cross-border links with daughter churches in Rwanda damning it in the eyes of the state. But most curiously Rubeya recorded the 'paths of infiltration, small children who circulate between Rwanda and Burundi to collect information to transmit it to Rwanda'. Using the market days, when traffic across the border was considerable, the children were said to cut through Kibira forest to cover their movements. It was the confirmation of the fears the state had long harboured of the Parmehutu 'poison' in the borderland, but it was said to come not simply through the machinations of politicians, bourgmestres and pastors, but through the unnoticed movement of children.

The degree of local involvement in the 'invasion' was apparent in the identities of those the military held personally responsible for the violence. Of the *Conseil's* 163 accused, only two were Rwandans, one caught smuggling ammunition and the other simply accused of crossing the border; all the rest were Barundi, the vast majority from Kabarore. This local character of the raiders is supported by those in the region today. In Munege *colline*, stories are told of how they gathered in Rwanda, then infiltrated across the border wearing banana leaves over their heads, and talk of the violence of the 1960s leads unavoidably to the discussion of the wars of the 1990s; the raiders were like the rebel bands of the civil war, people say, the men

⁵⁷ ANB, BI 5 (22), Conseil de Guerre, *Audience publique*, 10 April 1965.

⁵⁸ ANB, BI 6 (34), Bernard Rubeya, Notes, 27 October 1964. One of the first Barundi officers trained by the Belgians, Bernard Rubeya would later be a key accused in the 'Muramvya' coup trial of 1971. See Antoine Kaburahe, "En avant. Marche!" 4 April 2012; Manirakiza, *De la révolution au régionalisme*.

who went to the wild to seek power.⁵⁹ In Karama, further to the east where they were spared the violence, people remember the light of the flames by night on high Ryamukona, specified as a key target of the raiders in Kabanda's testimony, and tell how the Barundi in Rwanda didn't even need to wade across Kanyaru to cause havoc; they would catch the rays of the sun in mirrors, and set light to thatched roofs from across the valley.⁶⁰ It was a border conflict, but it was an internal matter. The border was exploited as a resource to pursue violence both political and opportunistic.

If Kabarore was indeed 'in general Parmehutu', as was now claimed and as had been suspected by the state since before Independence, the borderland population must be either traitors or informants; those taken had a choice of roles to perform. Thus a group of men picked up outside a bar in Caguka *colline*, where no burnings had been reported, bought their freedom by describing the suspicious activities of their neighbours. They fingered one man named Munuma, who, they said, 'was suspected of being a direct collaborator of Monsieur Mirerekano, and who deserted his home a year ago already; according to well-informed sources, Munuma has made a rather nice situation for himself in Rwanda, thanks to the support of Mirerekano.'⁶¹ Munuma had already been arrested a week earlier, found hiding in a rocky crevasse;⁶² the men were giving the soldiers what they wanted. Others reported that local youths had been known to pass through the commune before the burnings, distributing tracts 'emanating from Monsieur Mirerekano'.⁶³ None of the people to make this claim admitted to having seen the tracts themselves, but, 'According to what I've heard from my friends,' said one man in a characteristic statement, 'they said that the goal was to install Parmehutu.'⁶⁴ Rumours were circulating that every youth that burnt down a hut would receive a sum of 50

⁵⁹ Rwaswa David (pseud.), interview in Munege (Kabarore), 14 March 2011.

⁶⁰ Niyongabo Côme (pseud.), interview in Karama (Kabarore), 8 March 2011.

⁶¹ ANB, BI 5 (19), Cyprien Ntahomereye, *Interrogations: Nsabuwanika, Ntirumveko, Sebiganiro, Sebihehero*, Mbitse, Kavamahanga, 17 September 1964.

⁶² ANB, BI 5 (22), Conseil de Guerre, *Audience publique*, 10 April 1965.

⁶³ ANB, BI 5 (19), Cyprien Ntahomereye, *Interrogations: Nsabuwanika, Ntirumveko, Sebiganiro, Sebihehero*, Mbitse, Kavamahanga, 17 September 1964.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

frs from Mirerekano and Nigane. Given the poverty of Kabarore, and the scale of the property stolen during the raids, either this payment or the opportunism of looting were likely powerful motivators for many of those taking part in the violence, regardless of its political character.

If the evidence supplied by these men was substantially defensive, informing on the subversive elements around them to achieve their own liberty, denunciation and collaboration with the state were adopted as a far more active tactic by others in the borderland. This was most sharply exemplified in the claims made against a man named Rukushi Isaac, a rare PP propagandist active in an Uproniste world. He was subjected to a citizen's arrest, apprehended by his neighbours who dragged him before the local *Officier de police judiciaire* to demand his punishment. Rukushi's neighbours gave evidence that he was harassing them by conducting door-to-door, personal propaganda that invoked the names of Baranyanka and Biroli, denigrated Mwambutsa, and reiterated the old rumour that the mwami was illegitimate.⁶⁵ As a member of the noble Hutu *Abahanza* clan that legends claimed to have produced the founding king of Burundi, Rukushi declared that he himself would sire a king.⁶⁶ Most venomously, according to one woman's testimony, he 'declared that if ever our children should attempt to flee to him, he will take a sickle and cut off their arms and legs. Some days afterwards we were in the valley, Rukushi was in the middle of work and when we passed by him he declared again that it would be better to cut off the right arm, the right leg and the right breast of each woman, and in that way the women would become wise.'⁶⁷ He said that because we were Uproniste women.' In a motif of violence that was becoming rapidly commonplace, people whispered that, 'There is a register in which is inscribed the names of the living and the dead . . . people who will be killed and others who will be saved.'

Rukushi's neighbours emphasised not only his activities in their own community, but also

⁶⁵ ANB, BI 5 (18), Misigaro Tharcisse, *Pro-Justitia*, Interrogation of Rukushi Isaac, Bucumi, Barekebivugire, Ncamugitsure, Rwanda, Ciza, Mvuyekure Barnabé, Bariyuntura, 29 September 1964; cf. Baranyanka's deployment of this insinuation, above, p. 63.

⁶⁶ See above, p. 14.

⁶⁷ 'sages', another appearance of the euphemism of 'advice' attached to violence. See Chapter 3, pp. 126, 133, 142.

alleged that he had been active in cross-border conspiracy. The man himself denied the accusations of hate speech and sedition against the mwami, likening himself to Christ in the process, but he readily confessed to crossing the border for political purposes, and thus his evidence is crucial in disrupting the machiavellian portrait erected by the *Conseil de Guerre*. He described how he went to Ijene to meet his brother, also a PP propagandist; they had heard that others of their comrades had gone to find Baganzicaha, an old *Front commun* leader, who had fled to Rwanda after Uprona's victory and was said to pay good money for those willing to conduct PP propaganda. Rukushi and his brother made contact with Baganzicaha in Butare, but the exiled politician was a disappointment; 'He talked to us for a long time about everything that had happened to him since Uprona's victory, and we weren't able to speak about the PP propaganda.'⁶⁸ They also encountered Nigane Emmanuel himself, who was more accommodating; listening to their woes of the prejudice they experienced from Upronistes, he gave them 300 frs, but Rukushi was adamant that this was charity, not payment. Though unashamed of his political convictions, even proud of his crimes of collusion, the picture he painted of the 'conspirators' was of sad, conceited and atomised leaders incapable of, or uninterested in, pursuing a concerted attempt to regain power in Burundi.

There was, no doubt, a degree of truth in both perspectives. The attacks, over a prolonged period of time and concentrated in specific locations, appear to have had some direction, and by all accounts were launched from Rwandan soil, where Mirerekano at least was very much active in his political campaign against the Casablanca leaders. But the idea that the Kabarore burnings were attempts at genocide, or anything more than a destabilising foray, a test of resolution rather than a full-blown revolution, cannot be supported. The raids were characterised by arson, not massacre; the attackers spread fear, and took pillage, but left no signs of attempted extermination. However, in the swift shift to the extremities of accusation, and in the political cosmology constructed around the projection of foreign-sponsored conspiracy, the terms of interaction between borderlanders and state were established.

⁶⁸ ANB, BI 5 (18), Misigaro Tharcisse, *Pro-Justitia*, Interrogation of Rukushi Isaac, Bucumi, Barekebivugire, Ncamugitsure, Rwanda, Ciza, Mvuyekure Barnabé, Bariyuntura, 29 September 1964.

4.2 Frontier Politics

The Kabarore burnings showed the minimal half-life of dissent as a means of confronting the state in the borderland during the turbulent years of the mid 1960s. Despite its feeble presence on the frontier in the previous months and years of hostility from the north, when violence erupted within its bounds the state was swiftly capable of imposing itself with overwhelming force. The raids were no recreation of the Mparamirundi rebellion of 1961; while both involved intra-community violence, the pattern of the 1964 burnings appeared far more indiscriminate than the assaults of decolonisation. Despite the rumours of lists and suggestions of personal targets selected in the border attacks in Kabarore, the political direction of the raids took Uprona as the enemy, and Uprona was everywhere. The passion of Uproniste conviction was never again to reach the heights of the Mparamirundi rebellion, but only three years on, the exiled opposition seeking targets in the community would find far too many default Upronistes to select.

Along the border in 1964, therefore, both sides of the earlier rebellion were rediscovered, in muted forms. Popular political consensus in support of Uprona persisted, albeit dulling gradually, while the Uproniste state now had at its disposal the postcolonial equivalent of the Belgian military strength that had once crushed the local uprising. Violent opposition may have been a limited choice for a small portion of the community, but for most, any form of outright dissent was possible neither politically nor practically. The reaction of the army and gendarmerie to the outbreak of conflict, arresting every individual they could find, had revealed the general suspicion much of the state had to the border community as a whole. While the rebels might have hoped this hostile stance against the people would have driven more into their arms, in the short term at least it simply confirmed for most of the *banyagihugu* of Kabarore the need to display their loyalty to the state. The denunciations made against those who had conducted propaganda for the government's opponents were swift and clear demonstrations of one's political position; the invocation of rumours was particularly effective in this regard. The men arrested at a bar in Caguka distanced themselves from personal exposure to political contagion by claiming knowledge only of the rumours of subversive political

tracts, but proved their loyalty by confirming state suspicions. ‘Every rumour has its public,’ notes Kapferer, and these suited the state.⁶⁹

In the context of a border incursion, firmly believed to be the result of a conspiracy between political opponents and a foreign government, political loyalty to Uprona was inevitably conflated with loyalty to the nation. One of his neighbours denounced the PP propagandist Rukushi through direct association as political opposition and national traitor: ‘Rukushi is a man who, since the formation of the political parties, was in the party of Nigane, Baganzicaha and Cimpaye.’⁷⁰ Recently, Rukushi has received Rwandans who arrive at his house in the evening and almost never come out . . . Due to these regular visits between Rukushi and these Rwandans, I believe that Rukushi conducts the propaganda of Parmehutu.’⁷¹ While clearly connected to the border circumstances of the Kabarore burnings, this political cosmology was the product of several years of consistent development. During the 1960–1961 campaign it had been a central theme of Uproniste propaganda that its national rivals were affiliates of Rwandan Hutu-supremacist parties, explicitly labelling them ‘Aprosoma’ before Parmehutu came out on top. The careful blurring of identification between Mwambutsa, Rwagasore and Burundi itself was an eminently effective political strategy that was only enhanced with the Prince’s death, as he became both party figurehead and ‘*héros national*’. As the opposition increasingly took refuge beyond Burundi’s borders, the political duties of the loyal *munyagihugu* to nation, party and state became so intertwined as to be synonymous. The single order once violently urged in the Mparamirundi rebellion was given form through external threat.

A national trend, nowhere would this integration of obligations be so clear and accessible as on the border. With internal opponents few and far between, yet with Rwanda as their rhetorical sponsor ever-present, the borderland community had the particular opportunity of volubly displaying their political orthodoxy and national loyalty in the overt rejection of the elements that caused state suspicion towards them; the border was their own political resource,

⁶⁹ Kapferer, *Rumeurs*, p. 107.

⁷⁰ Nigane and Cimpaye were PP leaders, but Baganzicaha was PDC.

⁷¹ ANB, BI 5 (18), Misigaro Tharcisse, *Pro-Justitia*, Interrogation of Rukushi Isaac, Bucumi, Barekebivugire, Ncamugitsure, Rwanda, Ciza, Mvuyekure Barnabé, Bariyuntura, 29 September 1964.

inasmuch as it was the cause of state hostility.⁷² In purposeful opposition to the raiders, whose exploitation of the border as a practical and political resource is echoed in many other circumstances,⁷³ performing loyalty meant overtly turning one's back on the presumptions of permeable frontiers and trans-border networks, even though, on an economic and social level, the border was as permeable as any other.⁷⁴ Denouncing or apprehending those who transgressed the border allowed the population to present themselves as the border guards the state lacked, making themselves essential to the state and not simply tolerated by it. The informant Kabanda, who supplied the bulk of the information on the preparatory meetings in Rwanda, was so valorised by the act that he came into a position to request a face-to-face meeting with Mwambutsa. He was only in possession of his information because he himself casually crossed the border and personally engaged with persons of dubious politics, but as an informant he positioned himself as a border agent, vital to the defence of the nation. It was frontier politics; with the dangerous other beyond, impinging on the national community within, there was great political capital to be made by portraying oneself as the essential defender on the fraught edge of the nation.

Of course, this stance as border guards was far from a simple pretence. With homes burning and, if the allegations were true, individuals threatening physical violence against loyal Upronestes, it could be a matter of genuine personal necessity to act as the first line of defence, an urgent issue of self-preservation not just from the suspicious state, but from immediate enemies. Nor was the state's attitude towards the border simple paranoia. If nothing else, the Kabarore burnings demonstrated that there were indeed those who were willing to use violence

⁷² cf. Dereje Feyissa and Markus Virgil Hoehne, "State Borders and Borderlands as Resources: An Analytical Framework," in *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 2010), 1–25, pp. 14–16.

⁷³ e.g., Paul Richards, "The Sierra Leone–Liberia Boundary Wilderness: Rain Forests, Diamonds, and War," in *African Boundaries. Barriers, Conduits, and Opportunities*, ed. Paul Nugent and Anthony I. Asiwaju (London: Pinter, 1996), 205–221; Kristof Titeca and Koen Vlassenroot, "Rebels without Borders in the Rwenzori Borderland? A Biography of the Allied Democratic Forces," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 6, no. 1 (2012): 154–176.

⁷⁴ cf. Griffiths, "Permeable Boundaries."

to destabilise the state further than it had already undermined itself. The regional context of brutally violent invasion and genocidal retaliation in Rwanda, alongside devastating war in Congo, ensured that the restricted violence of Kabarore would not be treated as proportional to its actual limits of destruction. The portrayal of a planned genocide and viral civil war lying behind the border raids may have been unrealistic, but with both these horrors on the verge of realisation in neighbouring territories, it was not beyond the realm of rationality to fear them in Burundi. Both people and state on the border had reason to invest in their performance and paranoia.

Thus self-conscious collaboration emerged as the relationship of preference and necessity between the community and its government in the borderland. For the population, conforming to the role of voluntary border guards permitted positive relations with a hostile state, while pressing hard on its attention on matters of great local and personal significance. For the state, its political interests were served through the recognition of such popular endorsement of its presumptions and fears, while the politically-loyal border citizen was a valuable resource for the control or surveillance of the frontier. The scale of military investment in Kabarore could not be maintained, just as it had been almost entirely absent until the huts began burning. When the army inevitably withdrew to other areas of urgency, it needed a core of the community to pay lip service to the needs of border protection. Collaboration on the border was practically and politically convenient, providing far more potential for the service of both mutual and distinct interest than outright dissent could hope to provide.

4.3 Civil Defence and Moral Panic

To explore the nuances and reincarnation of this relationship away from the pervasive atmosphere of war, it is necessary to take a leap forward in time and consider the application of the terms of collaboration in the Republican world after 1966, when the new state sought *rap-prochement* with Rwanda and border relations were meant to be easing.⁷⁵ Cautious diplomatic

⁷⁵ See Reyntjens, “Rencontres burundaises,” p. 134; on the national events passed over here, including the election and execution of Mirerekano, see Chapter 2, pp. 74–80.

efforts between Parmehutu and the new Republican Uprona were slowly fruitful. Rwanda welcomed the end of the 'mwamist' regime in Burundi,⁷⁶ the two governments spoke words of friendship and fraternity, and tripartite talks chaired by Mobutu formed the first regional summits of cooperation over border issues, particularly the presence of each state's enemies exiled in their neighbours' territory.⁷⁷ Yet still, in the borderland itself, both people and state representatives continued to invest in the politics of the frontier, and meet each other on terms of collaboration against the stereotyped machinations of a Rwandan state that otherwise was gradually becoming a partner of convenience for the military government.

The Kidnap of Nkurunziza

Ryamukona, a *colline* that had been hit particularly hard in 1964, was once again the host of border conflict in 1967, and the contrast of contexts provides valuable insight into the nature of the performance of collaboration on the frontier. Rising steeply to tower above its neighbouring hills, it is frequently inaccessible after even the most moderate rainfall, and remains distinctly difficult to reach in any weather except across the border from Rwanda. Situated at the crux of the Kanyaru, where the border river veers northwards, the boundary is marked here only by a small river, the Kumuremure. The *colline* is now noted in the region for its relative wealth, benefiting from constant interaction with Rwanda.⁷⁸ But in the 1960s it was plagued by ongoing feuds across the international line, and its community sought the terms of collaboration, the invocation of duty and reciprocal protection, to claim support from the state.

One Saturday afternoon in July of 1967, a man drove his cattle along the southern bank of the Kumuremure.⁷⁹ He had taken his cattle along this route many times, from his home on

⁷⁶ Thadée Bagaragaza, "En 1966: Multiples accords signés. En 1967: Coopération intensifiée au Rwanda," February 1967, pp. 6–7.

⁷⁷ *Carrefour d'Afrique* (Kigali), "La rencontre au sommet de Goma règle les problèmes de sécurité," March 1967, p. 2.

⁷⁸ Abbé Macaire, conversation in Jene (Kabarore), 7 March 2011.

⁷⁹ ANB, B 11 (2), Paul Rusiga and Mathias Rwamo, *La situation frontalière*, 24 July 1967.

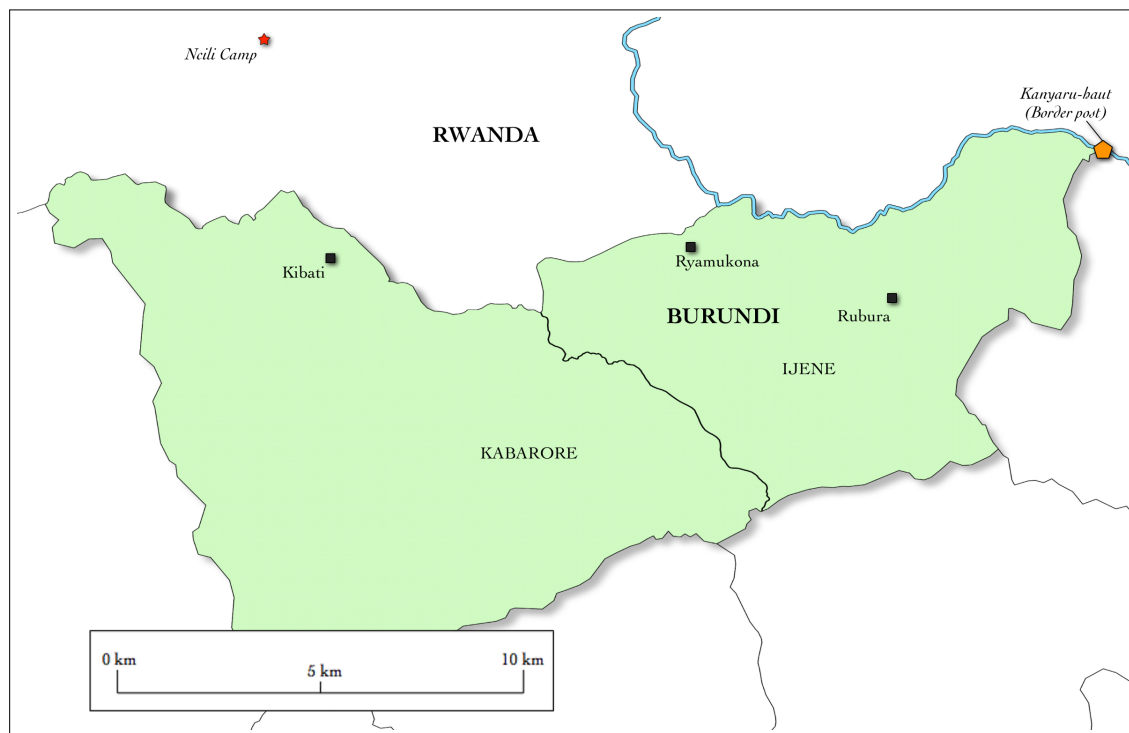


Figure 4.2: Kibati, Ncili and Ryamukona

Ryamukona through the *colline* of Kivuvu and up towards the heights of the Congo-Nile ridge, where the grazing was better; he would prepare a temporary enclosure for his beasts near an abandoned camp of the Belgian mining company Minétain, so that they could graze without destroying his neighbours' crops. As he followed the line of the border this time, however, he was followed.

A group of Rwandan civilians had crossed the frontier and penetrated a kilometre into Burundi territory. They gave chase; he was caught, and forcibly taken across the Kumuremure, into Rwanda. There were Rwandan soldiers waiting on the far bank of the stream, and the man was stripped naked, dragged away to a hill at some distance from the frontier, and tied to a tree. At this point, the reports became confused. Initial government telegrams spoke of the man's 'murder',⁸⁰ but when the official reports were written a week later the Vice Governor of the Province would only claim that 'to this day, the fate of Monsieur Nkurunziza

⁸⁰ ANB, B 11 (2), Commarro, Telegram to Mininter, Progou Ngozi, 21 July 1967.

is unknown.’⁸¹

He shares a name with the current president of Burundi, but Nkurunziza was himself Rwandan. He had lived in the area for over fifteen years, first moving under Belgian rule when the border was officially just an internal administrative divide. Local authorities believed that Nkurunziza, along with members of the other six Rwandan families who lived in the same colline, had long been suspected by Rwandan authorities of being spies for Burundi. Rwandan soldiers had penetrated Burundi multiple times in the previous months, claiming to be searching for ‘*inyenzi*’;⁸² the abduction of Nkurunziza was believed to be a key part of this operation, aimed at eliminating a traitorous spy who was aiding the militant exiles, and attacks on the other six long-term residents were to follow. ‘The Rwandan authorities,’ reported the Vice Governor of Ngozi, ‘have decided to liquidate systematically these seven persons.’⁸³

This shock intruded into a complex of divergent perspectives on the border. The local provincial authorities had been extremely anxious about the threat from Rwanda, but in terms of political contagion rather than invasion. Since the first days of the Republic they had noted that the border *collines* engaged in continual conversation and exchange with Rwandans, discussing the political character of the two Republics in a derogatory fashion. The inhabitants of Ryamukona are indeed among the few to confess to political dialogue with their Rwandan counterparts across the decade.⁸⁴ The authorities feared that Rwandans were inciting the Burundi to subversion,⁸⁵ saying, ‘always in secret, that the Republic of Burundi does not resemble their own . . . that our Republic is only half a Republic,’⁸⁶ since ‘blood has

⁸¹ ANB, B 11 (2), Paul Rusiga and Mathias Rwamo, *La situation frontalière*, 24 July 1967; ANB, B 11 (2), *Affaire Nkurunziza*, 25 July 1967.

⁸² ANB, B 11 (2), François-Xavier Muhamirizo, Letter to Minister of External Affairs, 17 July 1967; ANB, BI 6 (118), Commarro Kayanza, Telegram to Progou Ngozi, 8 May 1967; ANB, BI 6 (42), Zibakwiye Athanase, *Rapport mensuel Ijene*, 5 May 1967.

⁸³ ANB, B 11 (2), Paul Rusiga and Mathias Rwamo, *La situation frontalière*, 24 July 1967.

⁸⁴ Mbazumutima Thérèse (pseud.), interview in Ryamukona (Kabarore), 9 March 2011.

⁸⁵ ANB, BI 6 (120), Sakubu Lucien, Letter to Governor, 3 February 1967.

⁸⁶ ANB, B 9, Zibakwiye Athanase, *Rapport mensuel Ijene*, 1 March 1967.

not been spilled as with them.⁸⁷ In the eyes of the provincial officials, the border population were themselves a threat, going 'by day or BY NIGHT to Rwanda.'⁸⁸ Attempting to impose a system of *laisser-passer* permits,⁸⁹ officials in the borderland considered that the 'pretext' of buying goods in Rwandan markets was 'harmful to the morality of our population.'⁹⁰ Little concern was shown over the lost customs revenue except as it denoted a political conversation beyond state control.

The border population had their own concerns over the frontier, regularly complaining about the continued threat of cattle raids striking into their territories;⁹¹ their own reciprocal raids were noted in turn. For different reasons, both the community and the provincial authorities viewed Rwanda as the enemy. But this stood against official policy. At the end of June, less than a month before the abduction of Nkurunziza, orders were given to 'maintain and improve our relations, whether diplomatic, economic or commercial, with our neighbouring countries.'⁹² The situation was confused, and such instructions came alongside alarming warnings to 'redouble your vigilance on the frontier posts with Congo and Rwanda,' since 'we have information on a mercenary threat'.⁹³ Jean Schramme had begun a new rebellion in Congo, 1,700 mercenaries were reported in Butare,⁹⁴ and the state's fears crystallised with the first rumour that Ntare was intent on restoring the monarchy through white mercenary power.⁹⁵

⁸⁷ ANB, BI 6 (165), Budumo Onésime, *Rapport du Parti*, 1 April 1967.

⁸⁸ ANB, BI 6 (166), François-Xavier Muhamirizo, *Rapport politique*, Mois de mars-avril 1967, 15 April 1967; emphasis in original.

⁸⁹ ANB, BI 12 (4), Semahuna Charles, Letter to Immigration officers, 2 June 1967. Party

⁹⁰ ANB, BI 6 (165), Budumo Onésime, *Rapport du Parti*, 16 May 1967.

⁹¹ ANB, BI 6 (118), Zibakwiye Athanase, Letter to Commarro, 14 April 1967; ANB, BI 6 (118), Zibakwiye Athanase, Letter to Governor, 8 May 1967; ANB, B 9, Sakubu Lucien, *Rapport mensuel Kayanza*, 4 April 1967.

⁹² ANB, BI 6 (117), Jean Cicéron Masabo, *letter to Governors*, 19 June 1967.

⁹³ ANB, BI 6 (118), Dirgalinter, Telegram to Progous, 11 June 1967.

⁹⁴ ANB, BI 6 (89), François-Xavier Muhamirizo, *Informations*, 26 September 1967.

⁹⁵ ANB, BI 6 (216), Arthémon Nikobisa, *La réunion de cadre*, 3 September 1967.

In these contested times, the kidnap of Nkurunziza was an opportunity for people and provincial authorities to collaborate. The local authorities' suspicion of the community was defused; in unanimous agreement over the Rwandan threat, people and administrators presented a forceful case for restructuring their government's attitude towards the frontier, back towards the antagonistic relationship they each felt in their daily border troubles. To do so, the old terms of universal danger were resurrected. During questioning over the affair, an unnamed resident claimed that the Rwandan incursion was a matter of old treachery, driven by the instigators of the 1964 burnings; now refugees in Rwanda, they were claimed to 'serve as intelligence agents for the Rwandans', all the time 'motivated by a spirit of racism'.⁹⁶ The informant described how they had confronted their Rwandan neighbours on the border, and been met with ominous threats: 'It will not take more than nine days to achieve what we have planned to do,' the Rwandans reportedly claimed. 'Go and tell your leaders that we do not want *inyenzi* among the people, that Parmehutu will achieve its ends.'

The residents of Ryamukona proved their loyalty in the careful performance of guarding the frontier, even to the extent of enforcing the state's desire for a bureaucratic border regime. The inquiry noted that three days after the abduction, 'Thirty pigs, three goats and a bullock coming from Rwanda were seized by the people ... The animals were sent to market by six Rwandans, without a *feuille de route* and without a customs visa.'⁹⁷ Their own regular transgression of customs regulation was kept judiciously quiet. But in a careful moderation of the popular stance as border protectors, great emphasis was placed on popular terror. The population was 'afraid, and believed that it was a great provocation'. Engaged in their own personal clashes with their Rwandan counterparts and former Barundi neighbours, the politically astute of Ryamukona performed the duty of loyal protectors, but exhibited their vulnerability and fear to elicit reinforcements from the state, and thus were sure to describe their border troubles in terms most threatening to national interest. 'Now the Rwandan population shout war cries, signs of great excitement,' the informant described, 'which makes

⁹⁶ ANB, B 11 (2), *Affaire Nkurunziza*, 25 July 1967.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

the Barundi population of the border extremely anxious.’

The performance of loyalty was fully taken up by the provincial authorities, so that together they collaborated in the adjustment of national politics. In the formal report to the Ministry of the Interior, the Governor’s office rendered the scribbled notes of the Ryamukona resident’s evidence into the official position of the administration. The nights echoed with ‘cries of alarm ... intended to create a spirit of insecurity amongst the peaceful population of Burundi’, since ‘the Barundi refugees, former inhabitants of Rugwiza,⁹⁸ are at the base of these ploys’.⁹⁹ Already on the eve of Nkurunziza’s abduction an emphatic request had been submitted for a brigade of gendarmes to be permanently installed in Ijene, ‘to ensure the surveillance of the frontier posts’,¹⁰⁰ and the subsequent incursion served to underline this necessity. The officials of the *Arrondissement* were ordered to remain on Ryamukona indefinitely to report on the Rwandan ‘provocations’ and ‘to reinforce the morale of the population’.¹⁰¹ Where they had been deeply suspicious of this population’s loyalty, the officials responded swiftly to the claims and performance of the Ryamukona community as afflicted and overwhelmed border guards, presenting a united face to the national government. The Governor’s office urged the Ministry of the Interior that the state must ‘protect these innocents of the borderland, who are condemned to the tyranny of a neighbouring country.’¹⁰²

The response to the kidnap of Nkurunziza, himself a Rwandan by origin, thus demonstrated the utility of collaboration as a political tactic on the border. Even as the state’s policy drifted away from hostility to Rwanda, local interests among population and administration united to maintain the warlike stance they felt necessary. In Feyissa’s terms, they collaborated to show themselves together ‘more state than the state’; they insisted on the ‘rigidification’ of the frontier against the particular interest of the government, ‘mobilizing the state in a local

⁹⁸ The *sous-colline* of Ryamukona that faces north to Rwanda.

⁹⁹ ANB, B 11 (2), Paul Rusiga and Mathias Rwamo, *La situation frontalière*, 24 July 1967.

¹⁰⁰ ANB, B 11 (2), François-Xavier Muhamirizo, Letter to Minister of External Affairs, 17 July 1967.

¹⁰¹ ANB, BI 6 (115), Progou Ngozi, Telegram to Commarro, 26 July 1967.

¹⁰² ANB, B 11 (2), Paul Rusiga and Mathias Rwamo, Letter to Dirgalinter, 24 July 1967.

struggle'.¹⁰³ It was a tense relationship. Soldiers occupying the border prevented more attacks, but they also curtailed all visits to market in Rwanda.¹⁰⁴ Yet while two-edged, it was a stance of power for all concerned. Acting the border guards, the population received support in their local cross-border feud, while acting the protectors, the provincial authorities convinced the national government that the border was still in danger and received greater resources. Even in a circumstance far distant from the national threat experienced in 1964, united opposition to Rwanda became the means by which state and society could see each other in concert on the frontier.

Vigilance: Spies in the Congregation

The performance of loyalty among the border population was an occasional choice, adopted in moments of necessity. These self-conscious moments of collaboration were applied tools, intended to elicit support in a specific circumstances. For the state, however, the loyalty of collaboration and constant, voluntary surveillance from the people was something it deeply desired, a potential source of stability in a decade defined by state uncertainty. Seeking to secure its tentative revolution, therefore, the Republican government formalised collaboration; instead of responding occasionally to invocations from the border population, it began to require the duty of guarding the border from the youth of the community.

'There are people,' wrote a pastor despairingly in 1967 at the protestant mission of Rubura, a constant subject of state hostility, 'who walk day and night, trying to find those who cross the frontier.'¹⁰⁵ His letter was addressed to a colleague in Rwanda, lamenting that a hoped-for marriage between their children was being prevented by the state's aggression on the border. Intercepted, the letter was considered to 'reveal clearly enough an assault on the security of the

¹⁰³ Dereje Feyissa, "More State than the State? The Anywaa's Call for the Rigidification of the Ethio-Sudanese Border," in *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa*, ed. Dereje Feyissa and Markus Virgil Hoehne (Oxford: James Currey, 2010), 27–43, p. 43.

¹⁰⁴ Mbazumutima Thérèse (pseud.), interview in Ryamukona (Kabarore), 9 March 2011.

¹⁰⁵ ANB, BI 6 (168), Nyakamwe Ezekiya, Letter to Pastor Gituro Eliyakimu, 12 August 1967.

state'.¹⁰⁶ The pastor was right; the border was watched, and no longer simply by the *ad hoc* performance of private citizens. He referred to the new *Jeunesse révolutionnaire Rwagasore*, the JRR, Uprona's youth league created from the disillusioned dregs of the pre-revolutionary *Jeunesse nationale Rwagasore*. The transformation had been a sudden decision in February 1967, when a telegram was sent to all provincial Governors to declare that 'a youth movement has been created ... old denominations JNR and UNEBA [*Union national des étudiants du Burundi*] do not exist any longer ... you are asked to monitor the activities of people belonging to the former JNR and to take necessary measures in cases where their activities are contrary to the decision of the president of the Republic who created the JNR.'¹⁰⁷ Their slogan was 'Vigilance', a call to political orthodoxy and rigour, but on the border it took on a particular significance. They were the *de facto* formal border guards of the party and the nation, vigilant to incursions of the border in any form. Yet while carrying out this quasi-state duty, in the hills the JRR consisted of the eager youth of the community, providing genuine interest and opportunity for its members. 'They were like soldiers of the party,' explains a former member;

'if there was anything wrong in the community, they would call JRR members to try to put everything right. If there was someone who was making trouble they would go and take him and bring him to prison ... Every person would find his esteem to be a member of the JRR. Everything they would do they would be quick - helping people, doing jobs assigned to them, everyone found his pleasure to be a member of the JRR.'¹⁰⁸

The *Jeunesse* was at a precarious edge between power and obedience, enthusiasm and control, responsibility and abuse, people and state. A report in *Le Soir* recounted how 'these young men, most often unarmed, block the roads and stop traffic, sometimes for several days; they molest, insult or kidnap their political opponents without hitherto provoking any real

¹⁰⁶ ANB, BI 6 (168), François-Xavier Muhamirizo, Letter to Governor, 23 August 1967.

¹⁰⁷ ANB, BI 6 (118), Dirgalinter, Telegram to Progous, 6/02/1967.

¹⁰⁸ Ndikumana David (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 19 April 2011.

action from the government, which appears to fear them'.¹⁰⁹ The JRR was considered to be 'uncontrollable' by the Belgian newspaper, and Lemarchand emphasises this autonomy, describing the local cells of the JRR as 'an ultimate court of appeal in the provinces, with the local army men passively watching the proceedings'.¹¹⁰

The local leaders are more modest in their recollections, of course, proud of their role and prestige in the community but clearly denoting their subordination to the regular communal and party authorities. This may be an accurate representation of a less radical *Jeunesse* away from the political militants of Bujumbura described by *Le Soir*. In the hills of the border they assumed the duty of collaboration invoked as a point of connection between people and state. As the corporate realisation of this collaboration, they assumed the position of a new player in the political game, one that could take a remarkably ambiguous role in the negotiations of power and control at the edge of the nation.

To explore this complex and the role of the stance of collaboration within it, we may look to August 1968 and the far west of Kabarore. Four years after the frontier burnings things were remarkably calm, until one Sunday morning the JRR received a tipoff that in the small *colline* of Kibati (see Figure 4.2, p. 170), within sight of the Kibira rainforest, three Rwandan soldiers had appeared at a protestant church near the border. The youth league came quickly, managed to capture one of the men as the other two got away, and summoned the communal administrator immediately. But upon interrogation of the captured man the officials began to realise that this was far from the invasion they had feared. The Rwandans had come, the prisoner claimed, not even to hunt for '*inyenzi*', but simply to attend a service at the nearest protestant church to their camp.¹¹¹ Afterwards, he said, they chatted to the congregation. Conversation was genial, filled with casual inquiries of mutual curiosity; people asked them about their service in the Rwandan army and how it differed from that of Burundi, they discussed the relative size of communes in the two countries. The soldiers had apparently

¹⁰⁹ Jacques Cordy, "Après un an de République," 16 September 1967, pp. 1, 3.

¹¹⁰ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* p. 458.

¹¹¹ ANB, BI 6 (120), Mbanzamihiho Charles, *L'apparition de trois soldats rwandais sur le sol burundais*, 31 August 1968.

been in the region a few times before and seemed particularly at ease with their presence on enemy territory. There was some suspicion when it was noted that the soldier's identity card specified that he was Catholic, yet he claimed to be on a religious visit to the protestant church; when challenged on this inconsistency, in a fit of patriotic and political cheek the young man retorted, 'When one is Parmehutu, one is free to embrace the religion of one's choice.' Brimming with doubt, the *Administrateur de Commune* and soon the *Commissaire d'Arrondissement* considered his story, but it was eventually decided that he was merely 'an undisciplined soldier' and not part of any greater plot.

However, the most remarkable aspect of this peculiar event was the disjoint between the sequence of events and the colourful account given by the Barundi informers. One claimed that at the visit of the three Rwandan soldiers 'the population thought that it was war that was about to break out', but that 'since the arrest of these Rwandan soldiers, the population is calm. However, the people wish that Barundi soldiers would sometimes make patrols in our region so that the inhabitants of Rwanda can see that we have protectors.'¹¹² This was of course the correct official answer; to confess to knowledge of the unreported presence of Rwandan agents on Burundi soil, or to any reaction other than fear of the captured man, would immediately bring them under suspicion, and the wish for a greater military presence was a practical statement of the population's patriotism and political investment in the government. The informants described the political reaction of the community as the grip of moral panic, righteously invoking the state to regulate the intrusion of political deviancy into their midst. They performed the loyal duty of trembling in fear and apprehending the invader, became the border guards the state wanted to see in this distant, uncontrolled corner of the frontier.

Far more clearly than in the 1964 burnings or the kidnap of Nkurunziza, this was a self-conscious performance; claims that the population were afraid 'war was about to break out' scarcely fit either with the reported neighbourly small talk held after the service, or indeed the fact that the soldiers had been able to sit through the service at all. The locals showed

¹¹² ANB, BI 6 (120), Mbanzamihigo Charles, *L'apparition de trois soldats rwandais sur le sol burundais*, 31 August 1968.

no sign of being genuinely under threat, yet the informants forcefully expressed terror to the government. The two who gave evidence were a communal councillor and a JRR member; it was the latter who had sat through the church service, witnessed the casual conversations afterwards, and then alerted his superiors in terms of panic. The councillor was in a not dissimilar position, held as responsible for his community and intent on presenting a politically orthodox face to the state. Making the claim of their orthodoxy with regards to the precepts of the community's duties on the border, they performed their duty of vigilant loyalty.

Their curious evidence, on the other hand, suggested an awareness of the precariousness of the community that had so casually hosted enemy soldiers. Neither informant claimed personal responsibility for the alarm, a potentially powerful claim that might enhance their standing in contrast to the treacherous calm of their neighbours. Instead, the performance of loyalty and border protection was raised as a shield for the community as a whole, the congregation and Kibati population all said to be in fear at the soldiers' presence, and relief at the state's response. Indeed, the councillor emphatically rejected a clear opportunity to further his own individual status by denouncing one of his own. A member of the congregation who had been particularly friendly to the Rwandans was a former soldier in the army of Burundi, and his openness to foreign soldiers made the interrogating officials suspicious of his possible ethnic sympathies. When asked directly about the ex-soldier's political activities, the councillor revealed that the man had indeed been mixed up in ethnic ideas during the fractious elections in 1965, when, as an old teacher down in the lowlands of Ijene described, 'because many people were getting tired of the leadership of one party, they began to bring other parties that were based on differences - Hutu and Tutsi.'¹¹³ But the councillor went out of his way to minimise the heresy of the man he reported, assuring the authorities that he did not 'dabble in racial politics' any longer.¹¹⁴ The informers at every turn sought to present the local Burundi community of Kibati as beyond reproach, uniformly loyal to the Burundi state and therefore fearful of Rwandan aliens, enthusiastic civilian agents of an ineffectual war footing. Yet their

¹¹³ Nyamuhashi Sabène, interview in Nyanza-Tubiri (Busiga), 20 April 2011.

¹¹⁴ ANB, BI 6 (120), Mbanzamihigo Charles, *L'apparition de trois soldats rwandais sur le sol burundais*, 31 August 1968.

reports could not conceal that the behaviour of their neighbours indicated that it was the actions of the informers, the open call upon orthodox civic behaviour as collaboration with a protective, if insufficient state against an antipathetic other, that was in fact unusual in this area, at this time.

The Kibati story was a strange one. The JRR, tasked with the surveillance of the border and the population, seemed to stand as an intrusion of the state into society, ‘soldiers of the party’¹¹⁵ in places where real soldiers were lacking. ‘It was a strong movement, it would help the administration, but the best of them,’ describes one old associate, ‘they were doing what the leaders were asking them to do, they would not improvise by thinking what to do, they were helping the leaders, they were like soldiers who were serving the community for the administration.’¹¹⁶ Yet their ambiguous position between people and state permitted them, in the terms of loyal collaboration, to protect the former when they so wished. The community in Kibati was under no threat from Rwanda, but had exposed itself, and the approach of the JRR members to the state defused this threat as they embodied the assurance of political loyalty. While formalised by the government as an attempt to control the population and the frontier itself, collaboration remained a political identity, instrumentalised and adopted for the defence of the community.

4.4 Border Guards, Border Citizens

The relationship of collaboration on the border ought to be seen in broad terms. Invoked in a variety of circumstances, from urgent national defence to local protection and curious, optional performance, it was a core of expressions and practices that might be applied in many situations, but equally cannot be said to define the daily life of the borderland in the mid 1960s. The claims and practices of collaboration were, in each case explored here, the acts of key informants, often claiming to represent a community but remaining the isolated voices of those who spoke directly to the state. Simply the circumstances of their speech revealed

¹¹⁵ Ndikumana David (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 19 April 2011.

¹¹⁶ Ndayizeye Pascal (pseud.), interview in Cendajuru (Busiga), 26 April 2011.

the existence of alternative modes of political discourse in the borderland, nowhere more clear than in the violent dissidence of those implicated in the 1964 burnings, or more intriguing than the calm congeniality of the Kibati congregation in 1968. But while its practitioners may have been limited, the impact and importance of collaboration as an encounter between government and community was profound.

Collaboration in the borderland sprang from the reformation of the border itself in the circumstances of Independence. On the one hand, it is to be expected that national borders should strengthen in political reality under the pressures of conflict, as the governments of Rwanda and Burundi postured and tilted towards war. Local conflicts that spanned the frontier, in cattle raids or reciprocal political strikes, permitted the recognition of a national distinction shared between community and state, as local sufferings could be expressed in national obsessions. Beneath such larger frameworks of opposition, quotidian acts of social and economic integration seemed only to enhance the recognition of difference and the socio-political reality of the border, a process explored in detail by Nugent.¹¹⁷ For the Barundi in the 1960s, the end of the monetary union marked a fundamental moment of division, continued economic interrelations in weekly market trips doubling as confirmations of national separation. Every aspect of the interaction, from the currency to the topics of conversation to the language spoken, gave social reality to the border. Concerned about the stereotypical arrogance and disdain of Rwandan market sellers, some claim the necessity of disguising their Kirundi speech when visiting the north to avoid discriminatory price hikes; Rwandans, on the other hand, apparently show no qualms about their accent in Burundi, and further their reputation for arrogance. Despite the exceptionally close relationship of Kirundi and Kinyarwanda, when spoken across the border they became markers of national identity, not dialectal variations.¹¹⁸

For the state, however, the border had been discovered in the last years of Belgian rule as a two-faced peril that extended well beyond the international line itself. Both the neigh-

¹¹⁷ Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists*.

¹¹⁸ cf. Bonnie Urciuoli, "Language and Borders," *Annual Review of Anthropology* (1995): 525–546.

bouring state beyond the frontier and the borderland community within it were considered a proven threat to the centre. The independent years of the 1960s saw an attempt to push the border back, narrow its definition to the line on the map. This meant firmly determining the inclusion and loyalty of the borderland community within the political community of the nation. It was a collaborative process; the state approached the community intent on purging its undesirable elements, and members of the community responded by volunteering identification and evidence of these undesirables. As Rwanda embodied the tropes of Republicanism, ethnic politics and bloodshed against which the state in Burundi defined itself, the border community was required to prove itself as ‘un-Rwandan’ as possible. They had to prove their belonging to the nation; they had to prove their citizenship.

Citizenship as a matter of belonging and inclusion was defined negatively, not unlike the rise of autochthony movements across the region and the world in recent decades.¹¹⁹ Letters from 1963 would fit well within such movements, as local merchants objected to the government that Rwandan refugees, ‘Swahili’ traders and Greek businessmen were gaining unfair and corrupt advantage in the border markets, to the detriment of true Burundi.¹²⁰ But as the terms of exclusion revealed, this was not entirely the matter of legal status or romantic, quasi-familial belonging. It was a question of primary loyalty, owed above all to an Uprunite order of political orthodoxy. The legal-normative terms of citizenship in Burundi were conducive to this political test, so vested were they on the premise of ‘socio-cultural assimilation’;¹²¹ the Murundi identity was legally acquired through birth or through thorough integration in Murundi culture, and as Uprona pursued its self-identification with both state and nation, its own political cosmology was asserted as fundamental to this culture.¹²² Citizenship as belonging presumed a national community coterminous with a political one. Nkurunziza, kidnapped in 1967, was emblematic of the paradox of this political citizenship. He was consistently discussed as ‘*Rwandais*’ and ‘*Munyarwanda*’ in the documentation of the time, yet his abduction

¹¹⁹ cf. Geschiere and Ceuppens, “Autochthony.”

¹²⁰ ANB, BI 6 (94), Traders of Mihigo, Letter to Governor, 26 June 1963.

¹²¹ Verbrugge, “Introduction,” p. 7.

¹²² Sumu, “La permanence du Parti UPRONA,” pp. 79–117.

was treated as the molestation of a citizen since it was a political act by the alien other. By contrast, Mirerekano and others held responsible for the Kabarore burnings were excluded from national belonging by the deviance of their politics, tainted by association with Rwanda. The border setting, with its moments of territorial violation, encouraged the realisation of political exclusion in national terms.

To prove their belonging to the nation, the borderland citizens had to perform their citizenship, display their political loyalty. And throughout the situations described here, the overriding act of citizenship was that of vigilance. To be a good citizen was to be a vigilant citizen. Vigilance is ‘a frontier phenomenon’,¹²³ and on the literal frontier of the state it was a natural mode of engagement for the people. By reporting the incursion of individuals or ideas, one presented oneself to the state as belonging to the nation, and deserving of state endorsement. This was the sense of the collaboration performed in these relationships; citizen and state spoke to each other in shared terms of border vigilance, political orthodoxy, and each provided a degree of protection to the other. The word *citoyen* itself is almost absent from the vocabulary of the state in this time, overshadowed by the concept of ‘Murundi’ identity, yet it is in the context of borderland performances of threatened national guards that the *Commissaire d’Arrondissement* in 1967, weeks before the kidnap of Nkurunziza, endorsed the concept of ‘*la population citoyenne*’ as defined by loyalty on the frontier; he urged his superiors that it was essential to ‘establish the measures to be taken to avoid in time any border tangles between the inhabitants of the Rwandan riverbank and the citizen population.’¹²⁴ There was reciprocity, mutual obligation, mutual protection in the collaboration of border vigilance.

Until the formation of the JRR this was ‘civic vigilance’, but like the more explicitly vigilante violence of the Mparamirundi rebellion, civic vigilance entailed the definition and ordering of society.¹²⁵ It was not an empty performance intended to deflect state hostility and then be set aside; by endorsing the state’s consideration of political orthodoxy as the

¹²³ Ray Abrahams, *Vigilant Citizens: Vigilantism and the State* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), p. 24.

¹²⁴ ANB, BI 6 (120), François-Xavier Muhamirizo, Letter to Governor, 5 May 1967.

¹²⁵ David Pratten, “The Politics of Vigilance in Southeastern Nigeria,” *Development and Change* 37, no. 4 (2006): 707–734, p. 711; Buur, “Reordering Society.”

basis of belonging, the vigilant citizen gave it reality in his or her own community. When propagandists for the PP or for Mirerekano were either apprehended or reported, the informant put into action the state attitude that these individuals had, by their political conviction, set themselves outside of society. Vigilance established criminality, and criminality defined community by the exception. As Roitman's informant in Cameroon argued, 'So that the system can continue to function properly, it's important that there are people in violation.'¹²⁶ Vigilance recognised and confirmed these terms of violation.

It was, nevertheless, a state-centred act. Abrahams observes that vigilantism in its traditional sense 'presumes the existence of the state' by its attempt either to fill a gap left by state ineffectiveness or to express criticism of state failure to act, a fundamental question of self-help.¹²⁷ On the border in the 1960s, however, filling the gap left by the state was done at the state's own demand. It was collaboration on the state's terms. Only in the case of Nkurunziza's abduction could vigilance be construed as criticism, as both local people and local administration argued for greater state presence, the border a 'discursive resource' to demonstrate state deficiencies exposed by civic injury and vigilance.¹²⁸ Otherwise, vigilance appeared almost as an obligation, self-help required not in the later Zairean sense of *debrouillez-vous*,¹²⁹ but as a duty owed to the state. If the claims of the Mparamirundi rebels in 1961 had appeared somewhat as acts of citizenship conducted through the stance of the subject, vigilance on the post-colonial border showed the inverse. Displaying one's belonging within the nation, acting on behalf of the state, was to an extent subjection to the state's attitude of hostility towards the community, deflecting its wrath. 'Citizenship is Janus-faced',¹³⁰ and when the state considered any other path of action or expression to be treasonous, the duties

¹²⁶ Roitman, "Productivity in the Margins," p. 210.

¹²⁷ Abrahams, *Vigilant Citizens*, p. 9.

¹²⁸ Feyissa, "More State than the State?" p. 27.

¹²⁹ The 'take care of yourself' economy is now a proverbial theme in studies of Congo; see Gauthier De Villers, Bogumil Jewsiewicki, and Laurent Monnier, eds., *Manières de vivre. Économie de la "débrouille" dans les villes du Congo/Zaire* (Paris: Harmattan, 2002).

¹³⁰ Robins, Cornwall, and von Lieres, "Rethinking 'Citizenship'," p. 1080.

of citizenship appeared synonymous with the obedience of the subject. Border vigilance was a ‘ritual of citizenship’ as described by Burgess, training a ‘new kind of citizen’ who embodied both the political ideals and needs of the aggressive state,¹³¹ but it retained much of the expectations of submission from previous modes of power.

The JRR was only an avatar of this mode of cooperation with the state. Even outside of its ranks, by expressing themselves in the terms of the state’s prejudice, vigilant citizens raised issues of obligation and mutual interest, purposefully placing themselves and, largely, their communities within the citizenship of belonging in order that they might benefit from the state’s protection. It is notable that the denunciations of political deviancy or treachery frequently preceded the direct request for a greater investment of armed force in the borderland from the government, scarcely the desire of the oppressed subject. The language of state orthodoxy could be a tool of power, a means of access that permitted the elicitation of state power into a local contest by an involved local actor. It is impossible to judge the personal conviction of those who denounced ethnic politics, or collusion with Rwanda, or deviation from any of the norms of Upruniste dogma, but the careful invocation of these issues was a political act intended to shape and distort the local terms of contest to the interests of the informant. As Pratten observes in Nigeria, ‘modes of vigilance . . . are configured by internal imperatives as much as they are by the national and transnational political economy.’¹³² Yet the invocation of collaboration between vigilant citizen and state was not a limited act, within the control of the population, a tool to be used to solve a problem then be set aside. Once the state became invested in border surveillance it was difficult to dislodge. This would be distinctly uncomfortable for the population that lived and worked through daily cross-border exchanges, as the people of Ryamukona discovered in Nkurunziza’s absence.¹³³ Performing the border

¹³¹ Thomas Burgess, “The Young Pioneers and the Rituals of Citizenship in Revolutionary Zanzibar,” *Africa Today* 51, no. 3 (2005): 3–29; the Zanzibari ‘Pioneers’ Burgess describes had their nominal equivalent in the *Pionniers* of Republican Burundi, the children’s organisation for those too young to join the JRR; both derive in imitation from the Soviet model.

¹³² Pratten, “The Politics of Vigilance,” p. 710.

¹³³ See above, p. 175.

guard once would require its repetition in the future, lest the claim of orthodoxy be followed by the condemnation of deviancy, and the dutiful expressions of the Kibati JRR informant exemplifies this need for persistence beyond vital necessity. The border was a continuously evolving political complex, and each attempt to enact the relationship of collaboration altered, but never concluded, the mutual tension between doubtful state and borderland people. This manner of citizenship attempted no dissent, permitted no deviation from the language of the state, but nevertheless provided the opportunity to shape state actions and alter the political world of the border along lines the informer, the vigilant border guard, sought at the time; it was a gesture of power, but so thoroughly invested in the terms of the state that it was a tool over which the borderland population would struggle to maintain control.

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Through the early years of Independence, through the early years of the Republic, the borderland exhibited these flashes of political invocation, the performance of a citizen's vigilant duty to protect the borderland and the demand on the state's obligation to reciprocate. Eventually, the Republican regime succeeded in making headway with its Rwandan counterpart and partially defused tensions along the border. Having lost devotion to the mwami as a means of expressing one's loyalty, the border population thus lost purchase on the attention of the state, its most powerful means of displaying loyalty towards the unstable government. Distance was dangerous, and in the gulf that opened between society and narrowing state, paranoia and hatred soon transformed the suspicion of earlier years into the motor of a far more vicious approach of the government to its people.

However, the matters of collaboration along the border in the mid 1960s discussed here are only partially representative of the incarnations and practices inherent in the relationship of citizenship present in this time. Despite its local focus, this chapter has to an extent recreated the preoccupation and perception of the state, witnessing how borderland people took part in and shaped broad trends of international politics that took place on their back door. What remains to be examined is the far more intimate and complex world of local politics within the

borderland, the relationship with the state and the particular uses to which the same terms and acts of citizenship could be put when the personal political contests of the borderlanders blossomed within the larger atmosphere of frontier tensions. Therefore before the catastrophic culmination of the first decade of Independence in Burundi can be tackled, it is the internal politics of the borderland, shaped by the shadow of the frontier but rarely crossing it, that must be closely examined. Citizenship as a claim on the state remains the key dynamic, but in the fine grain of local politics its harder edge may soon be seen.

Elimination: The Fate of the Bourgmestres

In the mid-1960s, the crises of cascading governments, sprouting ethnic sentiment at the highest levels of state, and a potential war brewing on the border concealed a merciless and deeply significant contest at play in the field of local politics. The key political figures in local government during the early 1960s were the communal bourgmestres, but they were also the crucial political timebomb of Belgian decolonisation. They ought to have been the pivotal institution of political linkage, binding population to government through popular election and intermediate power. Chosen when the Belgians placed Rwagasore under house arrest and Uprona boycotted the vote, they were the product of a tainted election, already relics of an *ancien régime* that had been and gone in the year prior to the victory of Uprona in 1961. The bourgmestres, therefore, the longest-serving politicians in the country and the state administrators closest to the population, were almost all members of defeated rival parties, and thus viewed with intense suspicion and hostility from the solidly Uproniste hierarchy above them.

Across the central border region, the full political range of these bourgmestres was represented, three local teachers who put their names forward in the first popular election of Burundi's history. In Ijene commune, a man named Kaburazosi Zacharie held power; elected under the PP rubric, he was one of the rare adherents to pro-Hutu parties to be successful in 1960, and held fast to his convictions in the post-colonial years to become Vice President of the party. To his east, in Mparamirundi, a political chameleon survived; Ntahorwamiye Joseph, another PP man, had been caught up at the centre of the 1961 rebellion, but tactically

switched parties to Uprona when it became clear which way the wind was blowing. Further east still, in Busiga, Bucumi Côme held confident command; the Uproniste hero, personally recruited by Rwagasore but avoiding the party boycott of the elections to stand under the label of the PDR, his reversion to Uprona was immediate and unremarked, a loyal hero coming home and a wily operator subverting the Belgian aggression against the party of Independence.

An ethnically-conscious opposition rock, a floor-crossing changeling, and a party stalwart: by 1967, all three had been removed and imprisoned, as appeals from the population brought down the higher state against them. Within the atmosphere of paranoia and fear along the border examined in the previous chapter, but without any act of violence or rebellion, elements among the borderland population toppled their leaders by invoking the language of citizenship and political, patriotic loyalty to the state. Building on the terms and practices of vigilant citizenship along the border, this chapter examines the stories of these men to illustrate how such terms of citizenship shaped the conflict of personal political relationships in the borderland. Following a shared trajectory of hierarchical suspicion, popular invocation, and contested claims of loyalty, each tale reveals another strain in the thread that linked population and state, local politics and national government in an insidious game of personal elimination.

5.1 Trials of Loyalty

Kaburazosi: Purging the Opposition

In Ijene, the steadfast opposition man Kaburazosi Zacharie was no fool. Although he belonged to the pro-Hutu PP, and had no intention of abandoning its sparse ranks, he strove to collaborate with his Uproniste superiors after Independence. But he was under suspicion from the start. When the rumours first broke that Parmehutu was plotting an ethnic revolution in the borderland in 1962, he was among those cited by name as a traitor and collaborator. Along with the Protestant mission of Rubura in his territory, and his neighbour in the mountains of Kabarore, bourgmestre Buzubona, it was said that he ‘regularly holds meetings of a subversive

character which would cause an immense wrong to our Country if strong dispositions are not taken in time on the Burundi-Rwanda border.’¹ Because of him, the government believed, ‘Parmehutu leaders are infiltrating our Country to corrupt our compatriots, inoculating in them the poison of racial politics.’

The pressure came down through the hierarchy. The Governor of Ngozi was ordered ‘immediately to take your dispositions, without any delay, to stop the chaos which may be in the process of forming in your province.’² The Governor was a fearsome man, an Uprona grandee named Bizimana Séptime, a former judge and member of the *Conseil supérieur du Pays* under the Belgians.³ He would later be known as ‘*Mulele-le-terreur*’, recalling the Congolese rebel leader, and ‘Séptime the Severe’ for his attitude to command, ruling his territories with an ‘iron fist, reacting without pity against those who did not wed themselves to the official orthodoxy by surrendering to the idolatry of command’.⁴ This was the man in ultimate control of the province; as he responded to the orders of the national government and duly put pressure on Kaburazosi, the bourgmestre, clearly aware of his precarious position, chose to perform absolute loyalty and openness to defer the hostility of his superiors.

So it was that he engaged fully in the surveillance of the Rubura mission, performed absolute openness in any matter touching on the border, and distanced himself as much as possible from any hint that he might be sympathetic either to a Hutu political cause, or to Rwanda itself. He disclosed in anxious terms that pastors of Rubura were said to distribute food aid for free, on credit, to those who could show the letter ‘H’ for Hutu on their identity cards.⁵ When a bridge used frequently by Rwandan students and the sick on their way to Rubura’s hospital and school was mysteriously thrown down one night in May 1962, he swiftly reported the circumstances of the matter to Governor Bizimana and the *Commissaire*

¹ ANB, BI 6 (73), Isidore Rwamavubi, letter to the Interior Ministry, 7 April 1962.

² ANB, BI 6 (72), Charles Kabunyoma, letter to Governor, 7 April 1962; ANB, BI 6 (70), Mininter, Telegram to Progou, 7 April 1962.

³ Bankumuhari, *Le conseil supérieur du pays*; Weinstein, *Historical Dictionary*.

⁴ Ntibantunganya, *Une démocratie* vol. 1, p. 127; cf. Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, pp. 47, 95.

⁵ ANB, BI 6 (34), Kaburazosi Zacharie, Letter to Commarro, 10 April 1962.

of Kayanza.⁶ But he received an unexpected fillip from his Rwandan counterpart, of all people, in the form of a hostile letter he swiftly forwarded to the *Commissaire*. 'I am writing to let you know that no more Barundi will enter my commune,' wrote the Rwandan official; 'they will not even be allowed to harvest their crops unless the broken bridge is rebuilt. The sorrow is shared.'⁷ Any sign of hostility between himself and the Rwandan government was a valuable point of credit for Kaburazosi, and in his scrupulous administrative openness he succeeded in deferring his superiors' suspicion, for a little while; no pursuit was made of the allegations that he was personally involved in treachery on the frontier.

However, hostility to the bourgmestre came from below as much as above. Along with his disclosures of the louche character of the Rubura mission, Kaburazosi sent a separate, secret note to the Governor, one that was extraordinarily expressive in its terse and withholding tone:

'I am addressing myself to you confidentially, in order to expose certain issues that may place the Commune in danger:

'1. The situation of the country on the Border.

'2. Propaganda: a) Method b) Origin.

'3. Terror amongst the population: a) Method b) Origin.

'4. The persons who will place our country in danger.

'I apologise for not wanting to develop these points, since as you understand, once the matter is heard, I will be under threat . . . I would like to develop these issues in your presence.'⁸

Kaburazosi even went to some lengths to conceal his private talk with the Governor, suggesting that Bizimana attend a communal assembly the following day, so that they could

⁶ ANB, BI 6 (34), Kaburazosi Zacharie, Letter to *Commissaire* of Kayanza and Governor of Ngozi, 24 May 1962; ANB, BI 6 (34), Kaburazosi Zacharie, Letter to Marusu, 28 May 1962.

⁷ ANB, BI 6 (34), Mugemanshuro Tharcisse, Letter to Kaburazosi, 25 May 1962.

⁸ ANB, BI 6 (34), Kaburazosi Zacharie, Letter to Bizimana, 28 May 1962.

meet unremarked. Something was praying on the bourgmestre's mind, and it lay within his own community.

No record survives of the dark questions that worried Kaburazosi at that time. But his diligence and care in proving himself to his superiors appears to have paid off. He received moderate praise in his first year report, the claims of treason set aside, as he was considered 'a top-rate bourgmestre in terms of intelligence ... a good worker and decisive in his actions'.⁹ His political vulnerability, on the other hand, continued to count against him. He was not simply a generic opposition bourgmestre, but by 1963 had risen to become the Vice President of the PP.¹⁰ In his performance report it was suggested that he was 'poorly regarded by the population ... because he remains in the opposition and is immovable in his opinions'.¹¹ It was the verdict of prejudice, the opinion of the Uprona hierarchy projected onto the population at large, but there was enough truth in the assessment to hint at trouble to come.

For two years afterwards Kaburazosi enjoyed the relative confidence of his superiors while the seeds of hostility in the population continued to grow, in concert with the rising tensions of international politics along the border. The '*inyenzi*' attack of December 1963 that catapulted Burundi-Rwanda relations to a new low heralded a shift in the local political dynamics all along the frontier. A new flow of refugees entered Kaburazosi's territory, and their control and surveillance became his primary concern. While the national government took a strong stand against the killings in Rwanda, its attitude to the new refugees was characteristically unwelcoming, and Kaburazosi was quick to display his responsible hostility towards Rwandans. 'I hope you are going to find them a place in the interior of the Kingdom,' he wrote to his superiors, 'as they have settled too close to the border.'¹² He reported the movement of Rwandan refugees to the Rubura mission without the appropriate documents,¹³ while once again he deferred matters directly involving the border to higher authority, refraining from

⁹ ANB, BI 6 (197), Budumo Onésime, *RA Ijene*, 19 January 1963.

¹⁰ Weinstein, *Historical Dictionary*, s.v. *Parti du Peuple*.

¹¹ ANB, BI 6 (197), Budumo Onésime, *RA Ijene*, 19 January 1963.

¹² ANB, BI 6 (93), Kaburazosi Zacharie, Letter to Governor, 2 January 1964.

¹³ ANB, BI 6 (94), Kaburazosi Zacharie, Letter to Governor, 30 April 1964.

involving himself directly when, at the height of the crisis, some of his local population were arrested in Rwanda for theft.¹⁴ Ever a careful man, he placed his faith in administrative regularity, and hoped diligence would be his protection in a dangerous political climate. Though a borderland bourgmestre, he sought to keep the border itself at arm's length.

But in his care to position himself positively with regards to the hierarchy, Kaburazosi neglected to account for the resentment and dislike that some in the local population harboured for him. He had briefly been engaged in a court case with one of his constituents, a man named Batigura Gérard from Ruhinga, in the south east of his commune. While the subject of the case is unknown, Kaburazosi emerged victorious from the arbitration of the *bashingantahe*.¹⁵ But this was only the beginning. Batigura was an Uprona propagandist, in the circle of those who had once attempted to import rebellion to Ijene during the 1961 Mparamirundi uprising, and his resentment at losing to a PP bourgmestre festered. Defeated in the courts, his venomous opinion of the bourgmestre passed into popular political debate. Rumours spread about Kaburazosi's rebellious politics, citing his PP membership as evidence of his sympathy with Republican ideals, questioning his belonging in a loyal Uproniste community.¹⁶ The negative verdict of the debate survives in some quarters today; Kaburazosi practised 'ethnic politics', a woman recalled on the border *colline* of Ryamukona.¹⁷ With the antagonism between the Kingdom of Burundi and the Republic of Rwanda at an all-time high, decolonisation-era politics retained a certain bite, and Batigura seemed to know what would spark a political fire in the borderland.

Attacked under the terms of citizenship, the bourgmestre defended himself through judicious displays of patriotic acclaim. He wrote a blistering letter to his local rival, and copied it up to his superiors in an attempt to draw power from the state around him. He described how the youth of the commune had presented him with a medal that bore the image of Mwambutsa. 'If you can't see the good things that I have done, the youth can,' Kaburazosi declaimed, a

¹⁴ ANB, BI 6 (94), Kaburazosi Zacharie, Letter to Governor, 30 April 1964

¹⁵ ANB, BI 6 (94), Kaburazosi Zacharie, Letter to Batigura Gérard, 30 April 1964.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Mbazumutima Thérèse (pseud.), interview in Ryamukona (Kabarore), 9 March 2011.

pitch for popular support clearly targeted as much at the state hierarchy as at Batigura.¹⁸ ‘Don’t engage in politics if you don’t understand it.’ But Batigura was less ignorant of politics than Kaburazosi suggested; as a prominent Uprona propagandist he held considerable weight in the community, and as a local party representative he was a powerful man with the ear of the *Commissaire d’Arrondissement*, Kazohera Gaspard. The bourgmestre Kaburazosi was engaged in a dangerous game when he took him on.

The bourgmestre was strident in his defence against Batigura, pitch-perfect in his expression of patriotism, monarchism and popular acclaim, and might have triumphed over the propagandist were it not for the susceptibility of his superiors. The appeals of an Uproniste who claimed to confirm the hierarchy’s fears of border infiltration carried greater weight with a suspicious government than the diligence of the PP Vice President. Worse still, this diligence came under question. Allegations reached his superiors from commune residents that Kaburazosi had been less than full in his disclosure of his dealings with Rwandans. He had been seen with a bourgmestre, a soldier, a gendarme and communal police from Rwanda on the soil of Burundi.¹⁹ In Karama, one of the *collines* directly on the border, the people today confirm this rumour without a hint of recrimination or conspiracy. Proud Upronistes, they remember the foreign bourgmestre clearly as Murasandonyi Philippe, and laugh, saying that he was no taller than a walking stick.²⁰ He would come often, and not in secret; whenever there was any kind of celebration, the Rwandan bourgmestre would come to drink with his Burundi neighbours. Elsewhere, it is maintained that Murasandonyi would never enter Burundi, that Kaburazosi’s dealings with him were always conducted on the border itself, a fact of local administration in the borderland that continues today.²¹ But as the member of a ‘disloyal’ party, portrayed outside the Pale of Uprona-defined citizenship, Kaburazosi’s implication in such friendship with the antipathetic representatives of Rwanda’s ethnic Republic was damning. The *Commissaire* Kazohera was immediately convinced of the PP man’s guilt. ‘I beg

¹⁸ ANB, BI 6 (94), Kaburazosi Zacharie, Letter to Batigura Gérard, 30 April 1964.

¹⁹ ANB, BI 6 (97), Kazohera Gaspard, Letter to Governor, 14 May 1964.

²⁰ Niyongabo Côme (pseud.), interview in Karama (Kabarore), 8 March 2011.

²¹ Rwaswa David (pseud.), interview in Munege (Kabarore), 14 March 2011.

you,' he wrote to Governor Bizimana, the severe disciplinarian, 'to use all your power to put an end to this affair which seems to have invaded all the neighbouring communes by the whim of a single, simple bourgmestre.'²²

He was not immediately taken. Within weeks, however, the tensions of the time overtook Kaburazosi, and by June 1964 the fatal trap between antagonistic locals, suspicious superiors and an incendiary border location had closed around him. The final trigger was appropriately a matter involving Rwanda, the frontier and the Rubura mission. A car had been found abandoned between his communal offices and the protestant church, and as a large crowd gathered to see the unusual sight, a man who had hitched a lift in the jeep the day before explained that the driver had been last seen in a hurry towards the border, heading for Rwanda.²³ Ever alert to the suggestion of infiltration on the border, the *Commissaire* Kazohera descended on the region to interrogate the witness. Kaburazosi and Batigura stood in uncomfortable attendance, with Furuguta, the former rebel leader who tried to 'fuck everything up' for the Belgians in 1961, at Batigura's side.²⁴ The witness bumbled through a largely uninteresting story, and with little to go on, the *Commissaire* turned his attention to Kaburazosi himself. Already hostile and suspicious of the bourgmestre's every move, goaded by Batigura's invocation of Uproniste loyalty, the *Commissaire* pounced on the banal incident as a final proof of Kaburazosi's dereliction of duty, failing to protect the border from the flight of an apparent fugitive. The bourgmestre tried to argue that he had been ill, staying overnight at the hospital of Rubura, and that he had been the first to alert his superiors of the jeep when he was informed. But the suspicions of the hierarchy considered themselves confirmed, Batigura's agitation against him succeeded, and two days later Kaburazosi Zacharie was suspended by Governor Bizimana, and remanded to prison awaiting trial, 'taken by the Upronistes'.²⁵

The phrasing of his conviction was a naked concession to the definitions of his enemies, the state answering the appeals and claims of loyalty among the citizenry by self-consciously

²² ANB, BI 6 (97), Kazohera Gaspard, Letter to Governor, 14 May 1964.

²³ ANB, BI 6 (34), Kazohera Gaspard, *Audition relative à la jeep*, 6 June 1964.

²⁴ See above, p. 127.

²⁵ Niyongabo Côme (pseud.), interview in Karama (Kabarore), 8 March 2011.

fulfilling its reciprocal obligation to defend them against a traitorous, abusive administrator. Governor Bizimana displayed the severity of his reputation, but clothed it in popular support. Official censure was premised by ‘the public clamour according to which the bourgmestre Kaburazosi undertakes subversive politics and maintains secret relations with the communal authorities of Rwanda.’²⁶ Police from either side of the border were said to have held their own meeting in Munege *colline*, an exchange that the residents of Munege today confirm without any sign of disapproval or suggestion of conspiracy.²⁷ And paradoxically, the bourgmestre’s guilt was proven by the reputation of Ijene as a whole: ‘a place of refuge or an intermediary of escaping criminals’.²⁸

From years of careful disclosure and the performance of rigour and loyalty, Kaburazosi’s omissions opened a space for the trap to close around him. Never forgiven for his membership of an opposition, ethnically-defined party, but broadly succeeding in defusing the worst of the allegations against him, it took the invocation of a local man to keep the embers of doubt burning in the minds of the bourgmestre’s superiors. The precise nature of his guilt in the charges brought against him is difficult to say. Despite some negative recollections of his ‘ethnic politics’, most memories of Kaburazosi today are relatively positive, tempered by the fact that his reign was cut so short that there was little he could achieve for the commune.²⁹ His affiliation to the PP is intriguingly elided in many accounts, several people stating that he was a member of Uprona, since that was the ‘best party’;³⁰ for some his memory has been scrubbed clean of negative association, and his death lamented as one of the first shadows of 1972, an educated and intelligent man killed specifically because he had been a school teacher, because he was so capable.³¹

²⁶ ANB, B 20 (3), Bizimana Septime, *Décision no. 2 bis/091.VII/64*, 8 June 1964.

²⁷ Ngerenranya Daniel, interview in Munege (Kabarore), 14 March 2011.

²⁸ ANB, B 20 (3), Bizimana Septime, *Décision no. 2 bis/091.VII/64*, 8 June 1964.

²⁹ Manirabona Kizera, interview in Karama (Kabarore), 8 March 2011; Havyarimana Marie (pseud.), interview in Ngoma (Kabarore), 10 March 2011.

³⁰ *ibid.*; Ngerenranya Daniel, interview in Munege (Kabarore), 14 March 2011.

³¹ Rwaswa David (pseud.), interview in Munege (Kabarore), 14 March 2011.

The picture that emerges from this account, conflictual in the archives as in popular memory, cannot speak to Kaburazosi's guilt or innocence. It does, however, reveal the vital dynamics and terms of denunciation in the borderland that permitted the population to invoke the power of the state. The borderland bourgmestres were in a situation that necessitated contact with Rwanda, far more contact indeed than had been current among the Belgian administration when the border officially did not exist.³² For those that were outside Uprona's ranks, this exposed them to the slightest hint of an allegation, and as the atmosphere along the border turned to the worse, the paranoid government was easily persuaded of guilt. Kaburazosi was particularly susceptible, given his membership in and political conviction for the pro-Hutu PP. As professional, intelligent and competent as he was, as confident as he could be when retaliating against Batigura's attacks through the judicious invocation of popular support and royalist certitude, the upper levels of state were primed to respond to hints of treachery levelled by propagandists over the displays of loyalty exhibited by bourgmestres, particularly in the crisis atmosphere of mid-1964.

Kaburazosi's wife gave birth shortly before his imprisonment.³³ Her family travelled to the prison in Ngozi to visit the fallen bourgmestre, taking gifts of laden banana branches for the prison guards, and were given barely a minute to speak with him. It was the last time they saw him alive. A year later the ex-bourgmestre was rotting in prison, still awaiting trial.³⁴ There is no archival record of his fate. He may have been executed as part of the purges of 1972.³⁵ His old constituents today simply recall that Kaburazosi was taken to prison in 1964 'to be killed', and the Vice President of the *Parti du Peuple* died unknown, out of sight behind bars.³⁶

³² c.f. above, p. 7; Valère Vandembulcke, interview in Westrozebeke (Belgium), 21 July 2011.

³³ Havyarimana Marie (pseud.), interview in Ngoma (Kabarore), 10 March 2011.

³⁴ ANB, B 20 (3), Bizimana Septime, Letter to the Director of Internal Affairs, 4 August 1965.

³⁵ Weinstein, *Historical Dictionary*.

³⁶ Rwaswa David (pseud.), interview in Munege (Kabarore), 14 March 2011; Havyarimana Marie (pseud.), interview in Ngoma (Kabarore), 10 March 2011; Manirabona Kizera, interview in Karama (Kabarore), 8 March 2011.

Kaburazosi Zacharie was the first bourgmestre to be so eliminated in the borderland. But while he languished in prison, one by one his colleagues similarly fell. His elimination was a model, a confined test-case that saw a swift removal through the association of local accusation, border implication and hierarchical suspicion. By the end of 1964, four other opposition bourgmestres had been dismissed and charged by Governor Bizimana, as the purge of Uprona's enemies in the doomed cadre of local government was pursued between people and state.³⁷ But the archetype of Kaburazosi's elimination would prove far more powerful and flexible, indicative of a far deeper current of political strategy and practice in the hands of local individuals and the higher state, when even Uprona's own began to fall to the trap of an active citizenry and a susceptible hierarchy. Born from an effervescent political contest in the battles of decolonisation, fuelled by the fear and violence of the border, local politics on the edge of the nation crystallised around a single, combative conversation, and the lowest figures in the hierarchy of state would again and again prove to be the victims of this powerful alliance.

Ntahorwamiye: Any Excuse

If Kaburazosi had trodden a dangerous path by maintaining his political affiliation after the victory of Uprona, his neighbour Ntahorwamiye Joseph had been much more flexible. He was practiced, having survived the 1961 rebellion in his territory while actively working against it. Ntahorwamiye was a careful operator. Thus his subsequent defection to Uprona was opportunistic, characteristic and, in many ways, sensible. The old Upronistes in his territory remained doubtful of his character, but he was in a better position to defend himself to the state when he belonged to the party. And it was to the state that he continued to look for support; his early activities in the Uproniste world were focussed on exacting the best possible tax payment from his commune, an approach that he hoped would be appealing to a government whose funds were extraordinarily restricted. This partially backfired; he overreached his authority in deploying soldiers to collect tax, eliciting strong rebukes from the

³⁷ ANB, B 20 (3), Bizimana Septime, Letter to the Director of Internal Affairs, 4 August 1965.

hierarchy.³⁸ But a focus on extracting tax, from a community that had decades of experience exploiting the border to escape Baranyanka's taxation,³⁹ was inevitably interpreted as an act hostile to the population, and the campaign against Ntahorwamiye started early.

In the last few months before formal Independence, the Upronistes of the commune vented their frustration at the failure of progress, the vanishing promise of victory, in a remarkable letter of complaint to the Minister of the Interior, in which they christened themselves 'The orphans of Mparamirundi'.⁴⁰ Written in a neat hand on three pages from a square-ruled exercise book, endorsed with over twenty thumbprints, and with masterful emotional and political manipulation, the letter invoked the now-unassailable authority of the murdered Prince to demand the attention of the state. The orphans declared to the Minister, with sententious overtones, that 'Rwagasore knew [of our troubles] before he died'; the figure of lost heroism, the unimpeachable image of righteous struggle, Rwagasore's invocation was a call to order against the state.

'We saw how God helped Uprona to win, and we thought that there would be peace, but instead of peace we have regressed. The people with whom we shared our griefs are well off now, and have forgotten us . . . How quickly a man forgets his problems, his poverty, and the people who shared them with him! Now where will our help come from? We had great hopes that when people who knew our problems were elected they would come to help us - now we have lost both the goat and its tether.⁴¹ We ask you to answer our questions, since the Prince before his death said he would do it. Do not forget it, as we have not forgotten what he said . . .

'When Burundi weeps, give us what we need . . .

³⁸ ANB, BI 6 (75), Bizimana Septime, Letter to Commandant, 13 July 1962; ANB, B 7 (1), Zénon Nicayenzi, Letter to Mininter, 20 July 1962.

³⁹ Majombora, interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 18 April 2011.

⁴⁰ ANB, BI 6 (73), Imfuvyi yo muri Commune Mparamirundi, Letter to Ntiruhwama, 9 April 1962.

⁴¹ 'None tubure impene n'ibigiriko', from a proverb indicating total destitution.

‘Dear parents, we thank you for not forgetting our cries . . . Man is not made through university degrees alone. Remember what those who had many degrees did,⁴² and continue to do today. Truth and justice is a difficult thing in a community. This is the word that you must remember, so that you will give us what you are asking . . . [Uprona] won, but the PDC still has power.’

Peppered with proverbs, including a lengthy digression into one of the parables of Samandari, the archetypal figure of Murundi wit and wisdom, the letter is a masterpiece of its form. Ntahorwamiye’s Damascus moment following Uprona’s victory was not accepted by the more militant among the population. In their incisive reminder of Ntahorwamiye’s *Front commun* background, notably casting him as affiliated to the PDC rather than the PP, the ‘orphans of Mparamirundi’ from the start identified genuine belonging in the party as the key element of the local struggle to win state support.

Thus when it came about, Ntahorwamiye’s performance assessment in early 1963 was reasonably accurate; appreciated for his ‘very good will’ and ‘very remarkable activity’, the higher administration considered that ‘he is not so well regarded by the population from the political point of view, because he was in the opposition’.⁴³ Enthusiastic, active, he had succeeded in earning a certain respect from his superiors but failed to win over his constituents. His ‘Pédéciste’ background remains the foundational issue of his memory in the community.⁴⁴ But it was only in 1964, after Kaburazosi had been removed in Ijene and the Kabarore burnings had destroyed Buzubona, that things came to a head between Ntahorwamiye and his people.

It seems that every bourgmestre had a nemesis. For Ntahorwamiye, the subversive element among the local population that took the fight to him personally was Nahagere Gabriel, the leading Uprona activist in the borderland. Once cited by Ntahorwamiye himself as ‘Chief of the Upronistes’ and leader of the 1961 rebellion, he had been a prime target that the bourgmestre

⁴² This is surely a reference to Biroli, who was the first Murundi to receive a university degree abroad. At the time of the letter he was in prison awaiting trial for the murder of Rwagasore.

⁴³ ANB, BI 6 (197), Budumo Onésime, *RA Mparamirundi*, 19 January 1963.

⁴⁴ Magenge Patrice, interview in Cendajuru (Busiga), 26 April 2011.

had attempted to eliminate during Belgian control, and now survived as an influential and dangerous enemy for a local politician to live with. In a region that had already proven its remarkable talent for rebellion, Nahagere was the man to whom the people first turned to voice their anger at the bourgmestre. A group on Kinyami *colline* wrote a more personal letter of complaint to appeal to Nahagere's support, objecting to bourgmestre Ntahorwamiye's abusive tax collection regime, and derisively indicting his failures as a public servant. 'Who is this man who goes to a meeting, comes back and doesn't tell us what was said?' they wrote in mocking anger.⁴⁵ And if their accusations of abuse and incompetence failed to elicit the response they required, the plaintiffs of Kinyami knew how to trigger the alarm and suspicion of the state. 'These leaders used to be in the PDC,' they noted, ominously insisting on the forgery of Ntahorwamiye's Uprona façade.

Nahagere took up the fight, and a substantial volume of duelling correspondence from the old Uproniste leaders and from Ntahorwamiye was produced. Each camp objected and appealed to the higher state, implanting suspicion and raising charges against each other. In his own defence, Ntahorwamiye swore that he was a loyal servant of the state, a proud Uproniste, a dutiful citizen of the political nation. 'Yes, some bourgmestres like to serve themselves instead of serving Burundi of the Barundi,' he conceded to Governor Bizimana. 'But I, bourgmestre of Mparamirundi, refuse to do that, in the name of *Imana, Umwami n'Uburundi*.'⁴⁶ The elision between Uproniste fealty and the patriotism of the true citizen was never so simply stated; service to and inclusion in 'Burundi of the Barundi' was inseparable from the party's slogan, 'God, King and Country'. There was no Uproniste zealot like the bourgmestre-convert. The bourgmestre denounced the propagandists that stood against him as self-interested liars, and urged his superiors to speak rather to the simple farmers, since 'True Upronistes have courage, and defend Karyenda', the sacred drum of the monarchy and the nation. Ntahorwamiye even made a direct appeal to the stance of the vigilant watchman that the state so longed to see. 'You know that we border those Rwandan murderers who don't

⁴⁵ ANB, BI 6 (81), Inhabitants of Kinyami, Letter to Nahagere, 27 November 1964.

⁴⁶ ANB, BI 6 (34), Ntahorwamiye Joseph, Letter to Governor, 7 December 1964.

fear to kill their brothers,' Ntahorwamiye wrote; 'we are like the gate in the fence.'⁴⁷ But the metaphor was too easily twisted against him. Soon the accusations had pivoted, and the bourgmestre's enemies whispered that with bourgmestre Ntahorwamiye in charge, the gate against Rwanda had been left wide open.

This was the trigger to draw the state into the dispute. *Commissaire* Kazohera, who had been so swiftly turned against Kaburazosi in Ijene, was dispatched to Mparamirundi to conduct an inquiry, and took the testimony of thirty seven local Upronistes across several hearings on the troubles in their commune. Ntahorwamiye's nemesis Nahagere and his allies were star witnesses, and the evidence was not good for the bourgmestre.⁴⁸ '*Vyambu vy'impisho*': there were 'secret ways', one witnesses said, by which Rwandans infiltrated Burundi daily, 'and it was the bourgmestre himself who opened them.'⁴⁹ Effortlessly, Ntahorwamiye's enemies captured the position of loyal citizens defending the border. 'This has caused us to fail to prevent the Rwandans from intermixing with the Barundi,' stated another man. 'If we dare to put a finger on these Rwandans, the bourgmestre would treat us badly.'

And so, with the full attention of the state, the calls on state obsessions began to snowball in a startling manner. Stories of Ntahorwamiye's collusion with Rwanda were augmented with images of the antipathetic from throughout the political issues of the previous decade. Ntahorwamiye was bigamous, the protestors said, indeed one of his wives came from Rwanda;⁵⁰ not only did he cling to this pagan practice most hated by the Church, he even kept witchdoc-

⁴⁷ ANB, BI 6 (34), Ntahorwamiye Joseph, Letter to Governor, 7 December 1964.

⁴⁸ ANB, BI 6 (183), Kazohera Gaspard, *Déclarations faites par les membres du conseil communal*, 7 January 1965; ANB, B 10 (1), *Interrogations*: Mabwati, Bucumi, Bitababahe, Nyanzira, Ruksha, Musure, Kayenzuro, Nikwigize, Minani, Bucumi, Ndabumviye, Gishingaza, Nyanzara; ANB, B 10 (1), *Interrogations*: Nahagere, Ruvugo, Ndabumviye, Gishingaza, Nyanzara, 2 December 1964.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

⁵⁰ ANB, B 10 (1), *Interrogations*: Mabwati, Bucumi, Bitababahe, Nyanzira, Ruksha, Musure, Kayenzuro, Nikwigize, Minani, Bucumi, Ndabumviye, Gishingaza, Nyanzara.

tors⁵¹ in his home, in fact even his brother was a sorcerer.⁵² Ntahorwamiye's opponents thus sought to invoke the state against him by raising his unsuitability for public office in every respect. An incompetent and abusive administrator, he was deviant in political, religious and moral terms, and his dalliances with Rwanda bore not only the hallmarks of conspiracy, but by personal, emotional, spiritual ties, he betrayed his nation for the subversive other beyond the frontier. If Ntahorwamiye was removed, promised one of his enemies in the course of the inquiries, 'many would applaud'. And still, his claim to Uproniste loyalty was portrayed as a grotesque act of disingenuous mimicry; the bourgmestre presented a caricature of the Uprona salute, suggested one man, as he raised only two fingers in greeting, not three. The claim hinted at Ntahorwamiye's shallow claim to party membership, and asked a hidden question: which of 'God, King and Country', for which each of the fingers stood in the true salute, did Ntahorwamiye fail to respect?

The climax of the feud in the borderland became intertwined with the fractious legislative elections in 1965. Ntahorwamiye saw an opportunity; he would prove his claim that his enemies were self-obsessed liars, unrepresentative of popular opinion in the commune, by standing himself for election to the national assembly. But the swell of bitter complaints against Ntahorwamiye prevented him from standing as an Uprona candidate, as the committee that selected its representatives was comprised mostly of his enemies, and led by Nahagere. Ntahorwamiye cut a lonely figure on the ballot as '*Uprona hors comité*', a claim to Uprona representation without the endorsement of the regional committee.⁵³ The official candidate was Bucumi Côme, bourgmestre of Busiga and sitting *Député* (member of parliament) for the combined region of Busiga and Mparamirundi, at the head of the party list.⁵⁴

Yet in a dramatic turn of events, none of the 'Uprona' candidates won. An upstart figure

⁵¹ '*abapfumu*'; the term 'witchdoctor' would usually be avoided in translating this word, but its application in such an accusation makes the negative connotations of primitivism in the English term justified.

⁵² ANB, B 10 (1), *Interrogations*: Mabwati, Bucumi, Bitababahe, Nyanzira, Ruksha, Musure, Kayenzuro, Nikwigize, Minani, Bucumi, Ndabumviye, Gishingaza, Nyanzara.

⁵³ ANB, BI 6 (147), *Liste des candidats*, 1965.

⁵⁴ ANB, BI 6 (155), *Candidats élections législatives (Uprona)*, 8 April 1965.

of the reborn PP, named Mbarushimana, shamed them all.⁵⁵ ‘Many people were rushing to join the PP from all around,’ recalls an old man near Mparamirundi, the fratricide of Uprona proving wearying for the less invested.⁵⁶ But for Ntahorwamiye it was a brutal indication of popular support. While they may not be complete, tallies of votes in the archives suggest that while the victor took 11,800 votes and Bucumi did tolerably well, coming second with 7,531 votes, Ntahorwamiye took a desultory 521.⁵⁷ If *Commissaire* Kazohera had been uncertain which side to take when bombarded with allegations of the bourgmestre’s unsuitability, Ntahorwamiye’s complete lack of electoral support must have been convincing. The state’s decision was made, and Ntahorwamiye, having failed in his attempt to rise to the national legislature and prove his phantom popularity, was summarily dismissed from his post.

If the precise reason given, out of the many allegations, is unclear today, it was so at the time. In a surreal turn, Ntahorwamiye was forced to send an inquiry to the Governor to ask what was going on when he found himself locked out of the commune offices.⁵⁸ On the other hand, the nature of the struggle over his position as a matter of party politics, of the loyalty of the true Uproniste, could not have been made clearer when he saw who had been nominated as his replacement. It was Nahagere himself, the first choice of the people to voice their complaints against Ntahorwamiye, and his abiding rival. One of Nahagere’s first acts was to make a tour of the commune and hold meetings with the population, issuing strong warnings against the perils of Rwanda and the divisions of the parties;⁵⁹ he went out of his way to demonstrate the proper conduct of a true Uproniste bourgmestre, the functioning political

⁵⁵ Nsanze, *Le Burundi contemporain*, p. 106. While correctly assigning Ijene to Mbarushimana, Nsanze mistakenly cites Charles Mbanzamihiho as winning in ‘Busiga’. However, Busiga was not a district of its own, but incorporated within Ijene; Mbanzamihiho was rather a candidate in Bwambarangwe, Muyinga Province (ANB, BI 6 (155), *Candidats élections législatives (Uprona)*, 8 April 1965), although he was later active in Busiga as *Commissaire d’Arrondissement* of Kayanza, 1968–1969 (see ANB, BI 6 (213), Paul Rusiga, *Rapport mensuel Ngozi*, February 1968; ANB, B 9, Félix Niyonzima, *Rapport mensuel Ngozi*, 24 October 1969).

⁵⁶ Nyamuhashi Sabène, interview in Nyanza-Tubiri (Busiga), 20 April 2011.

⁵⁷ ANB, BI 6 (149), *Umurwi w’itora w’Ijene*, 1965.

⁵⁸ ANB, BI 6 (34), Ntahorwamiye Joseph, Letter to Governor, 19 May 1965.

⁵⁹ ANB, BI 6 (34), Nahagere Gabriel, *Ibikorwa vy’ukugwanya*, 19 May 1965.

link between people and government.

Ntahorwamiye was only dismissed, not imprisoned, but the political fallout from the legislative elections and the events of 1964 and 1965 threw an oppressive shadow on the border as on the nation. The hierarchy that had been induced to displace him was sinking deeply into panic. *Commissaire* Kazohera was more than ever inclined to attribute any hint at discontent to the evils of the border; he wrote that the inhabitants of the frontier communes,

‘having a political affinity and relationships to Rwandans that are too intimate, do not cease to interact with them day and night, despite the interdiction by the administrative authorities of such communication. It has come about, by consequence, that this communication causes the spontaneous infiltration of people resident outside of the Kingdom of Burundi, ‘political refugees’ as they call themselves, who come to instigate the mass to revolt and ground themselves in racism in order to sow trouble.’⁶⁰

It was just a month after the *Conseil de Guerre* had convicted Mirerekano and Buzubona for the Kabarore burnings. Living up to his nickname as ‘Sévérin the Severe’, Governor Bizimana’s attitude was succinct in a meeting of the nation’s Governors: ‘It is essential to take strong measures against the terrorism that is beginning to invade the Kingdom and to plunge it into a climate of chaotic insecurity.’⁶¹

Ntahorwamiye, no longer bourgmestre but still a free man, would be a victim of this iron fist, as his opponents among the *banyagihugu* called it down on him. After his dismissal, the letters continued to come; in language notably similar to that of the ‘orphans of Mparamirundi’ from 1962, another protest to the governor in June 1965 submitted that ‘We are coming to you as children, may you receive us as a *parent*, since indeed you are a parent to us.’⁶² The names attached to this letter include several of the Uproniste leaders and *bashingantahe* who had been led by Nahagere in 1961, including the lieutenants Minani Bernard and Seryobagi.

⁶⁰ ANB, BI 6 (97), Kazohera Gaspard, letter to Dirgalinter, 26 May 1965.

⁶¹ ANB, BI 6 (216), Raphaël Biregeya, *La réunion des Gouverneurs*, 4 June 1965.

⁶² ANB, BI 6 (34), Sebijagasha et al., letter to Governor, 3 June 1965, emphasis in original.

The letter thanked God that Ntahorwamiye had been dismissed, and praised Nahagere for the peace and good leadership he brought, but warned that the feud was not over. Mere association with Rwanda had only got the man dismissed from his post, and his enemies desired far greater punishment. And so they began to portray him not as a neglectful and irresponsible incompetent, leaving the gate to the country wide open, but as a true traitor; he was a subversive agent, plotting to import the ethnic violence of Rwanda into the peace of Mparamirundi.

An accused traitor in an atmosphere of invasion and internal crisis, Ntahorwamiye was finally imprisoned. But by then, the poison of violence and fear in the politics of the nation had become inescapable, and inexhaustible. And so the ultimate accusation was made: a final, sententious letter of complaint by the Uproniste Seryobagi stated baldly that there were men in the commune plotting to kill Upronistes, to kill the Governor, at the behest of their 'President', Ntahorwamiye. 'On 18 June 1965,' the letter claimed with tactical specificity, 'they held a meeting about how they will start to kill the Tutsi.'⁶³ Already jailed, Ntahorwamiye's fate was sealed by the rebels of Mparamirundi on whom he had once kept a vigilant eye for the colonial state.

The fear of conspiracy and the certainty of impending slaughter manifested itself even at this lowest level of the nation, rumours of ethnic violence permeating the hills as it overwhelmed the government. Ntahorwamiye was doomed, hounded from government, chased from the community, condemned to prison, implicated in treason to the nation, to God, the party and to the ethnic peace so dearly held to be the root of the Barundi identity. His verifiable crimes seem scarcely to have been so great; a wily politician, fundamentally self-serving and swift to shed and adopt political identities as they suited him, he may have been a bad bourgmestre, but there was little scope for him to be removed on such minor terms. Nor is he remembered with such an evil character, his name bringing slight awkwardness but no recrimination. Through endless escalation, endless appeal to and invocation of an unstable and fearful state, the border population cast him down on terms of such devastation that he

⁶³ ANB, BI 6 (34), Aloys Seryobagi, *Abantu bokumusozi wa Kinyami*, (n.d.)

could not arise again. As a disgraced politician, a former member of the PP, a suspect and inconstant traitor to Uprona, an alleged plotter of ethnic slaughter and, simply, an educated Hutu, he would be high on the list for elimination in 1972. The state came to knock on the doors of those targeted for liquidation, and his family never saw him again.⁶⁴

5.2 Invocation, Exclusion and the Violence of Citizenship

The purge of the bourgmestres in 1964 and 1965 was a national trend, as Uprona sought internal solidity through total domination of the state. But it was a state purge that functioned with the engagement, indeed the active elicitation and even instigation, of individuals in the local community. Even as the national mood turned sour in the atmosphere of violence and the spectre of ethnic politics, a state elimination was still only pursued and achieved through the collaboration of members of the local population. The Uprona hierarchy desired the security of popular support that it had achieved in the anti-colonial struggle, and the bourgmestres' local enemies took advantage of this desire to invoke the power of the state.

Through this invocation, the removal of the bourgmestres was an explicit claim on the state to act in obligation to its citizens. The conception of citizenship as political orthodoxy, performed and confirmed in the border conflicts discussed in the previous chapter, was deployed as a political weapon. That the bourgmestres' opponents were established Uprona propagandists, and thus the model on which the identity of Murundi citizenship was being constructed, made it facile for them to deploy the terms of this model to their advantage. It was the instrumental and exclusionary aspect of citizenship. If the performance of loyalty when it came to border incursions had served to display the community's right of inclusion in the nation, the accusation of disloyalty against the bourgmestres sought to exclude them from that community, to cast them as pretenders to power and belonging to which they had no right, or had surrendered by negligence and deviance.

Such terms might be available for any individual engaged in political conflict across the country, but once again the national frontier, the conceptual emblem of inclusion and exclusion

⁶⁴ Sibomana Justine (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 20 April 2011.

in the citizenship of loyalty, ensured the particular incisiveness of these claims in the borderland. The state presumed infiltration. Following the Kabarore burnings of late 1964, this was confirmed not to be entirely paranoia. By endorsing such fears the local militants ensured the attentiveness of the state, which was already primed to act and sought only to know the targets it should excise to cure the borderland of infection. Fanon described the transformation of the political party into dictatorship as a government on the defensive, in which ‘the militant is turned into an informer’ and turned against the people.⁶⁵ While this tendency would most clearly be demonstrated in subsequent years, the turmoil of the mid-1960s saw the potential for the same pressures to be turned against the underbelly of the state, as the old militants of Independence made the claims of citizenship to act as an informer against the deviant, or simply unwanted, administrator. Citizenship could be an act of violence; casting aspersions on the allegiance and orthodoxy of an individual was a trigger that unleashed the willing force of the state.

Inasmuch as the elimination of the bourgmestres was a consummate act of citizenship, confirming the political community as that of Uprona, expelling those who did not belong and mediating power between high and low against the middle, it also provided the most eloquent window on the transformation of political linkage in the first postcolonial years. Speaking of the particular example of Kenya, Cheeseman has noted that ‘political linkage in the post-colonial state came to closely resemble the political linkage structure of the colonial state’ as the ruling party set aside its campaign structure to speak to the people through the administration.⁶⁶ The tales of the bourgmestres show the process of this transference. The opposition politicians were eliminated through the structures of party linkage, the direct appeals of Upronistes among the people to their party in government. But in their place only the administrative link remained, as the Upronistes themselves took local power. The party subsumed to the state, and restored something of the distance between administration and people seen under Baranyanka’s *sous-chefs*. With elimination achieved as an act of citizenship,

⁶⁵ Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, p. 146.

⁶⁶ Nicholas Cheeseman, “Political Linkage and Political Space in the Era of Decolonization,” *Africa Today* 53, no. 2 (2006): 3–24, p. 15.

dominated by Uproniste conceptions, we might almost see a partial inversion of Mamdani's model; the 'legacy' of indirect rule did not itself create subjects, but in the last act of party linkage, it was the modes of citizenship that created, or rather recreated the structures of domination in the postcolonial hills.

In the wake of Kaburazosi and Ntahorwamiye's elimination, one bourgmestre elected in 1960 was left at liberty and in power in the borderland. Bucumi Côme's unimpeachable Uprona credentials ensured he survived the purges of 1964–1965, fully conforming to the terms and ideal of citizenship that destroyed his neighbours. A long-standing Uprona stalwart, wooed by Rwagasore himself, and, furthermore, a Tutsi, he was beyond suspicion when it came to the political contagion of the border. But as the world around him changed, he too would fall. Denuded of the powerful tropes of betrayal and political orthodoxy, with the border itself imparting little direct influence on his sudden predicament, his tale is a valuable counterpoint to those that have preceded. In drastically different terms, in bureaucratic banality and hostility that struggled for expression, he was nevertheless subjected to a trajectory of elimination that is strikingly similar to the battles of citizenship that excluded and destroyed his opposition counterparts. Through the tale of Bucumi Côme, we may see how the dynamics of hierarchical suspicion, local invocation, and the circles of authority between the two, were the underlying substance of the act of citizenship.

5.3 Circles of Power

Bucumi: 'A Most Total Anarchy'

The purges left the incapacities of the communal system in a disastrous state. A project to reduce the number of communes, increasing the power of the bourgmestres by giving them more territory over which to rule, had been mooted since 1963, and once the old opposition threat was annihilated, in late 1965 the reformation was undertaken.⁶⁷ Bucumi Côme's new Busiga incorporated the old Mparamirundi of Ntahorwamiye, and he was blessed with a new,

⁶⁷ Deliberations and delineations of the proposals are collected in *ANB*, BI 6 (102) and BI 6 (179).



Figure 5.1: Bucumi Côme, from his personnel file, document dated 12 January 1966. ANB, BI 10 (7).

modern title; ‘bourgmestre’ became *Administrateur de commune*, or Admicom for short. But even with the opposition expunged, the state was stumbling from crisis to crisis. In July Prince Charles deposed his father and became Mwami Ntare V, then instantly fell out with his ambitious military Prime Minister Micombero. On 6 October 1966 Bucumi officially took up his new mandate, swearing ‘loyalty to the King and obedience to the laws of Burundi’,⁶⁸ but the political order was about to be transformed.

Despite the purges and reorganisation, the attitude of the government towards the communal cadre was still one of total distrust. ‘The situation in the communes is deteriorating due to the incapacity, the poor organisation or the unwillingness of the communal administrators,’ declared the Minister of the Interior to the assembled Governors of the nation in November.⁶⁹ ‘We don’t have time to lose. It is more than time to endow our communes with capable and conscientious leaders. We must not forget that the communes are the cornerstone, the foundations even of our country. You all ought to know that if the foundations are poorly constructed, the building will crumble. It is so for our Kingdom.’

⁶⁸ ANB, BI 10 (7), Bucumi Côme, *Prestation de serment*, 6 October 1966.

⁶⁹ ANB, BI 6 (216), André Ndaberi, *Réunion des gouverneurs*, 15 November 1966.

The building crumbled, but not for the weakness of its communal administrators. Just over a week after the Governors' meeting, Colonel Micombero deposed the king and proclaimed the Republic of Burundi, confidently asserting that Uprona, as the new single party of state, would assure the continued prosperity of the nation. All civilian Governors were replaced by army officers, Ngozi entrusted to a Hutu *Commandant* named Congera Damien who had been a mere lieutenant only a year before,⁷⁰ but the lower ranks were left in place while the new Republic studied their reaction. 'Micombero was not welcomed because the people didn't know what would happen,' explains Ndayizeye Pascal in Cendajuru.⁷¹ Popular memory of the coup is tinged by retrospective horror, but caution and uncomfortable concern at the uncertainty of the time was equally noted by the observing Republic. The most politically invested were demoralised, left at a fearful loss; many had engaged in the political purification of the nation for the sake of the Uprona party, but found themselves now in ideological opposition to a government claiming their own name. Some in the hills feared an inevitable civil war and refused to go out to tend their fields. 'Rumours are circulating among the population,' it was said in Busiga, 'that the JNR and Uprona no longer have any reason to exist, since they were based on Royalty, and now that the Republic has come about, this party with its youth movement ought to disappear with the monarchy, to make way for the PP which has achieved the Republic that it always desired.'⁷² Similar 'rumours', public comment that noted unease at the transition, appeared throughout the region. To the south of Kayanza, near Muramvya Province, people thought back to the catastrophes of 1965, and teachers 'preached that those who sought a Republic in 1965 were killed to make way for a Tutsi Republic.'⁷³ Once again the denunciation of 'rumour' proved the vain attempt of state to dispel the pervasive debate of the people. 'All African politicians are acutely aware of the power of rumour,' remarks Ellis,⁷⁴ and the new Republicans feared that rumour would reveal reality. Dismissing counter-

⁷⁰ Nsanze, *Le Burundi contemporain*, p. 27.

⁷¹ Ndayizeye Pascal (pseud.), interview in Cendajuru (Busiga), 26 April 2011.

⁷² ANB, BI 6 (216), Mathias Rwamo, *Réunion des administrateurs*, 12 January 1967.

⁷³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴ Ellis, "Tuning in to Pavement Radio," p. 328.

discourse as rumour was itself the discourse of an elite that saw itself as a 'rational' body in opposition to an irrational popular opponent.⁷⁵ The old bourgmestre Bucumi Côme reported such rumours fully; he voiced no opposition to the military government, but it soon became clear that he was as disillusioned as those who exchanged such whispers.

Perhaps Bucumi caused the trouble himself. While refraining from any flagrant monarchist statements, he greeted the new military *Commissaire d'Arrondissement*, Sakubu Lucien, with a considerable degree of disdain and evident distaste. As Sakubu went about the restructuring of the provincial administration, pruning the administrators and secretaries in Busiga to suit the new reality, Bucumi took the incautious step of telling the *Commissaire* that he was wrong. Sakubu was instantly furious; 'You do not have the right to contradict the decisions taken by your superiors,' he blasted in the first of an extraordinary series of administrative rebukes.⁷⁶ From late January 1967, Sakubu could write multiple, vociferous letters a day to admonish and threaten the communal administrator, attempting to impose a military obedience to the new hierarchy for which Bucumi clearly had no respect. Nor did Bucumi aid matters by repeating his objections to Governor Congera. The Commandant threw back at him the rumours of anti-Uprona whispers that Bucumi himself had reported, and the responsibility of the Admicom to bring his people to the new orthodoxy was made clear.⁷⁷ 'I wish to remark to you that this manner of behaviour displeases me and forces me to believe that there is a most total anarchy on your part, an anarchy that is in the process of introducing a war without mercy in your commune,' the Governor berated.⁷⁸ 'You are using terms that are purely and simply demagogic, when you justify your insubordination by opposing orders received from your chiefs. You are displaying the feebleness of your authority when you cling to one individual

⁷⁵ cf. Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, *Imperial Power and Popular Politics: Class, Resistance and the State in India, 1850–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 251–253; Veena Das and Deborah Poole, "The State and its Margins: Comparative Ethnographies," in *Anthropology in the Margins of the State* (Santa Fe, CA: School of American Research Press, 2004), 3–33, p. 24.

⁷⁶ ANB, BI 6 (120), Sakubu Lucien, Letter to Bucumi Côme, 21 January 1967.

⁷⁷ ANB, BI 6 (117), Congera Damien, Letter to Bucumi Côme, 25 January 1967.

⁷⁸ ANB, BI 6 (117), Congera Damien, Letter to Bucumi Côme, 26 January 1967.

and declare yourself incapable of working with another.’

From insubordination in objecting to the orders of the military, the charges against Bucumi blossomed inordinately and ranged from the sinister to the procedural. The old border implication was briefly resurrected, the movement of Rwandans through his commune noted as having increased since the birth of the Republic, ‘agitating the population to subversion’;⁷⁹ with equal severity, he was censured for allowing the felling of eucalyptus trees to pay his own private employees, the colonial crime of ‘deforestation’ persisting as a useful tool of the state.⁸⁰ Bucumi is, by contrast, remembered favourably by the local population for his concerted campaign of tree-planting in Mihigo, perhaps suggesting the manufactured nature of this charge, or at least its lack of context.⁸¹ The old bourgmestre had disrespected the authority of a new hierarchy of power; as the infractions began to mount against him, his hostile superiors treated each one with the gravity of a hidden rebellion.

Bucumi was not the only one, and the Republican government recognised that it ruled in a crisis of authority. The Governor’s admonition of Bucumi’s weakness looks very much like projection. ‘The Bazungu were feared and blindly respected because of their white skin,’ the Governor believed.⁸² ‘Currently no one respects the authorities. We are already plunged into anarchy,⁸³ it is reprehensible. I will not tolerate it.’ The rule of force was framed in proverbial terms as Governor Congera gathered all the provincial officials. ‘*Akasozi k’intabarirwa kahiye abagabo babona*’, he told them: the stubborn *colline* burns, the people watch.⁸⁴

Bucumi stood precariously as one of these stubborn officials, and dared to respond to the Governor’s proverb with one of his own: ‘*Umuhini musha utera amabavu*’, he wrote to Sakubu and Congera: a new drumstick raises blisters.⁸⁵ The new regime would just have to live with

⁷⁹ ANB, BI 6 (120), Sakubu Lucien, Letter to Governor, 3 February 1967.

⁸⁰ ANB, BI 6 (120), Congera Damien, Letter to Commarro, 20 February 1967.

⁸¹ Rwageze Pierre, interview in Mihigo (Busiga), 23 February 2011.

⁸² ANB, BI 6 (216), Protais Rukere, *Réunion de cadre*, 11 February 1967.

⁸³ ‘*anarchie (ubusimbirahamwe)*’; ‘when everyone talks at once’, ‘anarchy’ (Rodegem, *Dictionnaire*).

⁸⁴ A variant of Proverb 3635 in Francis M. Rodegem, *Paroles de sagesse au Burundi* (Leuven: Peeters, 1983).

⁸⁵ ANB, BI 6 (77), Bucumi Côme, Letter to Commarro, 17 February 1967. Proverb 867, Rodegem, *Paroles*.

the discomforts that it had caused. But he raised this argument at the wrong time, in a letter defending himself against charges brought by one of his old comrades. Bucumi's own former deputy Ntigacika, one of Rwagasore's first recruits and a target of the Belgian arrests during the 1961 rebellion,⁸⁶ claimed that the commune owed him money, the substantial sum of 136,000 Frs. Bucumi rejected the claim. He told *Commissaire* Sakubu that 'the commune owes [Ntigacika] nothing', and dismissively referred the *Commissaire* to his monarchist predecessors.⁸⁷

The response was outrage. 'What kind of discipline, subordination, hierarchy is this?' Sakubu raged; 'I give you an order to do something and you do the same to me!!!'⁸⁸ Bucumi was swiftly reaching the limit of Republican tolerance, as he spoke against the new administration's active purification of the state. 'I am astonished to see your letters stipulating that we act through irrational militarism, that we are unjustly preferential, selfish, that we can expect other such complaints if we continue our favouritism.' Sakubu felt he had found the root of the personal resentment that was growing against him in the region, and directly charged Bucumi with fomenting hostility among the people. He was reported as the political poison of the borderland, that as the situation was gradually improving elsewhere, in Busiga affairs were 'questionable for us, following the pretension, the incapability, the indiscipline and the tendency to dishonesty of the administrator.'⁸⁹

The model of elimination, the trap between personal enemy and hostile hierarchy, was rapidly forming around Bucumi. He was a man out of date; while unwilling to oppose outright the new regime, his truculence towards his superiors placed him in the same context of *ancien régime* opposition that had condemned the other bourgmestres, despite his long-term adherence to Uprona. And in the personal falling-out with his old comrade Ntigacika, he opened himself to the local acuity of dispute that would permit the state to destroy him. But it took some time for the trap to close. His first hostile exchanges with Sakubu, already at

⁸⁶ See Chapter 3.

⁸⁷ ANB, BI 6 (120), Sakubu Lucien, Letter to Bafamukanwa Pascal, 24 February 1967.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, punctuation incontinence in original.

⁸⁹ ANB, BI 6 (185), Sakubu Lucien, *Rapport mensuel Kayanza*, 4 March 1967.

an extreme level of aggression from the part of the *Commissaire* at least, were in January 1967; five months later the blistering correspondence was still in production, as Sakubu produced multiple lists of infractions and ‘final’ demands for explanations,⁹⁰ until disciplinary procedures were opened in April, on the basis of his supposed mishandling of personnel and communal resources. It was the evidence of Ntigacika, the personal invective from below, that finally permitted the state to act on its desires.⁹¹

Perhaps Bucumi lasted so long because the administration had bigger worries; the Governor himself was under suspicion. The provincial party president catalogued the anti-revolutionary, pro-Hutu statements of some officials, and the arrests and removals of other Tutsi functionaries, and concluded with the damning verdict: ‘All of this has been caused by the provincial authorities, notably the titular Governor, *Capitaine Commandant* Congera Damien . . . He has created a division between Hutu and Tutsi officials.’⁹² The party thus condemned the Hutu Governor in the most absolute fashion conceivable. The Commandant, Micombero’s personal designate on the day of Revolution, was removed just a few short months into the Republic, and replaced by two Tutsi in quick succession, Commandants Karolero Evariste and Rusiga Paul.⁹³

But this distraction above him did not save Bucumi. The new Governors accepted *Commissaire* Sakubu’s account without question, considering Bucumi ‘a personality that cannot

⁹⁰ Notably ANB, BI 10 (17), Sakubu Lucien, Letter to Bucumi Côme, 23 February 1967; ANB, BI 10 (17), Sakubu Lucien, Letter to Bucumi Côme, 7 March 1967; ANB, BI 6 (120), Sakubu Lucien, Letter to Bucumi Côme, 17 April 1967; ANB, BI 6 (120), Sakubu Lucien, Letter to Bucumi Côme, 14 March 1967.

⁹¹ ANB, BI 10 (17), Sakubu Lucien, Letter to Governor, 19 April 1967.

⁹² ANB, BI 6 (165), Budumo Onésime, *Rapport du Parti*, 1 April 1967.

⁹³ Karolero seems to have been in Ngozi for less than two months before a quick transfer to Bubanza for unknown reasons, replaced by the enigmatic Rusiga. The latter had been a sympathiser of the PDC at Independence, but led the army’s repression of the 1965 coup attempt. A Tutsi, he was reputedly so loved by the people that he was suspected by other officers of being a covert Hutu (Weinstein, *Historical Dictionary*; Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, *Une démocratie pour tous les Burundais: la guerre “ethno”-civile s’installe (1993–1996)*, vol. 2 (Paris: Harmattan, 1999), p. 229).

stomach an order',⁹⁴ Karolero signing his dismissal notice on 26 May 1967.⁹⁵ Much like the bourgmestre Ntahorwamiye, however, Bucumi's presence in the community after his removal proved persistently problematical. This was not least because Bucumi himself was able to mount a masterful and eloquent defence of his actions, and a denunciation of his treatment. In a lengthy missive, composed in a quality of French that surpasses that of many of his superiors and is notably more natural than that of Sakubu, Bucumi gave his explanations for his infractions, set out the logical flaws of the arguments against him and cited the exact laws and regulations that his superiors had broken in achieving his dismissal.⁹⁶ 'The accusations of Monsieur Sakubu Lucien are all false, and inconceivable.' His defence was best framed in attack. 'The key to my business with the Commarro [*Commissaire d'arrondissement*] is thus solely the fact that I did not say thank you to insults, to humiliations addressed to me in public, in my commune,' he claimed, and turned the argument of hierarchy back on his superiors; the alliance he perceived between his unwanted secretary and the *Commissaire* that had imposed him was, he suggested, an inappropriate subversion of the chain of command.

'Speaking of indiscipline, of a lack of respect, of arrogance and a whole range of such matters, may I recall here that the administrative code unconditionally requires a certain respect of a superior towards his subordinates, in order to obtain the same in return ... Allow me to repeat, when someone has some trouble with a responsible chief, I see no grounds, neither administrative nor social, to scold him, to ridicule him, to humiliate him before the public under his command, since, in that case, rather than constructing precisely that discipline, order and mutual respect, they are destroyed.'⁹⁷

Finally, Bucumi demonstrated that his dismissal was illegal, that a suspension for a maximum of one month was the most severe punishment permissible under the law for the infrac-

⁹⁴ ANB, BI 6 (206), Karolero Evariste, *Rapport mensuel*, 24 May 1967.

⁹⁵ ANB, BI 10 (17), Karolero Evariste, *Décision no. 091/VII/6/67*, 26 May 1967.

⁹⁶ ANB, BI 6 (53), Bucumi Côme, Letter to Governor, 8 June 1967.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

tions he denied. He called on his seven years' of experience in government to demonstrate the inexperience of the military regime, exposed the hypocrisy of the façade of legality it employed to justify its attempt at hegemony. He even received support in his defence from the Minister of the Interior, Jean Cicéron Masabo, who ordered that Bucumi's disciplinary file 'justifies neither suspension nor dismissal. No serious wrongful conduct has been revealed.'⁹⁸ The residents of Busiga were informed of this telegram, and some were reported to be actively resisting the authority of the man the administration imposed in his place.⁹⁹ But unfortunately for Bucumi, the Minister did not have the sway that his title implied. A rare Hutu of the Tutsi-dominated Casablanca faction of Uprona prior to the Revolution, the Minister had built a reputation as an oratorical firebrand against Hutu politics, but lacked institutional support in the military government.¹⁰⁰ While he had intervened in a similar situation elsewhere in the country in 1965, achieving the reinstatement of a Tutsi bourgmestre dismissed following the 'clamour' of Hutus in his region,¹⁰¹ in 1967 his calls fell upon deaf ears.

Bucumi remained free. Soon, however, written objections arose from his local opponents in the hills. The formal complaints mostly consisted of claims that he had mishandled communal funds, but were expressed as an appeal in the name of Uprona, that 'the Upronistes want peace, but fear injustice in the Land.'¹⁰² This invocation and confirmation from complainants among the population provided the authority of popular discontent that the state needed; Bucumi was finally subjected to a judicial inquiry.¹⁰³ The twin campaign of innately hostile superiors and local enemies thus achieved their aim, and Bucumi was extracted from the commune he had ruled by popular acclaim for seven years. He was imprisoned, and died in jail some unknown

⁹⁸ ANB, BI 6 (118), Mininter, Telegram to Progou, 29 June 1967.

⁹⁹ ANB, BI 6 (213), Bimenyimana Polycarpe, *Rapport mensuel Busiga*, Busiga, 10 July 1967.

¹⁰⁰ According to Kiraranganya, Masabo was later fired from his position as Minister while dying in hospital so that the state would not have to pay a pension to his widow (Kiraranganya, *La vérité*, pp. 72–73). 'Cicéron' (Cicero) was a nickname given to him for his powerful verbal flourishes, and it is within his rather conceited character that he began using it in official correspondence.

¹⁰¹ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p. 415.

¹⁰² ANB, BI 10 (7), Barendayabo Joseph et al., *Rapport y'ivyo Bucumi*, 31 July 1967.

¹⁰³ ANB, BI 6 (216), Joseph Ntahiraja, Letter to Governor, 25 September 1967.

time later. With the charges against him clearly insufficient to warrant execution, his death must be seen as the final act of elimination, a murder behind closed doors. It is remembered in Busiga much like that of Kaburazosi in Ijene; Bucumi, his brother recalls, was simply taken away to prison to be killed.¹⁰⁴ He is listed in Boniface Kiraranganya's register of 85 'most conspicuous progressives' of the party that led the nation to Independence, with a mark indicating 'shot or hanged, following due process or not'.¹⁰⁵ While the archival material here drops away to nothing, it seems almost certain that Bucumi belonged to the latter category.

The denouement of this protracted struggle thus stands as a curiously bureaucratic counterpart to the abrupt eliminations of Kaburazosi or Buzubona in the years previously, a banality of elimination as a disciplinary response to misconduct that reflected the bureaucratisation inherent in the creation of the single-party state.¹⁰⁶ Undoubtedly, ethnicity had been confirmed as the dominant issue of politics in the progression to and aftermath of the coup, and the more prominent victims such as Governor Commandant Congera were dramatic demonstrations of this new reality, the continuing consolidation of power into the hands of emerging Tutsi-supremacists. But the quieter eliminations of lesser figures, the removal of those whose less than full-throated support of the new, oxymoronic Uprona Republic embodied that Republic's insubstantial foundations, were indicative of the deeper dynamics at play within the state and the society it claimed to rule. The repeated, vociferous invocation of hierarchy, obedience, of administrative authority betrays the extent to which each of these elements were feared to be entirely absent from the structures presented by the Republic. When local people appealed to state power on these terms, informing on Bucumi's bureaucratic misbehaviour, they not only confirmed the state's fears but provided reassurance that this was an aberrance, that against the anarchism of the administrator could be set the dependable loyalty of the population. That they represented only themselves, and that there was a considerable body of other *banyagihugu* and local elites still supportive of Bucumi, was irrelevant; the state sought support, and recognised it where it wished. The counterproductive nature of

¹⁰⁴ Ndikumogongo Victor, interview in Rwanyege (Busiga), 28 February 2011.

¹⁰⁵ Kiraranganya, *La vérité*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁶ c.f. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, p. 290.

this self-indulgence, the continued erosion of the structures of state and the widening of the gulf between the military government and the population in the hills, would not be realised until it was too late.

Local Politics and the State: Feud and Purgation

Local politics is a brutal thing. The tales of the bourgmestres thrust the particular reticulation between local and national politics into prominence, the broken root of the state providing the grounds on which the *banyagihugu* of the borderland hills would collaborate with government in pursuit of their mutual goals. As the middle management of the state was purged, the functioning of a circular system of authority and power around them was made clear.

Each local leader was engaged in a local conflict. A skein of personal rivalry, jealousy, or antagonism lay at the core of their downfall, providing the emotional intensity that gave heart and passion, a particular degree of venom, to the outwardly political struggle. Kaburazosi clashed with a man he had beaten in court; Ntahorwamiye struggled with a rival for power, who would soon replace him; Bucumi feuded with an old comrade. Such is the root of local politics, and the personal relationship of the antagonists in the disputes that scoured the lower ranks of the state must not be forgotten. The details are more than just distraction, as they challenge the rhetoric of the participants' appeals to the state, and to the state's self-righteous terms of demission when finally the bourgmestre was removed. The 'public clamour' that the state was swift to invoke when destroying its subordinate was undoubtedly real, but how far beyond the bourgmestre's personal enemies this 'clamour' extended is in doubt. Rumour, the constant flow of popular political discussion, could be heard in the background of these contests, evaluating and embellishing the claims and accusations, and it is on this basis that each side could draw their projection of popular support. But as significant as this wider political conversation must be, in these accounts we must equally tilt in the opposite direction, and appreciate the dynamics of the individuals. The bourgmestres and their enemies knew each other personally, had reasons to dislike, even hate each other that needed little embellishment from the political differences of party affiliation, background or

behaviour that coloured the complexion of the struggles. The individual relationship of leader and rival formed the basis on which the conflict progressed, and the means through which the state intervened to achieve its aims. As such it is the indispensable premise by which such political contests must be approached. However, none of these personal disputes stayed purely personal, and the integration of multiple levels of contest, from individual dynamics through the local complex of pressures peculiar to the border region and the community, and up to the terms and structures of higher politics, demands consideration.

The local context of the borderland remained percolated by memories of rebellion. Although largely disowned and forgotten by the national Uprona government in its aftermath, the Mparamirundi rebellion in 1961 was still fresh in the minds of the borderlanders. Ntahorwamiye's personal rival was the *de facto* leader of the rebellion, Nahagere Gabriel; Kaburazosi's enemy Batigura was a close associate of the man who worked hardest to spread the violence of Mparamirundi all along the border, the propagandist Furuguta. Even for Bucumi Côme, the heritage of the last Belgian years would play its part in his downfall; he had been ideologically aligned with the rebels but kept his distance from them, while his feuding friend Ntigacika had been the local ringleader of revolt. It was an explicit theme of complaint for the 'Orphans of Mparamirundi', orphaned from the national leaders in whose name they had established premature, temporary independence, that their struggle had not only been crushed, it had been ignored. Even though the bourgmestres had not been the primary targets of revolution, they were lingering reminders of how little had changed. The thwarted revolt festered.

But where the political contest in 1961 had been an asymmetrical power struggle, acts of resistance to domination blossoming to rebellion against considerable state strength, the dynamics of power in the fall of the bourgmestres cannot countenance the framework either of resistance or revolt. The bourgmestres' relative power belied their rank; none were in any position to exert domination over their region. The nominal power suggested by the title of bourgmestre depended entirely on the backing of the state hierarchy, and this was repeatedly and overtly withheld. Instead, in each tale of conflict it is apparent that the bourgmestre held a distinctly weaker position than those without formal state rank that campaigned against

him. It is therefore remarkable that the rhetoric of the plaintiffs invested deeply in the imagery of oppression, pursuing the ‘romance of resistance’, which has been considered a criticism of the resistance paradigm, as an explicit tactic to solicit the support of power.¹⁰⁷ This appears to have been rarely more than a strategy of presentation; whatever crimes and infractions of which the bourgmestres were guilty, and it is likely that there were several, they did not amount to the despotism of which their enemies complained.

Nevertheless, the appeals made on this image of oppression provided the thin substance for interaction between society and state. It was a patrimonial call on the paternal self-image of the state, invoking a relation of political clientelism as an *ad hoc* form of linkage to displace the institutional link of the bourgmestres. The institution of the local politicians, particularly when peopled by opposition parties, impinged on the interests of the Uproniste state in securing its rule and confirming its position as the party of the people; a linkage strategy that presumed a quasi-personal relationship of patronage was more attractive than any attempt to make the structural connection of the state hierarchy and popular representation function coherently.¹⁰⁸ Direct address, appeal to the patrimonial obligations of a patron state to whom was paid the duties of orthodoxy and a subject’s obedient support, proved of greater utility and was preferential both for the individuals in the population who made the call, and for the higher state that answered it.

Here was the persistence of political linkage from the colonial period, a directive state twinned with a paternal self-image that made it responsive not to programmatic or regularised dialogue, but to appeals for protection. Thus title and position within the hierarchy proved relatively vain for the bourgmestres, their position as the elected structural link rendered redundant. The game of power lay rather in the nature of the relationship one could command with the higher ranks of state. Such Foucauldian terms are inescapable, repeatedly demonstrated in the cycles of allegation, invocation and response between local antagonists

¹⁰⁷ cf. Abu-Lughod, “The Romance of Resistance.”

¹⁰⁸ cf. Wolfgang C. Müller, “Political Institutions and Linkage Strategies,” in *Patrons, Clients and Policies: Patterns of Democratic Accountability and Political Competition*, ed. Herbert Kitschelt and Steven I. Wilkinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 251–275, p. 275.

and the provincial authorities. Power lay in the ability to call on and collaborate with another, both for the local contestants invoking the support of the higher state, and, it must be noted, for the higher state representatives seeking endorsement for their eliminations among the people. Through this relationship, this stunted conversation, the political community around the bourgmestres was formed. ‘Communities are created by their critical use of a specifically political language,’ notes Lonsdale; ‘This enables different groups . . . to contain their present conflicts within a moral field which encompasses past and future.’¹⁰⁹ The terms of political orthodoxy and loyalty on the border provided the language and moral terms by which to claim fellow membership of a political community between state and society, working towards a common goal by the shared exclusion of the denoted deviant.

This was the substance of righteous citizenship, excluding the traitorous other between people and state. Once again, therefore, the political community was incarnated through a mode of vigilance, the political language of the day a matter of attentive and loyal surveillance. Vigilance against the politically-deviant in the revolutionary community of 1961 had passed to vigilance against infiltration and invasion from Rwanda in the post-colonial years. Now the final face of this dominant aspect of political action was found: the people performed loyal vigilance against the deviance of state. It was a matter of governance, shared, or rather split, between fractions of the political community; it was an act of boundary-making, monitoring for the heresies that lie beyond the bounds of the licit or the political community, defining precisely these edges of the acceptable. Vigilance against deviance within the state was conducted along the wider terms of political rigour and border protection, and thus provided the tones of consensual governance and recrimination that permitted the powerful collaboration of high and low against the middle. Pratten calls attention to vigilance in governance as a ‘tactic’ in de Certeau’s terms, an ‘art of the weak’ rather than a ‘weapon’, which must ‘make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers’.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ John Lonsdale, “Political Accountability in African History,” in *Political Domination in Africa: Reflections on the Limits of Power*, ed. Patrick Chabal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 155–156.

¹¹⁰ de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 37; cf. Pratten, “The Politics of Vigilance,” p. 710; Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*.

The performance of a panopticon of vigilance, watching the border and one's neighbours and one's leaders, was such an art, creating the political community of citizenship that permitted protection for those included within it. Yet while vigilance may have been an art of the weak, invoking and directing the strong to their purposes, it frequently took as its victim others who in their alienation from government stood weak in political possibility themselves. Vigilance as the link between a willing citizenry and the higher state was a reciprocal relationship of power, defined by those it surveilled.

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Under both the monarchy and the Republic, the national shared enemy, the antipathetic archetype that defined citizenship through opposition, was represented by foreignness and the Rwandan demon of ethnic politics beyond the border. But it was consistently the internal proxy for this conceptual opponent that proved the actual victim in the collaboration of local and national politics. The state gutted itself, through its own paranoid aggression and by the guiding hand of its willing partners among the population. The distance between the two, which substantiated and permitted this collaboration, widened; while the bourgmestres had been local men, rising from the community itself and deeply knowledgeable of their neighbours, their replacements would by necessity be the state's men. Nahagere, the old rebel leader who displaced Ntahorwamiye, was only temporary, soon demoted back to the level of councillor. After each instance of removal, the bourgmestre's replacement could not help but seek protection and support by binding themselves ever closer to the hierarchy. Since it was always at the state's hands that the local politician met his end, however it might be caused by or expressed as the people's will, self-preservation demanded that those placed into the borderland to administer the population made themselves closer and more loyal to the greater power of their superiors than to the population. Distance between people and state widened, the knowledge each had of the other diminished as the circles of authority and the performance of intimacy actively destroyed the personal link in the chain between them. Mutual support and shared interest, always expressed in the terms that obsessed the state, remained powerful

performances, while actual substantive interaction and understanding rotted away.

The Republican state thus receded into its manifold internal panics, purgation rising from the lowest levels of the hierarchy up to repeated accusations of conspiracy at the very summit. The link with the population, a matter of mutual ignorance and comforting patrimonial appeasement, was neglected, as far more pressing issues seemed to emerge in the poisonous corridors of power. Games of power and denunciation continued in the borderland, vigilance on behalf of the orthodoxy of state, against the incursions from Rwanda or the infection and weakness from within, continued to be the language of the political community at the end of the decade. But the highest state had travelled far beyond in its obsessions, paranoias and power struggles. Ethnicity had been a valuable political tool in the borderland across the 1960s, a means of attracting the state's attention through denunciation of division. Soon, however, it would prove one of the fundamental means by which society and state themselves would violently be defined, as the precarious acts of citizenship as loyal vigilance were viciously inverted and the balance of citizen and subject realigned. The experience of and response to this disaster, the connotations for the new identities of state and people, for the redrawn distinction and relationship between the two, is the final question to be explored.

Repression: Violence and Obedience

Ever on the edge, Busiga and Kabarore were marginal areas of a marginal province when the state brought unprecedented violence to the hills in 1972. On the opposite end of the country to the locus of the Hutu ‘Mulelist’ uprising in Bururi, distant even from the supposed mercenary coup attempt in Gitega that justified Ntare’s murder there on the night of the 29 April, Ngozi Province had little apparent connection to the crises that prompted the army’s revenge. Yet along with Bururi, Gitega and Bujumbura, Ngozi experienced some of the most extensive bloodshed of the time. A dense population, a low proportion of Tutsi,¹ a busy town hosting an elite school and an army barracks, there were many reasons why the province might attract the particular attention of the state in repression. But among these many factors, its socio-geographical position was key; Ngozi province guarded the main route that might permit the escape of many of the state’s victims, and had been long suspected for its proximity to the Hutu Republic in Rwanda. In the hills of the borderland, the killings and purges most often associated with the context of the urban elite came with full force, the prime example of the instant extension of the rationale of repression far beyond its initial, farcical logic.

While oral interviews reveal the particular circumstances of Busiga and Kabarore communes, scatterings of remarkable documents in the archives permit a glimpse at the unfolding of violence across Ngozi province, and thus this chapter takes a slightly broader perspective than those that have gone before (see Appendix A for maps of the communes mentioned). Chrétien and Dupaquier called for research to follow their crucial volume, itself the only de-

¹ 9.79% to Bururi’s 28.93% in the Belgian count. See Office de l’information, *Ruanda-Urundi*.

tailed national account of the crises of 1972, to ‘follow in detail what happened, region by region, commune by commune’;² perhaps most remarkable in this investigation is the degree to which the experience in the rural edges of the nation echoes so closely much of what they describe in the towns and elite centres of education. The local experience of ‘selective’ genocide on the edge of the nation tells a vital story that not only illuminates the unique significance played by actions on the border, but also reveals an undercurrent of the dynamics of violence that played out across the nation, almost out of sight among the hills.

This chapter explores this local experience of *Ikiza*, the ‘catastrophe’ that devastated the nation. Where previous chapters have seen how the local population took ultimate initiative in engaging with or challenging the state, through violence or in the shadow of violence, here we see a time when the state brought devastation to its citizens for reasons arising far distant from the local population’s knowledge or experience. Firstly, the state character of the violence is interrogated; while the central direction of the violence escapes scrutiny on the national scale, the provincial and local experience was dominated by an intensification of state power, penetrating the community to an unprecedented degree. Secondly, the process of the violence itself, the rough chronology and the categorisation of society into blocs of collective identities to be eliminated, is explored for the local context of the borderland. Finally, special consideration is given to two less-considered elements of the violence: the impact on the surviving community that the methods of violence themselves imparted, and the strategies of response, of flight, resistance, and submission, that the community at large undertook in the face of devastating state aggression. The catastrophe of 1972 was the beginning of a new period in Burundi’s history in almost every respect; as such, it provides the necessary coda to the historical analysis here provided, revealing how response to state violence fundamentally restructured the character and relationship of society and state on the edge of the nation.

² Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 288.

6.1 *Vide du Pouvoir* or the Concentration of the State

The Resilience of Hierarchy

The violence in 1972 has been described as unfolding within a ‘power vacuum’.³ Following the dissolution of the government on 28 April, and exacerbated by President Micombero’s personal absence from public or private view for the majority of the crisis, the freedom of individuals to seize the moment and achieve their own objectives in extraordinary violence was considerable. However, while the question of direction and control at the pinnacle of the state remains elusive, the violence itself was applied through state institutions across the country. Initially through a discernible influence of the courts and intelligence branches of government, consistently through the presence and actions of the army, and frequently through the industry of local administrators, the period of crisis was experienced from below as unequivocally a state matter. For the *banyagihugu* the bloodshed was, in terms almost universally shared across all those interviewed in Busiga and Kabarore, the politics of *Ingoma za Micombero*, the reign and government of Micombero. It was an act of state, taken against society, to decapitate and break all threats to its power for a generation. If at present it is possible only to identify an ‘invisible hand’⁴ in ultimate control, the only explanation for a unified pattern and policy of violence across the nation, on the local scale the hand of immediate direction was anything but invisible. The actors who persecuted the people were known and recognised as representatives of state, and the state that sought this destruction was conceptualised as synonymous with the power of Micombero.

The repression of 1972 was experienced as an overwhelming intensification of state power, the ‘vacuum’ at the top out of sight behind a terrible density and focus of governmental agency at the bottom. As the national governmental space was emptied and a hollow state presided, on a provincial level the administration became more crowded as Military Governors arrived to dominate their civilian counterparts.⁵ In Ngozi’s case the military representative

³ ‘*Vide du pouvoir*’; Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, pp. 196–197.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 184.

⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 292.

was Commandant Bizoza Joseph, an officer whose reputation for brutality became swiftly secured. ‘A man of simplistic and blundering determination, but not without efficacy’,⁶ he was noted as one of the most ‘zealous, reckless or wicked’ of all the Military Governors of the crisis.⁷ Originally from Bururi, bearing fresh horror of the genocidal acts taken against Tutsi by the rebellion there, he is remembered in Ngozi today for his viperously hostile attitude to the territory entrusted to him. Believing that there were no Hutu in the province, he is said to have declared, ‘If there was no coffee in Ngozi, we would just bomb it.’⁸

The redoubling of control at a provincial level presided over a largely continuing cadre of administrators in the arrondissements and communes. Where internal purges removed individuals from within the local state structure, they were replaced with a rapidity that formed a stark contrast with the empty halls of power in Bujumbura. Thus when the civilian Governor, Antoine Gahiro, felt under such threat from the ferocity of his Military equivalent, Commandant Bizoza, that he was forced to follow the lines of refugees and flee the country,⁹ Bizoza smoothly assumed the functions and status of the regularised, civilian command. Correspondence to him in late July refers blithely to ‘Your predecessor, Gahiro,’ and the administration continued unchecked.¹⁰ The resilience of hierarchy ensured the continuing existence of the state as known from below. Some of those who were seen as the local manifestations of a murderous state were local politicians the *banyagihugu* had known for years, others were new appointees with familiar titles, still others were neighbours and local youths whose actions or words brought them, in local eyes, into the auspices of the state, turned against society by fear or greed or trickery. The summit of control was not apparent, and remains difficult to identify with certainty, but through the strengthened and penetrating presence of the local hierarchy, the genocidal repression of 1972 was experienced as a destructive, transformative,

⁶ Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 238.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 292, quoting Bernard Bizindavyi, Director of the *Sûreté* from 1971–1976.

⁸ Dieudonné Hakizimana, Lyse Nkurunziza, and Abbas Mbazumutima, “Répression: Terreur dans le nord,” April 2012, pp. 14–18.

⁹ Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 258.

¹⁰ ANB, BI 6 (146), Njinyari Juvénal, Letter to Governor, 27 July 1972.

scarring question not only of how society and state would from then on interact, but precisely of what society and state would be constituted.

The State in the Community

This latter issue is most apparent in the identities of those recruited and deployed to enact the state violence within the community. On the one hand, the principal tools of state implicated in the pursuit of violence were the institutions of the army and police; it was those in uniform who, it appears, committed the majority of the killing, albeit almost entirely out of sight. Scattered witness accounts of physical violence, when prisoners were beaten with rifle butts, for example,¹¹ are dwarfed by the continuously repeated trope of calm arrest and disappearance. ‘That was the last time I saw him,’ is the phrase that almost every survivor spoken to in Busiga and Kabarore employs at some point in their memories of those lost to state predation in 1972, loved ones last seen alive and unharmed as they were taken away in trucks. But if the consummation of violence was committed by the soldiers and police behind the closed doors of lorries and prisons, the application of it was felt far closer to home within the community. In agreement with accounts from many other parts of the country,¹² the personnel most closely witnessed as the face of repression in the border communes were members of their own community, the youth of the borderland recruited into the JRR.

The JRR had existed in an ambiguous dual position as a social and political movement in the rural milieu, but in the course of 1972 the local cadres were thoroughly subsumed to state power when deployed as the tool of repression against their neighbours. In the borderland, their particular role and identity as border guards, the local specificity of their terms of ‘Vigilance’, were seized upon and deployed as efficient and effective tools of control. Whether through personal interest, investment in the politics of repression, political manipulation or fear, the youth moved from a changing identity in between society and state to an unequivocal position as an arm of government, deeply embedded within the community. Harrowing and

¹¹ Havyarimana Marie (pseud.), interview in Ngoma (Kabarore), 10 March 2011.

¹² Marvine Howe, “Slaughter in Burundi: How Ethnic Conflict Erupted,” 11 June 1972, pp. 1, 3; Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict*, pp. 96–99; Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, pp. 297–303.

traumatic for its neighbours as for its members, many of whom would hold personal horror for the policies they were required to carry out and many, if not most of whom were Hutu,¹³ this transformation was a crucial aspect of the experience of the crisis. State was reconstituted as a presence that penetrated the community through the surveillance and violence of its own collaborating members.

The qualities of the JRR in previous years made it susceptible and valuable for such a transformation. A martial character, underlined by their khaki uniforms, and an honour found in celerity and obedience are the most remarked elements of the JRR's identity in the community, 'Like soldiers of the administration.'¹⁴ Qualities of respect and authority, they were fuel for local youth aspiration in more peaceful times, sections of the population reaching out to share in the status of the state. In the siege mentality and ferocious aggression of 1972, their proud efficiency, intense nationalism and military obedience allowed them to be swiftly captured by the leaders of the repression, and the JRR became the face by which the state was known in the hills.

The central role of the JRR was evident from the first application of the state of exception on 1 May. While the initial violence and army response was limited to the southern areas of rebellion and associated incidents, where the local JRR played a notorious and bloody role,¹⁵ in the north the community youth were called out to man barricades and establish a tight net across the country. 'Vigilance' was invoked and demanded of all agents of the administration, as well as from the population at large. 'It is useless to remind you that the Vigilance must be rigorous,' declared the *Commissaire* of Kayanza, Isidore Ntahobaje, as he transmitted the orders; 'You ought to choose confirmed militants, in order to avoid possible abuses. The *chefs de zone*, the communal councillors, the *bashingantahe*, even those responsible for ten homes¹⁶

¹³ The predominance of Hutu in the ranks of the JRR was observed as late as June 1972 by Jean-François Dupaquier. See Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 253; Abbas Mbazumutima, "JRR, un outil de la répression," April 2012, pp. 19–20; Nsanze, *Le Burundi contemporain*, p. 223.

¹⁴ Ndikumana David (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 19 April 2011. Ndikumana was an active leader of the JRR in 1972.

¹⁵ Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, pp. 139–149.

¹⁶ The *nyambacumi*; this lowest level of formal organisation is remarkably little mentioned for this time,

ought to participate actively in the Vigilance. You must detect and denounce in time anyone who may attempt, in actions or in words, to disturb public order.¹⁷ But the barriers were the central tool of the instant repression, the key to the control of the nation; overseen by the Admicoms, roadblocks in every commune were to be manned by JRR members, under the leadership of a *mushingantahe*, and carefully, bureaucratically managed. A list of names of the members of each band, their rota on the barriers, their leadership were to be submitted to the local administrator, and passing cars stopped, inspected, and recorded on a provided form, detailing the driver's name, nationality, registration number, route and *laisser-passer* details.¹⁸

There is an absurdity in this overt exertion of bureaucratic control. Many JRR cadres were illiterate, unable to read the pieces of paper that represented their higher authority. Dupaquier records a powerfully illustrative account of his own experience when stopped by JRR members near Bujumbura, only to see them reading his documentation upside down; the accompanying cases of beer further undermined the performance of regularity.¹⁹ Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, later President in 1996, recounts an identical experience.²⁰ Nevertheless, the performance of regularity and bureaucracy was a necessary aspect of the repression. A symbolic and expressive power of literate authority stood either as a tool of coercion for the JRR members themselves, whose responsibility and freedom of choice could be self-consciously deferred in the face of such symbols of order and higher authority, or as a point of attraction, members aspiring to the self-evident power of the literate state.

When the call to the barriers first went out it was an act of national defence, framed as a righteous duty of patriotism by state communications and underpinned by widespread horror at the facts of the uprising. An enthusiastic response in the northern communities was to be

informants speaking largely of the *bashingantahe* and *Administrateurs de commune* as their immediate administrative superiors.

¹⁷ ANB, BI 6 (66), Isidore Ntahobaje, Letter to Admicoms, 2 May 1972.

¹⁸ ANB, BI 6 (66), François Gikoro-Habarugira, Letter to *Bajenama ba Commune (bose)*, 1 May 1972.

¹⁹ Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 251.

²⁰ Ntibantunganya, *Une démocratie* vol. 1, p. 112.

expected. But as they lined the border, the communes of Busiga and Kabarore assumed both a particular role in the state apparatus of repression and an unusual position from which to perceive and comprehend the state's actions that they upheld. Hosting the main line of escape to Rwanda, the community members that manned the barricades along the border were placed there to prevent the flight of Hutu from the purges to the south.

It was this passage of refugees that brought the first news to the north that the response to a rebellion was turning to brutality. 'It didn't start around here,' explains Ndayizeye Pascal, who recalls the arrival of the southerners at the Mparamirundi barriers, 'it started in Bujumbura. The people who had been at school, who were educated, they were fleeing, going to Rwanda. When they reached Mparamirundi in their flight, the community around them asked, "Where are you going?" They answered: "We are fleeing being killed by Micombero."'21 But still they were taken, handed over to the communal administrator Senkwavu Stanislas, and from there to the provincial authorities in Ngozi. The northern communes first experienced the state violence of 1972 as a barrier against the flight of their compatriots, and the local JRR were there to stop them.

Ndikumana, a JRR leader in the borderland scarcely 20 years old at the time, describes the situation with defensive candour:

'The leader asked all the population to be vigilant, to prevent others from fleeing to Rwanda. But we didn't know, even though they were asking us to be vigilant we obeyed the law, we went and were standing at the barriers, preventing those who were trying to flee to Rwanda, preventing them from crossing the river, but we didn't know that we were blocking our brothers. We didn't know what we were doing.'²²

Initial ignorance is understandable, but the JRR would go on to be implicated in violence closer to home. Known as the *indarangavye*, those who stay alert through the night, they

²¹ Ndayizeye Pascal (pseud.), interview in Cendajuru (Busiga), 26 April 2011.

²² Ndikumana David (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 19 April 2011. Compare the compelling accounts of the constraints of fear as told by others, in Mbazumutima, "JRR, un outil de la répression."

were responsible for taking away those specified for elimination, both the fleeing refugees and local targets;²³ their military pretensions were confirmed as they were deployed before and alongside the regular army personnel to comb through a community they knew far better than the leaders above them.

Another local JRR president, elsewhere along the border, told his story surrounded by survivors of the slaughter. An older man, in his late 30s in 1972, he spoke clearly and confidently of his memories, but with every effort to impart his pain and regret; he described the lists of names that he was given, the names of his neighbours written in red ink, those who were to be taken and handed over to the authorities, their hands bound before them.²⁴ He had described the *Jeunesse* as a service that ‘protected the *banyagihugu*’, that rebuilt houses in the community when they needed help, but when it came to the violence of 1972 this duty of community service was thoroughly subverted and subordinated to the political duties of state. The JRR was confirmed as simply another of the ‘forces of order’ at the command of local authorities, and its members were constrained by powerful pressures of social and political coercion, confusion and fear. Fear and powerlessness are described even in the central committee of the organisation, attempts to speak against the crimes and deployment of the youth as state weapons lost in high level feuds and intimidation.²⁵ In the hills the Youth were adopted, recruited, captured as agents of the state, rifling through their community to find the names on the lists they were given by their administrative superiors, the Admicoms.

Gathering Intelligence

At its heart, selection implies intelligence; to enact a ‘selective genocide’, the perpetrators required knowledge of the people targeted, along with perspicacity, to judge what qualities

²³ Ruranyaga Jean (pseud.), interview in Rukere (Kabarore), 7 March 2011; Niyongabo Côme (pseud.), interview in Karama (Kabarore), 8 March 2011.

²⁴ Nzisabira Joseph (pseud.), interview in Muremera (Busiga), 1 March 2011.

²⁵ See the account of Professor Emile Mworoha, Secretary General of the JRR at the time, as recorded in interview with his teacher and fellow historian, Jean-Pierre Chrétien (Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, pp. 168–170, 251–253 and *passim*).

earned selection for elimination. This is palpable in the accounts of the first days of violence in Bujumbura and Gitega, when those on apparently pre-prepared lists of individuals in the army, administration and other positions of power were swiftly apprehended and removed, the phase of repression that most suggests the guiding hand of the *Sûreté* and the functioning façade of a predatory judicial process. Yet in the north, Chrétien and Dupaquier note the exceptionality of Military Governor Bizoza's approach to the purging of Don Bosco college in Ngozi town, where, unlike the targeted removals seen in equivalent institutions elsewhere, the army simply collected everyone, sorted Hutu from Tutsi in the prisons, and released only the latter. Bizoza, they suggest, may not have had 'the capacity to weave webs of informers susceptible to identify the supposed 'tribalists' in the schools and to assemble a list from them'.²⁶ This may or may not be accurate; rumours of ethnic divisionism in Don Bosco had been reported and investigated two years previously by local military personnel, whose invasive power and presence was resented by the civilian administration.²⁷ In the hills, however, the construction of local administrative knowledge of the population, and the public experience of this construction of knowledge as the population was sorted and categorised, was a fundamental aspect of the procedure and implication of the violence, and one that is revealed in a handful of specific instances that survive, recorded, as exemplars for the many thousands that do not.

The preparation of local intelligence was conducted by local administrators who, since the destruction of the bourgmestres in the mid-1960s, were wedded closely to the state hierarchy in cautious hostility to their wards, whether through political conviction or practical self-interest. Some specific victims of elimination may have been long-standing persons of interest to the *Sûreté*, but further victims were selected based on emerging behaviour and close monitoring by local officials. A letter sent by a student studying in Paris to his family in Kabarore was intercepted by local Commarro-adjoint Athanase Kibuguzo, who alerted Bizoza to the supposedly suspicious phrases by which the student expressed his anguish and support for

²⁶ Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 238.

²⁷ ANB, B 9; BI 6 (139), Félix Niyonzima, *La situation collège Don Bosco*, 16 February 1970.

those left behind in the slaughter; the student mourned Burundi as a ‘place of leopards’, and warned of *imidugararo*, ‘troubles’ or ‘rebellions’ to come.²⁸ Ongoing administrative meetings identified individuals who seemed liable to foment trouble in each commune, and the signs taken to denote suspicion and guilt were quickly found. Hutu who possessed weapons treaded this line dangerously; where once it had been said that the grip of a firearm would burn the hand of the Hutu that held it,²⁹ now those who defied this manipulative rumour were targeted and killed.³⁰ While guns remained rare, even the possession of knives were sufficient to earn death; a document dated 5 August 1972, some time after the beginning of the slaughter, catalogued 11 inhabitants of Kiremba commune arrested and accused of owning knives and daggers ‘for the purpose of slaughtering Tutsi.’³¹ The imputation of such hidden plans was all that was necessary to invoke the power of the state, as when two anonymous women were understood to have rumoured that ‘uprisings’ were imminently planned on specific hills in Banga and Matongo communes, eliciting a swift patrol from the ‘forces of order’.³² The *de facto* integration of the Ministries of the Interior and of Justice under Albert Shibura³³ was echoed in the actions taken on communal level, as both enforcement and law.

Sympathy for the arrested, or a perceptive understanding of the terrible aggression that the state had undertaken, was regularly enough to warrant the elimination of individuals. An administrative meeting in Ngozi commune towards the end of July cited several specific instances of men, especially churchmen, who were known to have spoken openly about what the state was doing.³⁴ A man named Bakundukize in particular had reportedly described to his friend the pattern of murder, that 25 Hutu were being taken at a time, packed into a truck,

²⁸ ANB, BI 6 (146), Kibuguzo Athanase, *Rapport politique*, 31 July 1972.

²⁹ Ndikumana David (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 19 April 2011.

³⁰ Mbazumutima Thérèse (pseud.), interview in Ryamukona (Kabarore), 9 March 2011.

³¹ ‘*yafatanywe yo gutemagura abatutsi*’; ANB, BI 6 (146), Nzisabira Salvator, Letter to Military Governor, 5 August 1972. Their names are listed in Appendix B.

³² ANB, BI 6 (146), Isidore Ntahobaje, Letter to Admicoms, 9 August 1972.

³³ See Nsanze, *Le Burundi contemporain*, p. 229.

³⁴ ANB, BI 6 (146), Ndambi Barnabé, *Rapport y’umugambwe*, 24 July 1972.

shot or stabbed to death, and disposed of by night. In this description, he was almost entirely correct.

Little evidence, of course, survives of such monitoring, consultation and planning of the selective genocide in the north. Personal denunciations, the appropriation of state power to eliminate individuals without such administrative monitoring and consultation, abounded. The state surveillance was far from total, even if the experience of the arrests made it seem so. Nevertheless, a consistent managing and processing of the violence by local government, cataloguing, reporting and rendering captives up the administrative hierarchy, is plainly witnessed in that which does remain. In the following, we turn our attention to the victims of violence, sketching the rough chronology of actions taken in the north and recognising the rural groups in the hills that correspond to the urban elites whose destruction is better recorded; the same lines of murderous logic link the eliminations in the town and the hills.

6.2 Repression in the North

Anticipation and Crisis

If the state had been aware of an imminent uprising in the days and weeks before the attacks in Bururi, the response was prepared and practised in the north as much as in the southern areas where the uprising would eventually emerge. ‘Even before the arrest of the ex-monarch,’ assured the Commarro of Kayanza in mid-April, eleven days before Ntare would be murdered, ‘a military manoeuvre was planned in the Province of Ngozi. Civilians ought to participate as intelligence agents to inform the soldiers in uniform of notable things, the other soldiers disguised as rebels.’³⁵ The actions of the army were closely marked by the population, and in characteristic terms the Commarro remarked disparagingly how ‘rumours and false stories circulate everywhere, spreading false news.’

The day after the moment of crisis, when the uprising broke out in Bururi and Ntare was murdered in Gitega, the state of exception was immediately applied in Ngozi, far from

³⁵ ANB, BI 6 (66), Isidore Ntahobaje, *Réunion du Parti*, 17 April 1972.

these centres of violence. Rumours in Bujumbura reported that the northern provinces were entirely untouched by violence,³⁶ but on 8 May, the same day that Micombero made a speech to the nation that heralded a shift in the violence from quasi-judicial rendition to summary executions,³⁷ the inmates at Ngozi Prison staged an apparent uprising, seizing the weapons of the guards and attempting an escape. The prison revolt was brutally suppressed, Lieutenant-Colonel Ndabemeye giving an interview two days later to reassure state loyalists that the army had ‘liquidated the insurgents to the last man’.³⁸ Remarkably, a record was kept of these ‘insurgents’, sixty four men ‘found dead’ during the uprising on the night of the 8th.³⁹ Of these, twelve were in custody on charges of assault on the interior security of the state, numbering surprisingly fewer than the thirteen labelled under charges of cannibalism or ‘barbaric practices’.⁴⁰ The rest of the dead were mostly accused of various degrees of theft, extortion and other regular crimes, including a handful under murder or manslaughter charges. Of all sixty four, only three had been convicted, all others counted simply as ‘accused’.

Furthermore, alongside this list of those who died in the prison that night, a second list was compiled of those who escaped.⁴¹ Rather than the ‘two or three’ suggested by the story as heard by Chrétien and Dupaquier,⁴² the escapees numbered in fact twenty seven, of whom only one was a supposed rebel. Named Burarame Pontien, he had been arrested on 28 April, the

³⁶ Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 151.

³⁷ Micombero, “Message à la Nation.”

³⁸ *Flash-Infor* (Bujumbura), “Interview du Lieutenant-Colonel, M. Thomas Ndabemeye,” 10 May 1972, pp. 2–3, p. 3.

³⁹ ANB, BI 6 (146), Havyarimana Zacharie, *Détenus morts*, 26 July 1972. The names of those killed are provided in Appendix B.

⁴⁰ Most likely an indication of accusations of Nangayivuza membership, a syncretic cult believed to incorporate incest, infanticide and cannibalism in its rites and known to be strong in the north in the 1950s. See Francis M. Rodegem, “Nangayivuza, une secte syncrétique au Burundi,” *Cultures et développement* 2, no. 2 (1970): 427–434; Joseph Gahama, “La secte syncrétique Nangayivuza au Burundi,” in *L’invention religieuse en Afrique: Histoire et religion en Afrique noire*, ed. Jean-Pierre Chrétien (Paris: Karthala, 1993), 431–444.

⁴¹ ANB, BI 6 (146), Havyarimana Zacharie, *Prévenus évadées*, 26 July 1972.

⁴² Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 181.

day before the beginning of the crisis. The number of fugitives gives some substance to the idea that the massacre was the result of a rebellion, rather than an execution, although apparently a decision to liquidate the prisons had already been taken up to two days previously.⁴³ The individuals involved in the uprising go far beyond just ‘soldiers doomed to death’.⁴⁴ The situation is difficult to reconcile with the idea of an isolated act of solidarity with the southern rebellion and monarchist plot that it was framed as at the time,⁴⁵ ‘the first Hutu stand against the repression’.⁴⁶ The timing is scarcely coincidental, but the identities of the prisoners in revolt suggests more immediate, personal and opportunistic motivations for escaping prison than any kind of political goal.

However, coinciding with Micombero’s call for ‘new victories’, specifically invoked in radio propaganda across the country, the Ngozi prison mutiny acted as a symbol for the start of the new phase of violence, as the state transitioned from reconquest and repression to selection and genocide. Prisoners seizing the weapons of their guards was cited as evidence of a generalised uprising, and the state ‘counterattack’ quickly enacted throughout the nation. For the communities previously disturbed by the stories of those halted in their escape at the barriers of Mparamirundi, the shock as the violence turned against their own communities was profound.

‘The way they killed them was strange,’ recalled Gahungu François, near Mparamirundi. ‘They selected people, they would go to meet certain people where they stayed, bring them to the commune ... That was the last time they were seen.’⁴⁷ The selection of victims according to a broad system of categorisation, the universal image of the genocide across the country, was closely marked along the border. ‘Everywhere, everywhere ... they took those who had studied. Doctors, teachers, even the *batware* [‘chiefs’, ‘leaders’], they even

⁴³ Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 292.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 183.

⁴⁵ *Flash-Infor*, “Interview du Lieutenant-Colonel, M. Thomas Ndabemeye.”

⁴⁶ Weinstein, *Historical Dictionary*, p. 37.

⁴⁷ Gahungu François (pseud.), interview in Nyanza-Tubiri (Busiga), 20 April 2011.

killed them,⁴⁸ described Ruranyaga Jean in characteristic terms. ‘*Benshi, benshi, benshi,*’ he sighed, as family and neighbours listened attentively, ‘many, many, many.’ Even those whose position and actions implicated them in the application of state violence describe the selection and execution of the population in perfect consonance with those who lost family members to the purges:

‘They selected among the population those who were educated, mainly the teachers in the primary schools, every person who had been educated at that time they would come and take them from their family, from their schools where they were teaching, they would tie them and bring them to the commune station and jail them. That was being done during the day. During the night a car would come and pack them, saying that they were taking them to Ngozi province, that there is some information that they were going to be asked, that they would come back. But that was our last sight of them. That is why they selected them. Those ones who were selected, they were the Hutu.’⁴⁹

The ‘*batware*’, the old political leaders in the community, were the most notable victims of the early violence, a matter of eliminating old targets of gossip and suspicion from across the previous decade. The old bourgmestre of Mparamirundi, Ntahorwamiye Joseph, was one such *bête noire* for the emerging Tutsi-supremacists taking hold of the state. Ntahorwamiye had served his time in prison by 1972 and was once again a free man. Staying with his extended family in Mparamirundi when the repression began, a knock came on his sister-in-law’s door; Ntahorwamiye was called away to a ‘meeting’ in Ngozi, and never heard from again.⁵⁰ Whether a part of the repression or in the months and years before it, his fellow elected leaders Kaburazosi Zacharie and Bucumi Côme were all dead by 1972, and the loose ends of the political struggles of the 1960s resolutely cauterised. Similarly, the long-established suspicion of the protestant mission at Rubura finally bore fruit a decade after it had begun. Once

⁴⁸ Ruranyaga Jean (pseud.), interview in Rukere (Kabarore), 7 March 2011.

⁴⁹ Ndikumana David (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 19 April 2011.

⁵⁰ Sibomana Justine (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 20 April 2011.

the locus of state fears of a Parmehutu infiltration in 1961, the supposed headquarters of the border rebels in 1964, and the origin of subversive correspondence with Rwandan counterparts in 1967, it was finally the victim of state purges in 1972; Pastor Nyakamwe Ezekiya, author of the intercepted letter describing the early Republican oppression, was taken and killed along with a large proportion of the Barundi protestant pastorate across the country.⁵¹

A snowballing logic of intelligence targets was swiftly appreciable at the beginning of the repression, as long-term persons of interest to the *Sûreté* begat others through an association as weak as a one-time encounter. A week after the Ngozi prison break it was considered that an official telegraphist named Vyumvuhore Charles ‘was to have participated in the aborted massacres in our Province’, since in mid-April he had been seen in the company of Burarame, the one ‘rebel’ to escape from the prison alive.⁵² And so paranoia and denunciations crept along inside the state itself; the *Commissaire* of Ngozi who recorded this incrimination was himself killed under orders from Military Governor Bizoza, one of six Tutsi officials in Ngozi Province who fell under the Commandant’s hatred.⁵³ The flight of the civilian Governor Gahiro may well have been wise.

The assassinations of leaders were the principal indication of the new form the state was taking. Through internal purges the state was captured, reconstituted in the *de facto* image of the governmental ‘*Groupe de Bururi*’ and those who joined them to enact the slaughters. However, the purification of the state and of the political field was less than half of the story; it was the destruction wrought on two sections of society that imparted the highest degree of shock to the region, and formed the basis of a new structure of society itself.

⁵¹ Ruranyaga Jean (pseud.), interview in Rukere (Kabarore), 15 March 2011; See Norman A. Wingert, *No Place to Stop Killing* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974) for an emotive, yet considered account of 1972 and its impact on the protestant Church in Burundi.

⁵² ANB, BI 6 (66), Zacharie Gahungu, *Rapport occasionnel*, 16 May 1972.

⁵³ Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 158: ‘Balthazar, son of Rurakobe ... Gaspard Kidahigima ... a son of Gikoro, Comarro Zacharie [Gahungu] and a magistrate’ in the evidence of the widow of another of Bizoza’s victims, Joséphine Kibugubugu.

The Education System and the Administration of Repression

The position of education as the principal factor of the state's selection of its victims is universally acknowledged, in popular memory as in contemporary observations and even in the state's internal documentation. 'Whoever had ideas, whoever had been to school,' mused Ruranyaga Jean near the protestant mission at Rubura.⁵⁴ Nearby on Ruhororo *colline*, the men recall the exactness of this selection and the sensation of futility that it instilled; 'The students from their first year of secondary school, teachers, nurses, the educated; they had no force to oppose, they just submitted to what was being done. They were weak in one way or another. They could see the bad things that were being done at that time, but they were unable to do anything.'⁵⁵

With secondary schools few and far between, it was the purge of teachers from communal primary schools that brought the violence most profoundly into the community in the hills. There were forty primary schools across Ngozi province,⁵⁶ and none were untouched. The selection of teachers as the first victims made children the primary witnesses of the genocide, and from the schools the stories of fear spread out to the community; the children ran home through the fields to spread the news that their teachers had been taken from the classrooms.⁵⁷ In her fourth year of primary education at the time, Ndabahariye Bernadette tells how she was in class when the police came to take away many of the teachers to the commune offices.⁵⁸ 'The Administrator needs to talk to them,' the police said, but many never returned. Ndabahariye's uncle, a teacher himself, was taken from his home, but the peculiar muted savagery of the time was demonstrated when he was permitted to fetch a child from his niece's home to look after his wife while he was gone. The next day, finding him absent from school, Ndabahariye and her sister spent the day in tears. The remaining teachers advised them to keep quiet, and brought them to the commune offices to visit their uncle after school. There they met an

⁵⁴ Ruranyaga Jean (pseud.), interview in Rukere (Kabarore), 7 March 2011.

⁵⁵ Musavyi Daniel (pseud.), interview in Ruhororo (Kabarore), 27 April 2011.

⁵⁶ Chrétien, "L'enseignement au Burundi."

⁵⁷ Havyarimana Marie (pseud.), interview in Ngoma (Kabarore), 10 March 2011.

⁵⁸ Ndabahariye Bernadette (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 18 April 2011.

army truck loaded with prisoners, their uncle among them; that was their last sight of him.

The scale of the school purges was closely monitored by local officials, as the administrative incapacity the state inflicted on itself would produce particular problems of management, quite aside from its human cost. In the commune of Gatara, the Administrator compiled a list on request from Military Governor Bizoza of the 'missing' teachers in his region.⁵⁹ Classified by the teachers' 'date of imprisonment or desertion', the catalogue thus marks a precise citation of the progress of the repression across the territory. Six were lost on Thursday 18 May, indicating the comparatively late beginning of the school raids in Gatara and in the north in general; the purges then accelerated, taking eight on the following Tuesday, 23 May, and another five the next day. Finally, a lone teacher is listed as disappearing on Saturday 3 June 1972. The commune thus lost twenty of its teachers, out of its four schools.

This schedule of arrests conforms with other sparse documentation and testimony that suggests that the second half of May was the most intense period of slaughter in the north, even as claims of 'normalisation' came from the elite in Bujumbura.⁶⁰ Two days before the first teachers were taken in Gatara, the *Commissaire* of Ngozi reported that 'the political situation remains consistently calm throughout the extent of the Arrondissement confided to me,' but cited a military operation against 'rebels' in Kiremba commune and further arrests in the neighbouring eastern areas of Marangara and Tangara.⁶¹ The army entered Don Bosco College for the first time that same day, 16 May; the purge of the college notably began in earnest around two days later, as the first arrests came in the hills.⁶² Tuesday 23 May is remembered as the day when the first arrests were made on the eastern edge of Busiga,⁶³ coinciding with the heaviest toll of teachers in Gatara, and by the end of the week the Administrator of Rango

⁵⁹ ANB, BI 6 (146), Basemba Fidèle, *Statistiques scolaire*, 25 July 1972. Their names are provided in Appendix B.

⁶⁰ Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, pp. 259–272.

⁶¹ ANB, BI 6 (66), Zacharie Gahungu, *Rapport occasionnel*, 16 May 1972. On the peculiar Marangara and Tangara situations see below, p. 259.

⁶² Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 238.

⁶³ Nzisabira Joseph (pseud.), interview in Muremera (Busiga), 1 March 2011.

commune, south of Kayanza, was reporting his newly-apprehended prisoners to the Governor in plain terms that deserve to be quoted in full:

‘Monsieur le Gouverneur,

‘I have the honour of informing you that we have 30 political prisoners in the Commune of Rango, of whom ten are educated and twenty uneducated.

‘Therefore, Monsieur le Gouverneur, please send me a vehicle to take them away.

‘I trust this letter finds you well.

‘The Communal Administrator of Rango,

‘Dismas Simbizi.’⁶⁴

The purges had already gone beyond those considered ‘elite’ by their education, but the Administrator’s distinction starkly exhibits the particular significance the state placed on the elimination of such potential leaders.

While the arrests began in the second half of May, they continued at a consistent rate for at least three months.⁶⁵ In the same commune of Rango that provided thirty ‘political prisoners’ on 26 May, another thirty eight were arrested in June; startlingly, and in a useful reminder that the vagaries of the killing could heavily depend on the action or otherwise of local officials, thirty five of these were released by a Commarro-adjoint, eliciting a frustrated letter from the assistant communal administrator to the Governor.⁶⁶ The appointment of the Nyamoya government in mid July is considered an attempt to bring an end to the slaughter and initiate

⁶⁴ ANB, BI 6 (66), Dismas Simbizi, Letter to Governor, 26 May 1972.

⁶⁵ Melady’s ‘27 days’, followed by low level continuing violence, is undoubtedly incorrect (Thomas Melady, *Burundi: The Tragic Years* (New York, NY: Orbis Books, 1974), p. 3). The American ambassador during the crisis, Melady subsequently suggested partitioning Burundi along ethnic lines in the model of Israel-Palestine (Thomas Melady, “To Stop the Killing, Partition Burundi,” 1 September 1988, 25; cf. Lemarchand, “The Killing Fields Revisited”).

⁶⁶ ANB, BI 6 (146), Ntibarekerwa Pascal, Letter to Governor, 24 July 1972.

a return to reality,⁶⁷ yet into August the arrests continued, perhaps with an even greater degree of judicial and administrative oversight if the concentration of surviving documents is representative. Rango commune again provided nineteen prisoners in full regulation, names and dossiers submitted to the *Procureur* in Ngozi, and copied to both the Military and civilian Governors.⁶⁸ In this submission two details catch the eye; firstly the *Officier de police judiciaire* Tharcisse Sinankwa, who sent the prisoners to Ngozi, noted in particular that three of them had ‘members of family who sought salvation in flight to Rwanda’, indicating the breadth of terms of suspicion by this point, and secondly, he felt it necessary to point out that ‘Councillor Mpfanye Etienne, Sindaharaye Innocent and Bantenzengowe Bernard are only accompanying the accused.’ The possibility that this might not be instantly understood, or respected, by those above him in the hierarchy is startling.

The following day, in his meeting of local administrators, the new *Commissaire* of Kayanza who had replaced the murdered Zacharie Gahungu urged that ‘we must redouble the vigilance, in order to track down and detect every instigator of troubles. We must also reinforce the barriers . . . The people who sow panic among the populations ought to be apprehended and all brought to Justice.’⁶⁹ He required his subordinates ‘to surveil very closely the behaviour of students on holiday, and oblige them to register themselves at their commune of origin’.

In a final example of the selection and oppression of teachers, the administrative formality of repression, and the suspicion imparted to those who exhibited fear, surviving teachers caught in flight towards Rwanda were submitted to formal interrogations, recorded verbatim and passed up the Provincial hierarchy on 18 August. The two men were pushed to reveal who had advised them to flee, but remained silent. ‘No one told me to fear,’ declared Ngenzebuhoro Elie; ‘I was the one who was afraid, and for the sake of that fear I fled.’ His companion, Ndikumana Antoine, was more expansive, even accusatory: ‘I met a teacher named Ntawuhorahiriwe

⁶⁷ Manirakiza, *De la révolution au régionalisme*, pp. 141–144; Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, pp. 282–288.

⁶⁸ ANB, BI 6 (146), Tharcisse Sinankwa, Letter to Prosecutor, 7 August 1972. Names are provided in Appendix B.

⁶⁹ ANB, BI 6 (146), Isidore Ntahobaje, *Réunion d’Arrondissement*, 8 August 1972.

Gervais,' he said, 'and he told me how they accused⁷⁰ the others. As soon as we parted he too was taken. When I saw that I feared in my heart. Then I said to myself that they were coming to arrest me too, and I fled.'

The apparently increasing bureaucratic control of the administration in August coincided with a realisation that the self-mutilation of the provincial education system demanded urgent restructuring in anticipation of the new school year. The state took the opportunity to confirm its new order, Military Governor Bizoza establishing a list of approved replacement headmasters across the province. In the schools of the Bene Yozefu order in Busiga and Gatara, especially, the *Frères directeurs* were 'to be replaced', the Governor and the Schools Inspector suggesting their two preferred candidates to assume control. The legal representatives of the order and of the Busiga diocese were resisting the genocidal government's authority, and a wholesale, imposed change of leadership was undertaken:

'As well as their educational qualifications, their experience of at least three years and their rating received in the last two, for the recruitment of new headmasters we have taken into account candidates who are distinguished by their PATRIOTIC MILITANCY.'⁷¹

The letter is filled with mistakes in spelling and grammar, only adding to the appalling absurdity of the content.

Change in leadership, however, could not paper over the gaps left by the purges. The decimation of the education system coincided with the termination of a ministerial five year plan begun in 1968, by which schools that were only partially filled would be closed, concentrating resources into central institutions. 'By virtue of this recommendation and from the fact that it would not be possible to replace all the teachers who have disappeared or left the country during and after the events,' announced the new Minister of Education Bimazubute

⁷⁰ 'batwaye', from *gutwara*, 'carry', 'govern', 'accuse' (Rodegem, *Dictionnaire*).

⁷¹ ANB, BI 6 (146), Bizoza Joseph and Ruraguba Michel, *Rapport concernant le personnel de direction*, 14 August 1972. Emphasis in original.

in September 1972, ‘it has been decided no longer to subsidise incomplete branch schools⁷² . . . It would thus be useless to devote approved staff to such schools, where they still exist.’⁷³ In his bleakest euphemism, the Minister noted that ‘certain primary school directors will not be available in the new school year . . . Considering the shortage of personnel, and for fear that the best teachers should only occupy administrative roles in education, we will not be able to replace all the absent school directors.’ Bimazubute was a member of the reconstructionist Nyamoya government, a man who openly challenged the destruction and brutality brought by the ‘*Groupe de Bururi*’ in the previous months,⁷⁴ but presented with a decimated education system, there could be no return to ‘normality’ as desired by the new minister. Begun in bloodshed, the restriction of access to education and the repression of the Hutu population was completed in bureaucracy.

‘It was all on money’: Greed and Denunciation

While education remains the most emblematic issue of the ‘selective genocide’, the terms of selection were far wider than simple literacy. Alongside the educated, survivors today cite businessmen, market sellers, those whose lifestyles betrayed a certain level of economic success, as the most evident victims of the state. The attribution of financial success to political betrayal is a common story, as narrated at Kanyaru-haut: ‘Micombero looked for a pretext to kill people. They would accuse a person, that Ntare V has sent money to him. They said, “You have got money from Ntare V. So we have a list, a list of names, of those who are receiving money from Ntare. They must be killed.”’⁷⁵ Such a justification could in fact be deployed to conceal the extent of the repression, as indicated by the contemporary testimony of a refugee from Ngozi province who described Bizoza urging calm, since only those

⁷² ‘*écoles succursales*’, schools attached to daughter churches of diocesan centres.

⁷³ ANB, BI 6 (146), Gilles Bimazubute, *Modalités de recrutement, inscriptions et critère d’admission*, 7 September 1972.

⁷⁴ Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 285.

⁷⁵ Ndayizeye Pascal (pseud.), interview in Cendajuru (Busiga), 26 April 2011.

who had betrayed the nation were to be arrested.⁷⁶ The almost limitless implications of its logic, however, were quickly apparent, as any degree of financial notability became grounds for denunciation and elimination. The ownership of a bicycle as a marker of death is perhaps the most absurd and representative motif of this situation across contemporary descriptions and modern memories, the ultimate indicator of how the consideration of a ‘financial elite’ was so broad and flexible that it could encompass almost anyone whom an individual with the support of the state might wish to destroy.⁷⁷ Absolute poverty, the absence of any marker of exceptionality or potential, was the principal line of defence against the state. ‘If you had no work to do, they passed you by and continued on,’ remarks Ruranyaga Jean of Rukere *colline*; ‘If you had anything, some work, or if you were a teacher, they took you away to be killed.’⁷⁸ As the market sellers and businessmen were killed or fled, the economic potential of the countryside was curtailed as brutally as its intellectual promise.

The role of money in the selection for elimination incorporated a particular set of dynamics that profoundly shaped the community’s experience of repression. The recurrence of theft and greed in the process of genocide was such that it even blurs the ethnic character of the slaughter in the eyes of some. Ndabahariye, she who saw her uncle taken away for being simultaneously Hutu and a teacher, reflected that as it moved away from the schools, state violence became more and more appreciably venal; state agents would target those with a nice house, a bit of comfort, coming to ask where the owner got their money for it. Eternally unsatisfied by the answer, the owner would be taken away to be killed. ‘There was no distinction between ethnicities,’ she said; ‘It was all on money.’⁷⁹ Few share this perspective; that the state wished to destroy any Hutu with potential for power is swiftly expressed almost by all.⁸⁰ But alongside ethnic supremacy and the destruction of the intellectuals, the place of banal greed

⁷⁶ Nyandwi, “La chasse aux Hutu au Burundi,” *Revue française d’études politiques africaines* 81 (1972): 105.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*; Lemarchand and Martin, *Selective Genocide*, p. 18; Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 245.

⁷⁸ Ruranyaga Jean (pseud.), interview in Rukere (Kabarore), 7 March 2011.

⁷⁹ Ndabahariye Bernadette (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 18 April 2011.

⁸⁰ Note Jeremy Greenland, “Black Racism in Burundi,” *New Blackfriars* 54, no. 641 (1973): 443–451, p. 445, for ‘unique evidence of Tutsi being killed in the repression’ in Gitega.

in the inspiration and experience of the slaughter is scarcely to be underestimated.

And so the confiscation of supposedly ill-gotten gains from the accused encouraged the spread of violence, and took it beyond whatever degree of central direction by which the initial eliminations of leaders and teachers had been driven. The indulgence of greed and jealousy, however, was itself not entirely divorced from administrative monitoring and exploitation; a Commarro-adjoint in the borderland, Bonaventure Harimenshi, submitted a formal request to the *Directeur-Général de la Comptabilité* for an official permit to acquire 'a personal vehicle from among the cars seized before it is put on public sale', eagerly eyeing the goods of the 'Traitors to the nation'.⁸¹ With only 1,600 vehicles registered in the entire country, Harimenshi's 'find' was a highly desirable prize.⁸² Such a formal submission is an important indication of the regulation of the confiscations, a vital piece of evidence substantiating the true extent of pillage as hinted at by the declaration of Prime Minister Nyamoya at the end of July, as he attempted to begin his doomed 'reconciliation' programme. He acknowledged that 'certain local Authorities carried out seizures of the goods (houses, livestock, etc...) of people who were implicated in the latest coup d'état-genocide'⁸³ and 'carried out seizures of the goods of relatives (fathers, brothers) of the guilty', distributing the spoils 'without any decision from the Minister of Justice or that of the Interior'.⁸⁴ He ordered all goods, 'except vehicles', to be returned to their surviving owners, and a catalogue made of the stolen materials.

Nyamoya's actions and attitude throughout 1972 served to illustrate that there were those within the Administration who were at the least uncomfortable with the extent of the violence. In light of Harimenshi's request quoted above, however, the new Prime Minister's words of restraint and rebuke in this letter ring slightly hollow; whatever excesses he now denounced, the unauthorised actions of some in local administration were simply continuations of those formally authorised or permitted by individuals at high levels within the remaining hierarchy. Nor did Nyamoya's order in any way impinge on the plundering carried out at the expense

⁸¹ ANB, BI 6 (146), Harimenshi Bonaventure, Letter to *Directeur Général du Budget*, 8 July 1972.

⁸² Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 245, n. 240.

⁸³ This phrase of course refers to the initial Bururi uprising, and not to the repression that followed.

⁸⁴ ANB, BI 6 (146), Albin Nyamoya, Letter to Governors, 31 July 1972.

of those killed, who remained labelled as ‘the guilty’; this order of restoration was purely restricted to the attempt to ease relations with those who remained, those whom the state still wished to rule. While it may have been an indication of the veteran politician’s burning conscience, the order amounted to no more than a political gesture, palpably handicapped by the new realpolitik of a nation in the shadow of a genocidal state.

The indulgence of administration officials in the greed and plunder of the repression process, however, was of lesser consequence in the communities of the hills than the divisions of neighbours, the acts of jealousy and betrayal that implicated members of the broader population in the state bloodshed. The common explanation of the repression, that there were spies and mercenaries in the community who had betrayed the nation and prospered in the illicit pay of a fallen king, provided the encouragement to denunciation that militated against community solidarity in the face of state violence. The prospect of righteously serving the nation, the promise of personal reward or the opportunity to act on petty, long-nurtured grievances caused many small acts of betrayal within the community at large. Beyond simply the confiscation of the goods of those so betrayed, some were said to have taken advantage of the situation through extortion, threatening to denounce another if they refused to give up money or possessions ‘voluntarily’.⁸⁵ But in a curiously consistent trope of this poisonous dynamic, such betrayals are invariably said to have led to the betrayer’s own demise. ‘Because he was afraid,’ described one Ngozi refugee at the time, ‘your brother farmer would deliver you up, and in the night they would kill you. The next day, it was he who would be killed in his turn.’⁸⁶ But for all that this murderous sequence reveals the acute divisions of betrayal and the thoroughness of state violence, it is striking to hear this trope of memory today expressed as a parable of natural, divine justice. Shadowing the Bible in Kirundi dressing, Ruranyaga Jean reflected how the recurring story of betrayal and punishment was a fulfilment of the proverb: ‘He who kills with the spear, so he too will be killed.’⁸⁷ A conception that the genocidal state devoured its own, and would soon be itself devoured, is a potentially vital element

⁸⁵ Nzisabira Joseph (pseud.), interview in Muremera (Busiga), 1 March 2011.

⁸⁶ Nyandwi, “La chasse.”

⁸⁷ Ruranyaga Jean (pseud.), interview in Rukere (Kabarore), 7 March 2011.

of local interpretation, of the ways of making sense of horror, that would give the devastated survivors a means to live together again in a new, violently imposed order of society.

6.3 Triage and Response

The Experience of Being Known

‘The passivity of the victims who allowed themselves to be arrested without resistance, or who delivered themselves to summons that were, to say the least, disturbing, constitutes for the European observers a source of incomprehension, just as the repression expanded without apparently encountering resistance from the subaltern levels of the administration, in businesses, and even in the countryside.’⁸⁸

Little has been said regarding the behaviour and reaction of those selected by the state. Insofar as it has been discussed at all, rare anecdotes largely consist of this recurring trope of docility. ‘Leadership elements have been slaughtered,’ reported a US embassy cable that was published in the *New York Times*; ‘The rest are docile and obedient.’⁸⁹ This judgement has been much repeated since, illustrating the ‘apparent placidity’⁹⁰ of cooperative Hutu, the trope even passing on occasion into ‘feudalist’ conceptions of cultural submission: ‘Such was the docility of people who had long thought of themselves as obedient serfs that most obeyed unquestioningly,’⁹¹ according to one ‘historical background’ summary, while Chrétien and Dupaquier, in their far more robust handling of this issue, speak of ‘the tradition of blind

⁸⁸ Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 188.

⁸⁹ Benjamin Welles, “Burundi Reported Continuing Executions and Reprisals against Ethnic Majority,” 25 June 1972, p. 2; apparently written by the US Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission in Bujumbura, Michael Hoyt (whose communications are quoted at length in Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict*, pp. 90–100), it was leaked to the *Times* by the office of Senator Edward Kennedy.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 97. See also the use of the cable in less careful hands, David Ress, *The Burundi Ethnic Massacres, 1988* (San Francisco, CA: Mellen Research University Press, 1991) p. 87.

⁹¹ Robert Krueger and Kathleen Tobin Krueger, *From Bloodshed to Hope in Burundi: Our Embassy Years During Genocide* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2007). US Ambassador to Burundi 1994–1995,

submission to authority,' among other interpretations of such behaviour.⁹² Ntibantunganya agrees unequivocally, having seen his own father answering the call of 'Vigilance'.⁹³ This trope of genocide narrative emerges with some prominence in the accounts of Barundi who escaped the violence, employed as a damnatory illustration of the mythico-history of ethnic relations fostered by many in the exile community, conceiving themselves as having escaped this psychosis of obedience through the purity of exile.⁹⁴ It is a theme of such universality in accounts of the selective genocide that its basis in reality, the frequent obedience of individuals to the murderous state, cannot be doubted; terms of astonishment at such a meek response, however, demand a critical attitude.

Leo Kuper classifies Burundi in 1972 as an example of a genocide 'in which the victims have some (significant) capacity to resist, or in which, objectively considered, the victims do constitute a serious threat', as opposed to genocides 'in which the victims are weak and defenceless'.⁹⁵ To stand astonished at victim docility one must rely on the assumption that the Hutu acted as the latter, when by their numbers and by the model of Rwanda they, as a yet-to-exist ethnic community, truly constituted the former. The fault of logic lies in the failure to distinguish between the individual faced with such state violence, and the potential of an imagined community that many did not, as yet, imagine themselves.

There is nothing alien or incomprehensible, nothing demanding explanation through a myth of inveterate psychology, in the obedience to oppressive power witnessed

Krueger shows far greater understanding of the country than his counterpart from 1972, Thomas Melady, but the recurrence of such tropes is unfortunate.

⁹² Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 188. Distancing themselves from the problematic term 'feudalist', the authors raise this interpretation, alongside others more robust, through Abbé Michel Kayoya's thoughts on the '*mentalités anciennes*' of the Barundi. Abbé Kayoya was killed in 1972, remembered for his devotion, forgiveness and love expressed even in his prison cell (Kiraranganya, *La vérité*, p. 81; Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict*, p. 99).

⁹³ Ntibantunganya, *Une démocratie* vol. 1, p. 113.

⁹⁴ Malkki, *Purity and Exile*, e.g. pp. 99–100.

⁹⁵ Leo Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 103.

in those who did not attempt open resistance to their killers. Primo Levi observed that ‘the harsher the oppression, the more widespread among the oppressed is the willingness to collaborate with the power.’⁹⁶ This is true both for those, such as the footsoldiers of the JRR, who partook in the raids and arrests in terror for their own lives, and for those subject to the raids themselves, the victims of violence. ‘Why flee? I prefer to die with my parents on my *colline*,’ expressed a young Hutu according to one second-hand account.⁹⁷ ‘When I hear the soldiers come, I will lie down on the ground, face to the soil. In that way, I will not see when they are going to kill me.’ The prospect of a little more peace, a little more life, if the orders are only obeyed, is a powerful force that needs no culturalist hypothesis of mass-ingrained, feudal submission to explain. It is necessary to make the distinction between the desire to resist or escape, the power to resist or escape, and the belief that one has that power; for those who answered summons to attend ‘meetings’ that inevitably led to their death, the latter at least is questionable. Certainly there was opportunity to ignore the summons, to flee to the border, and unknown numbers took this opportunity. What is less apparent is that this should appear as a viable solution to the majority, when the summons came in the garb of a state order violently pinning down society, curbing movement and displaying its ability to know, categorise and sort the population, individually.

To recognise this experience, it is necessary to dwell on the methods of violence deployed by the state. Barriers and lists, recurring motifs of violence in the memories of survivors and witnesses, and indeed of those involved in the perpetration of the crimes themselves, were the means by which the population was sifted and separated into the living and the dead; first barricades lowered to strain those who sought to escape, then lists assembled and named victims plucked from schools, markets and homes. There is meaning in method; the conscious character of list-making and roadblocking exerted the violence both to perpetrators and victims as acts of policing and control, legitimate actions of state to restore and impose

⁹⁶ Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (London: Vintage, 1988), p. 28.

⁹⁷ Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 191. The statement was recounted, appalled, by a former member of the Israeli Defence Force, who directly rejected the possible comparison with Jews in occupied Europe when it was proposed by Dupaquier.

order on criminal opponents. The practical system of triage that lay at the heart of the repression ensured that the whole population was subjected to the methods of control and felt their effects. The lists of names specified not just enemies, but traitors, *bamenja*;⁹⁸ it was genocide as policing, the criminalisation as well as the dehumanisation of the victims. The authority of pre-prepared lists, composed prior to the arrests if not prior to the beginning of the period of violence itself, was the manifestation of state power, and the subjection of the population in general. Anyone might appear on the lists of names, and thus the effect of their deployment far exceeded the impact on those whose names were specified. It was the fact that those claiming state power were capable and willing to compile these lists, to define the desirability and undesirability of the individual in the nation, that established a new mode of this state power in the hills.

The policing character of lists and barriers, the methods that gave substance to the reverberating call of ‘Vigilance’, now turned not against the foreigner or the deviant opposition but against the population at large, was thus an exertion of a legalistic façade to the violence that was appreciable throughout the process of elimination. While the direct role of the courts and prosecution is only in evidence for the early purges,⁹⁹ the image of legal process shot through the entire period of repression. The lists denoted the guilty, to be delivered to the police, punishment exacted out of sight through the institutions of law. One notorious mass grave in the north is said to lie behind the provincial *Tribunal de Grande Instance*, part of a widespread pattern of association between the courts and the disposal of bodies.¹⁰⁰ Such invisible strength was the root of power. The agent of the JRR, police or army, likely unable to read the names on the list in his hand, might be known personally to the victim as a neighbour or acquaintance, or be visibly weak, one man controlling twenty prisoners, yet behind them lay a machine of state in command of the technologies of literacy and knowledge that the agents at their disposal lacked. There was a literate state and an illiterate state, interlocked; the literate state, the core of authority that produced the lists and conducted the control, was

⁹⁸ e.g., Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 191.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 150–180.

¹⁰⁰ Hakizimana, Nkurunziza, and Mbazumutima, “Terreur dans le nord,” p. 15.

largely unseen, while the illiterate state, populated by informants and members of the JRR recruited or captured by higher authority, had their power increased in the face of the rest of the population even as they felt their own freedom to act on their conscience curtailed by the illegible papers that commanded their actions.

In the agonisingly managerial procedure of violence when deployed by the state through bureaucracy and its performance, the ‘lawmaking’ function of such ordering violence is appreciable.¹⁰¹ The barriers were an implement of violence that stated and created desired order in the hills, much as they had once in the infinitely lesser violence of the Mparamirundi rebellion eleven years before. It was the imposition of order on a country that had never stably rested in the government’s hands; it was the achievement of a revolution that had been spoken of, but never undertaken, for five years. The bloodless coup of 1966 had abolished the monarchy, but left society largely untransformed; the revolution itself was deferred, until its bloody realisation in 1972 and the restructuring of society through the sorting and categorising methods of its violence. Certainly, opponents and potential opponents were eliminated, but the genocide was coercive violence as much as it was exterminative. Those categorised as ‘criminals’, the ‘terrorists’ and their supposed sympathisers, were the direct victims, to be exterminated; the targets of the violence were those who remained, to be coerced to obedience and conformity in the new order of things. As Kalyvas remarks, a simple test to differentiate the two forms of violence is to ask if the violent actor intends to govern those it targets.¹⁰² Given the considerable majority of Hutu in the country, there was no choice in the matter for even the most strident Tutsi supremacist in government, despite Bizoza’s supposed preference for bombing his entire province. Society was defined by opposition to the names included on the lists, but it was itself subdivided into ruler and ruled.

Survivors and analysts talk of the state violence in 1972 as a ‘repressive machine’,¹⁰³ flattening society to meekness and fearful obedience, but its structural aspect must be recog-

¹⁰¹ Benjamin, “Critique of Violence.”

¹⁰² Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence*, p. 26.

¹⁰³ NB, “Terreur dans le nord”; Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, pp. 161, 164; ‘killing machine’, p. 202.

nised. The violence proceeded by categorisation and the means of bureaucratic order, of control framed as legality, and in so doing established the categories and systems on which the country would subsequently function. It was violence as order, the impersonal functioning of the state that established a new society in a new terror of power. Not only in the elimination of their relative elites and of their means to advancement, but in their personal experience of being sorted, subjected to the oppressive categorisation of an aggressive and dominating state, the *banyagihugu* were made into peasants, dependent on external power, and Hutu and Tutsi shaped into the conscious communities that previously had been largely limited in political reality. After the process of 1972, the community in the border hills knew it was engaged in a new relationship with a reconstituted state; a new hierarchy was formed, with a substantially Hutu peasantry, devoid of power, subjected to a Tutsi-dominated, domineering state, with no intersection or linkage between the two beyond that of command and conformity. For those who survived, the experience of the methods of violence in 1972 was the experience of being known. The root of totalitarian control, such dominant force prompts the auto-surveillance of a population fearful of the state's apparently limitless capacities to know and categorise them one by one. With violence deployed through the methods of state surveillance, knowledge, and private judgement, even those who were not themselves destroyed were exposed to this violating power of state, and forcibly reconstructed into a new order as a result.

Thus the dynamic of fearful obedience was imposed, at the most re-established, through the application of systematised and ordered violence. This ought not to be taken as an indication of a mass psychology of obedience, but rather the establishment of a political norm. Obedience to power, even at the point of destruction, can be the function of a domineering political cosmology, and not necessarily of psychosis. The reality of the totalitarian system in effect during the selective genocide is sufficient to understand the much-observed behaviour. As explained by those who lived through the repression, and cannot draw on the distance of exile to invest in the myth of docility, the victims and targets of the violence 'had no force to resist'.¹⁰⁴ It has already been seen that historical obedience to unchallengeable power was

¹⁰⁴ Ndayizeye Pascal (pseud.), interview in Cendajuru (Busiga), 26 April 2011.

scarcely a matter of docility, but of awaiting opportunity. The proverb once cited to explain the popular obedience to Baranyanka is once again relevant: '*Umwansi utagira aho umuhungira uramusaba,*' you bow to the enemy you cannot flee.¹⁰⁵ The order of genocidal violence in 1972 was an unprecedented, previously unimaginable exertion of state power and destruction, 'an unheard-of mechanisation . . . of the process of extermination',¹⁰⁶ represented not only by the man standing before a prisoner with a gun, but by the system he represented, the pervasive mechanisms of state that had composed the lists, that controlled movement across the country, that entered deep into society through the informants and pawns of the JRR that patrolled the community, whether willingly or not. It is legitimate to question the true extent of control available to the state at large during this time; in the experience of those in the hills, however, this question could barely arise.

Flight and Resistance

The persistence of the myth of docility has obscured recognition and appreciation for the varied tactics of resistance and escape that were in abundant evidence alongside the thousands of cases of doomed obedience. Flight was one such reaction, sending many thousands abroad, although Chrétien and Dupaquier calculate that the vast majority of these were driven before the 'reconquest' of the rebel zone in the south, leaving only a small proportion of 'voluntary refugees' (a curious phrase) who fled the subsequent targeted repression.¹⁰⁷ This calculation is proposed along with the apposite contrast of the Tutsi flight from Rwanda between 1959 and 1962 as a useful indication of the much lower level of ethnic consciousness among Barundi Hutu when the violence began in 1972. Furthermore, many of those who achieved this escape were largely those relative elites under the threat of destruction:

'The businessmen, those who had been to school, the educated, they managed to find a way to escape. They fled to Rwanda, many of them fled to Rwanda. Those

¹⁰⁵ Ntiruvakure Sévérin, interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 21 April 2011. See above, p. 96.

¹⁰⁶ Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 189.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p. 190.

who stayed, they were just the poor people, those who didn't have power, those who were likely to obey all the laws given by the leaders, when they said go and do this and do this; so they stayed. But those who had maybe an opportunity to stand against the leaders had already fled to Rwanda.¹⁰⁸

It is notable that this instance of the obedience of the poor comes from a man who led the JRR in his region. He refers not to the fatalistic obedience of victims obeying killers, but to the surrender of the terrified powerless, permitted to survive. However, along the border another, hidden narrative is discovered in such frequency that it demands acknowledgement. On the northern edge of the country, and likely on all other border zones around the nation, short-distance and short-term flight was taken by local residents from across the social spectrum. *Banyagihugu* with no education or resources, but with grounds to fear the bloodshed around them, dipped across the Kanyaru river to pass a handful of nights under shelter in Rwanda. For some, this brief sojourn was an eye-opening experience, as they were shunned in exile as they were excluded at home. Having slept in the open, beneath the trees in Rwanda for three nights, one man explained how Rwandan xenophobia kept him on the run; 'In that time, even if they accepted you as a refugee you were mistreated, they refused to lodge you in their houses.'¹⁰⁹ Asked why he eventually decided to return to the violence of Burundi, he shrugged and explained that he came back when he saw that he could die in Rwanda just as easily as he could die at home.

Others, on the other hand, tell of how they were taken in and well received by local Rwandans, those they had known from previous years of quotidian interaction or simply those receptive to the plight of their neighbours, and it is in such experiences that the new consciousness of ethnicity as political community could be most powerfully expressed. Gahungu François, who had previously spoken with antipathy of Rwandan aggression in 1964, told a different story of his experience across the border in 1972: 'We were well received there,' he explained, 'because the government, the bourgmestre, was Hutu. So we were well received

¹⁰⁸ Ndikumana David (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 19 April 2011.

¹⁰⁹ Bitariho Damien (pseud.), interview in Nyange (Busiga), 21 February 2011.

because we were Hutu who were fleeing to Rwanda. They perceived that we were brothers.¹¹⁰ The politically conscious in Rwanda had for over a decade perceived this brotherhood; subjected to the categorisation and triage of state-driven, ethnically-aligned violence, many Barundi Hutu now began to recognise their ties of ethnicity in return.

These short periods of escape confirmed the reconstitution of relationships with the state in the borderland. The borderlanders not only exploited the frontier for themselves, but in some cases facilitated others in their attempts to cross the border and slip through the state's hands. While Mparamirundi was marshalled to prevent the movement of refugees, other border *collines*, away from the control of administration loyalists, could aid the escape of their southern neighbours. Overlooking the Kanyaru river, not too distant from Mparamirundi itself, on Karama hill the people recount that they themselves were spared the violence that shook the rest of the country; they had no intellectuals, they explain, they had none to arouse the state's suspicion.¹¹¹ So close to the heavily-monitored border crossing of Kanyaru-haut, yet out of the government's eye, the hill instead served as a path of escape. Refugees arrived in the evening, and the local people led them down to the river to make the crossing at dusk. It was in the evening, as night was falling, that they were best able to evade the watchful eyes of the JRR.

Such assistance to the flight of the persecuted was not limited to those areas with a lax administrative presence. Aiding the passage of refugees was a clear act of defiance against the predatory state, and one in which certain local officials could take their stand against the violence conducted by the hierarchy around them. So it was that a councillor in Busiga named Rubuza François, installed in 1967 during the fallout from Bucumi Côme and long viewed with doubt by his superiors,¹¹² came under censure from the local Administrator, Senkwavu Stanislas, who requested that he be replaced by another 'more serious and dynamic.' Ultimately successful, the reasons for this demand were illuminating:

¹¹⁰ Gahungu François (pseud.), interview in Nyanza-Tubiri (Busiga), 20 April 2011.

¹¹¹ Niyongabo Côme (pseud.), interview in Karama (Kabarore), 8 March 2011.

¹¹² ANB, B 20 (1), Paul Rusiga, *Décision no. 091. VII/35/67*, 24 December 1967; ANB, B 20 (3), Bimenyimana Polycarpe, Letter to Governor, 20 February 1970.

‘Indeed, Monsieur le Gouverneur, the man has just allowed a person coming from Bubanza to escape, in the presence of militants who were conducting Vigilance. I have given him many remarks concerning the people who escape towards Rwanda and who pass within his circumscription but alas. He is truly incorrigible.’¹¹³

Such open challenge was not limited to the renegade among the administration. Reflecting on the relative calm of his province in the first two weeks of repression, the *Commissaire* Gahungu, himself later killed,¹¹⁴ reported that ‘the state of relations between the different social strata¹¹⁵ remains normal’, however,

‘I must indicate in passing that certain evil-intentioned people please themselves by propagating false rumours of a nature to alarm the population, despite its uncontested calm to this day. So it is that at Musenyi, Brother Baramé of the Misericorde, returning from Muyinga, indulges in saying simply that no literate Hutu is still alive in the Province of Muyinga, or amongst the officials in Ngozi town. Worse still, these declarations have been expressed to the local authority, in this case the communal administrator of Tangara. The situation thus leaves a lot to be desired in this monastery, and other ethnic groupings are equally emerging in the Petit Séminaire of Burasira.’¹¹⁶

Similarly, the *Commissaire* reported ‘the same situation’ in the commune of Marangara, where the communal secretary Ndikumwami François and two men named Ntakuwundi and Nyabunda André made public protests that their relatives had been ‘thrown in prison and killed unjustly’. The government response was predictable; ‘I have required the communal administrator to arrest them so that the situation does not worsen, and we are requesting

¹¹³ ANB, BI 6 (146), Senkwavu Stanislas, Letter to Governor, 26 August 1972.

¹¹⁴ See above, p. 240.

¹¹⁵ ‘*couches sociales*’, an unusual code for ethnicity.

¹¹⁶ ANB, BI 6 (66), Zacharie Gahungu, *Rapport occasionnel*, 16 May 1972.

a vehicle to transfer them to the central prison, since the administrator's car has broken down.'¹¹⁷

Though framed as 'rumours', what the *Commissaire* described in Musenyi and Marangara were public protests, made directly to the face of power, despite the swiftly confirmed peril of this resistance. Such a path may have been rarely taken, but the fact of its evidence should temper considerations that the state's victims were defined by docility, and serve as a reminder that those who did submit quietly did so with such swift vengeance against resistance as their only model of what would result from challenging the state. Yet most remarkably, the *Commissaire* went on to record a rare glimpse of the role of women in mounting a response to the crimes of the state. The *Commissaire* complained that the behaviour of the wives of the men taken to their deaths 'is becoming more and more scandalous.

'Now they gather in Kigarama, now you see them processing through the town to visit their friends in the area of the boys' Primary School; all these movements, every day, are nothing else but demonstrations. The 'latin' campus of the Ngozi bishopric accommodates some parents of those arrested, and they do not hesitate either to propagate the same rumours. A remedy ought to be found, and these women ought to return to their *colline* of origin or of residence.'¹¹⁸

Through indirect means, the collective, silent expression of outrage and solidarity, these women appear to have found a way to protest the state that, for a time, stopped short of exposing themselves to immediate retaliation.

The swift apprehension or planned dispersal of such protesting citizens was not the only state response. Despite its genocidal aspect as an institution, there were instances in which individuals within the state ranks listened to the outrage of their people; not just in acts of resistance like the Busiga councillor who allowed refugees to escape, but in manipulated and controlled political actions under the careful guidance of a wily population. Ntahobaje,

¹¹⁷ ANB, BI 6 (66), Zacharie Gahungu, *Rapport occasionnel*, 16 May 1972.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*

Commissaire of Kayanza, was taken aback by the collective protest on Mukinya *colline*, Gahombo commune, when he visited for a *réunion d'information* in July, nearly two months into the slaughter; forty two of the *colline*'s residents had been 'arbitrarily imprisoned' by the communal administrator, and the community subjected to the semi-official despoilment and robbery of individuals exploiting the crisis to enrich themselves. Perceiving the scale of popular outrage and anger, Ntahobaje made a speech declaring that all such unauthorised extortions would be punished, receiving great applause, and submitted a report to the Governor confirming the people's protest against the arbitrary arrests. He warned that the imprisonment had 'aroused a general discontent and was liable to alarm the population.'¹¹⁹ He summoned before him the six men said to be extorting the population,¹²⁰ and, walking a fine line of loyalty and suspicion, assured the Governor of the population's loyalty: 'The whole audience promised unconditional support to the Chief of the Revolution of 28 November 1966, Colonel Michel Micombero, President of the Republic and Secretary General of the Uprona party. Furthermore, the population of Mukinya *colline* insisted that the people who sow panic and make unauthorised collections should be subjected to exemplary punishment, in the same way as the authors of the genocide which our Country has just survived.'¹²¹ The 'genocide' to which he referred, of course, was the slaughter of Tutsi in the initial Bururi uprising. As across the previous decade, the *banyagihugu* were thus able to press their demands on a hostile state by swearing loyalty to its pretensions and feeding its delusions, deploying 'vigilance' to portray predatory administrators beyond the bounds of the political community. In the crisis of 1972, this pattern of political behaviour saw its consummation, to good and ill. The actions of informants, of neighbourly denunciations, were echoes of the 'acts of provocation' abundantly described in the secondary schools elsewhere, when nascent Tutsi-supremacist pupils attempted to start disturbances with their Hutu brethren in order to spark an army incursion into the campus and the elimination of their colleagues.¹²² All fit into the same dynamic of

¹¹⁹ ANB, BI 6 (146), Isidore Ntahobaje, Letter to Governor, 20 July 1972.

¹²⁰ ANB, BI 6 (146), Isidore Ntahobaje, *Réunion d'Arrondissement*, 8 August 1972.

¹²¹ ANB, BI 6 (146), Isidore Ntahobaje, Letter to Governor, 20 July 1972.

¹²² Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, pp. 221–241.

invocation and elicitation, appealing to the state on its own terms to achieve a personal goal. But in this remarkable instance on Mukinya *colline*, an alternative result was achieved, and a genocidal state guided to the protection of its people. The situation is, for the time and according to current knowledge, unique. But for both the remarkable instance of resistance among the targeted people during such totalitarian violence, and for the evidence of the persisting dynamics of political strategy and communication in the northern hills, it is a most extraordinary moment.

6.4 A New World

The reconstruction of state and society in the violence of 1972 was accompanied by a total rejection of the *Ingoma za Micombero*, the power and the man that had presided over the extermination. An elderly man in a bar in Mparamirundi encapsulated the relationship of the people with Micombero in the shadow of violence in a remarkable and expressive parable. It was like a second marriage, explained Ntiruvakure Sévérin. A man has died, and his wife remarries, taking her daughter to live with a new father. The new family is not at ease; the man's sudden success, a wife and a child around him where before he had nothing, seems to hint at some hidden intrigue and wickedness. The wife, too, knows that something is wrong. She warns her daughter, 'Be careful of how you interact with this man.' Confused, the daughter waits until the man is out of the house, and asks her mother to explain again. 'This is what I have been trying to tell you,' the mother says; 'This man is a sorcerer. I tell you now so that when you grow up, you will be able to face him.'¹²³

The people in the borderland had been surprised and confused at the sudden appearance of Micombero's Republic in 1966, a 26 year old army officer abruptly in command of a nation. By 1972 they saw the state functioning by destructive and catastrophic means, knew the dangers of speaking too openly or confronting the new form of state that carried power over them. But with this knowledge, obedience to power would be performed in a collective spirit of rejection, a consensus that while power remained, the state's authority had vanished.

¹²³ Ntiruvakure Sévérin, interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 21 April 2011.

Micombero had once tried to persuade the people that his name signified ‘Good Culture’, it is said along the borderland; in the aftermath of genocide, the current of popular discourse expressed its disgust and rejection of his claim on authority, and the President was derogated with the censorious and mocking nickname ‘Micomibi’, ‘Culture of Evil’.¹²⁴ As they had damned Baranyanka’s son Biroli as ‘Birozi’, ‘witchcraft’,¹²⁵ a decade earlier, the community once again chose to give nicknames, *amazina z’amanegurano* for the criminal powerful, a genre of speech a man uses against his enemies as ‘insults, statements illustrating that he knows what they are doing, that he will revenge himself or that their harmful actions are useless’.¹²⁶ It was, explained Ntiruvakure, who loved to speak in riddles, due to something the President had done before the unfolding of the violence. He had come to Mparamirundi, Ntiruvakure described, and asked if anyone there could break a bushel of sticks bound together. ‘Of course not,’ the people replied. ‘We cannot break them because they are many.’ Micombero conceded, ‘Okay, that is true,’ and told them that to deal with so many sticks, it was necessary to remove one and break it, one at a time, one at a time, until it was over. ‘That was his strategy,’ concluded Ntiruvakure; ‘That is why he was called Micomibi.’¹²⁷ To hear the name today brings smiles and laughter; it conjures not only the personal rejection of the predatory state, but the image of total, united consensus in the life of the hills after genocide. ‘After killing many people, in the whole country no one wanted to hide what is in his heart,’ claims Sibomana Justine when asked if the nickname was used in secret or in the earshot of police, ‘they uttered that name everywhere, fearlessly, they didn’t fear anything bad because at that time everyone knew what Micombero had done.’¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Ntiruvakure Sévérin, interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 21 April 2011; Sibomana Justine (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 20 April 2011; Ndayizeye Pascal (pseud.), interview in Cendajuru (Busiga), 26 April 2011.

¹²⁵ See Chapter 3, p. 144.

¹²⁶ Kimenyi, *Kinyarwanda and Kirundi Names*, p. 96. Kimenyi provides only a question mark for the meaning of ‘Micombero’ in his glossary.

¹²⁷ This parable is heard in various incarnations throughout the country. See Chrétien and Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972*, p. 187.

¹²⁸ Sibomana Justine (pseud.), interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 20 April 2011.

This is overstated; the caution taken to ensure the state was not aroused again was undoubtedly extensive, and most speak of the remaining years of Micombero's presidency as a time of terror different to 1972 only in the intensity of the violence. But in such terms Sibomana communicates the unity of opinion among the new social world of the peasantry. Those who remained were forced into a new communal identity, buttressed by ethnicity but confirmed in economic, social and political oppression. They shared the expression of disdain and dismissal of the power above them, while the new order imposed by the experience of methodical violence by triage was substantially internalised. Micombero's authority was destroyed by the violence he perpetrated, or at least was irrevocably attributed to his name, even while his power stumbled on for six more years. As such he represented perhaps the ultimate demonstration of the applicability of Arendt's opposition of authority and violence to the political world of Burundi.¹²⁹ When Jean-Baptiste Bagaza deposed Micombero in 1978, the people of Busiga and Kabarore celebrated; the days of violence were over for a time, it is said, and Bagaza's reign is remembered with extraordinary fondness, a decade of peace between devastation, despite pervasive and continuing ethnic discrimination.

The events of 1972 have been discussed here as an ending, the close of a transformative, turbulent, traumatic yet dynamic decade of potential and crisis. Yet the year of *Ikiza* is more appropriately to be considered as a beginning; one of the few genocides not to be coterminous with a war, its actions, and even more so its effects, drifted off into society and daily life in a most insidious and pernicious way, the violence itself only 'a brief journey in the institutional evolution of the Micombero regime.'¹³⁰ The reconstitution of peasant and ethnic identity was pursued and confirmed in the years that followed in peace; the bureaucracy that guided the violence of 1972 persisted by other means, and Hutu shut out from what schools remained by a regularised system of semi-covert ethnic categorisation, from power by continuing autocratic and paranoid politics, from 'progress' and 'development' by the *de facto* limitations of education, economics and the withholding image of the paternalist state,

¹²⁹ Arendt, "What is Authority?"

¹³⁰ Filip Reyntjens, *Burundi 1972-1988: continuité et changement* (Brussels: Centre d'études et de documentation africaines, 1989), p. 9.

promising but continually failing to deliver gifts of salvation.

The violence of 1972 sought to destroy a generation of opposition to those who controlled the state. It was in one sense remarkably successful, as it would indeed be around a generation before a direct challenge to the transformed structure of society and power would be seen, brought back by those who had escaped. On the other, it was inherently self-defeating. In seeking to pre-empt an ethnic consciousness in the Hutu population by destroying its political potential, the state in 1972 necessarily created that precise ethnic consciousness that would provide the basis in which the political power of their challengers would grow twenty years later. How those who remained in the country, functioning within their new structures and hierarchies of discrimination and control, related to their new forms of state in those years before political contest, elections and war would return to their hills, must be the subject of another time.

Conclusion

Independence was a time of crisis in the Great Lakes. In this regional turmoil, it became dangerous to live on the border. The Kanyaru divide had been a presence in the life of the community across the few short decades of colonial rule even while the law of the colonisers failed to recognise it as an international frontier. But as it regained legal recognition, marking the seam between tumultuous political conflicts, the border indeed became a perilous place to live.

The nationalist narrative of hope and liberation is particularly difficult to maintain for any of Belgium's former territories. For Burundi, it was entirely encapsulated in the figure of Rwagasore, and died with him. The experiences of the 1960s proved that the principal danger weighing against the borderland community was the hostility of their own state, the divided and uncertain nationalist government they had fought for. They were the victims of harassment and depredation from the Rwandan army, and suffered at the hands of their own internal dissidents, but it was the power of the state itself that threatened them most, since the state doubted their belonging to the political nation and approached them as an enemy. Yet rather than take the path of exile or join the state in combat, the majority of the population found ways to live with it, and whether through political conviction, pragmatic strategy or occasional opportunism, engaged in the project of state-building from the margins.

The opportunities of the border did not diminish. In some respects it was positively amplified; as an economic resource the frontier was enriched when the monetary union was dissolved. And as borderlanders had once slipped across the Kanyaru to escape Belgian taxes

and Baranyanka's punishment, the potential of protection was realised again and again as first dissidents, and then the Hutu population at large, fled the persecution that came to their homes. But marking the intersection of violent political conflicts, implicated in the struggles of either nation, the borderland community experienced the construction of the new independent states of the Great Lakes as a time of suspicion and violence.

Dissent, collaboration, elimination, repression: the modes of interaction between people and state on the border that have been distilled here ought not entirely be considered as a trajectory of relations across the decade. They have been explored in a broadly chronological sequence, but none are mutually exclusive, and within each narrative the presence of polyvalent tactics and choices among the involved actors is clearly apparent. Dissent against Baranyanka and the Belgians was expressed through invocation of the highest state, an act of one-sided collaboration that prompted powerful repression. The destruction of 1972 was achieved through pervasive collaboration, personal elimination, and it concealed eloquent moments of non-violent dissent. And the political manoeuvring visible in the local struggles through the intervening years were palpable responses to the state's repressive potential, entailing at times a limited dissent against the suspicion of government and the violence of the border. Each of these modes of interaction were intersecting potentialities, constantly available in the political encounter of the border. The negotiation of state power, political authority and the position of the *banyagihugu* in relation to the fractions of their government was a perpetual debate, expressed and tested and transformed through the violence of Independence and its aftermath.

These modes of interaction and the stories of the people who pursued them have revealed the junction of the three themes at the heart of this inquiry: the border, the nature of political linkage upon it, and the political community constructed within it. Finally, therefore, it is necessary to unravel these fundamental concerns and review their significance and form across the tumultuous decade of national transformation. But once each has been taken in sequence to reflect upon their respective transformations, wider questions remain. The fine grained detail of microhistory has revealed much of the life and politics of the border, but where

might these insights be taken to speak beyond the narrow space of this study? And what, indeed, is the place of microhistory in the history of the community, the nation, the wider region? The lens has proven valid and rewarding for the discovery of the border, but it cannot be set aside until such historiographical questions of significance have been answered.

7.1 Society and State on the Edge

From the rediscovery of the border between Rwanda and Burundi as a gate in need of closing against an insidious external threat, to its confirmation as a barrier preventing the escape of the government's internal victims, the pressure of the state definition of the border was considerable. Yet the role of the borderland population in the inspiration of this conception and in its realisation was fundamental. The popular Mparamirundi rebellion prompted the state manifesto for the border as a rigid wall; popular action during the Kabarore burnings and incursions throughout the decade proved the only means by which the state's perception of the frontier as an ideological front line would be performed. And as the state approach to the population changed from caution and distrust to outright aggression, it fell to the local members of the JRR to lay the barricades and invert the border, to make it a prison gate against their fellow Barundi.

The counter-narratives in each of these instances are equally essential. Propagandists revelled in the heroism of border smuggling in 1961, militants struck across the border in 1964, residents twisted the attention of the state to strengthen the frontier in 1967, borderlanders escaped and aided others in their escape through the lines in 1972. Both conformity to the state's border regime and transgression of it contributed to the erection of a cohesive political image of the Kanyaru as a divide between political communities, each dominated by the hegemonic self-conception of a militant state.

The border was thus confirmed as a political resource *par excellence*. It was the stage, the stakes and the expression of a triangular political conversation. The border was created and recreated through the mutual actions, perceptions and pressures of people and state, each responding to the other as they responded to the threats and opportunities of Rwanda. It

permitted the encounter between these three, it brought them together even if the interaction was fractious. It was by the border that the local people knew both Rwanda and their own state, and how they were seen in return.

While this study has specifically chosen to remain largely on one side of the border, the better to witness the encounter of people and state within their political expressions, a further distinction ought to be made; the Rwandan voice in this painful interaction should be disaggregated. The political conversation in Burundi homogenised Rwandan people together with their Parmehutu government, regardless of the equivalent complexities on the other bank of the Kanyaru, yet border interactions defied this homogeneity. Refugees from the civil war played their vital role in shaping the border as a barrier and a battleline. The first voices from within the borderland to denounce its infiltration were those of Rwandan refugees, whispering in the ears of the state that the borderland was infected with Parmehutu poison. Ten years later their one-time neighbours would aid or reject the Burundi refugees when they came in 1972, shaping the border as conduit or cliff-face as they did so. And always the quiet interactions of weekly market trips from one side to the other, the small profit or loss of exchange in a foreign currency, the curiosity or prejudice felt or expressed at an odd-sounding accent and an unfamiliar face, reiterated the border as they wove back and forth. Such quotidian contact has been in the background of this study of crises, but it must not be forgotten as the canvas on which the larger portraits of the border were drawn.

From the construction of the border, this interaction brings us to our second central theme. As a point of contact, the frontier played a crucial role in light of the failures and deficiencies of political linkage. The institutional link between society and government was repeatedly excluded, destroyed or subsumed to one or the other party of this political exchange. Banyanka, his *sous-chefs* and his Pédéciste successors in local government were the first local connection we have seen demolished by popular action and invocation of higher authority; the supposedly democratic bourgmestres proved the most outstanding victims of this same act of collusion and exclusion between above and below, the intersecting middle cut out. And the JRR, an institution with the greatest potential both for participatory linkage and direc-

tive power, rather established the two-faced paradox of this integrative position. Relatively successful in spreading the government's political orthodoxy of expression within the community, it promoted no dialogue and permitted no accountability between above and below, but acted either as a shield for the community, as in the Kibati church in 1968, or as a weapon of state, most horrifically so in 1972. If it was not destroyed through collaboration around it, the institutional link between society and state found itself incorporated into government or community.

Within such a manipulable hierarchy of authority, the border played a definitive role in establishing a direct linkage strategy in place of, indeed frequently set against, these excluded or partisan linkage institutions. Appeal to the patrimonial protection of the higher state, within the terms of its own political conception of the frontier, proved a remarkably effective link between government and borderland population. The border provided a language of communication that simplified political complexity to questions of inclusion and exclusion, loyalty and treason, citizen and infiltrating alien.

And so we come to the third and final theme. The border became realised as the point at which the political community was most in doubt, and most comprehensively performed. It defined the borderlanders through the suspicion of state, and thus in their encounter with government they were both victimised and privileged by it. Their belonging doubted, they were imprisoned *en masse* during the Kabarore burnings, policed through overwhelming force in the Mparamirundi rebellion, and persecuted to an exceptional degree during *Ikiza*. But the political resource of the border was open to them to a unique degree, and the terms of doubt against them provided the means of self-presentation that claimed a right not only to belong, but to call on the duties of state.

The dynamics of a political community that was grafted onto the nation thus exhibited the potential integration of both subjecthood and citizenship as modes of interaction within its bounds. Some of the broadest terms of citizenship that have been adopted here are that of belonging to a political community and the practices that reproduce that community; as such, the petitions and claims that cast the border inhabitants as fully within the political

community of the state must be recognised as claims to citizenship, acts that reproduced the community of which they claimed membership. Yet the suspicion of the state that drove the population to prove their inclusion was itself a force of subjection. ‘Suspicion . . . occupies the space between the law and its application,’ writes Asad; ‘Suspicion is like an animal, ‘aroused’ in the subject, it covers an object (a representation or a person) that comes ‘under’ it.’¹ Proving conformity and dispelling suspicion was an acceptance of the terms of subjection to state direction. Inclusion in citizenship was claimed and the political community sustained through the performance of the subject-stance, a fundamental aspect of the patrimonial appeals that dominated the direct political linkage of the time.

In its turn, this element of subjecthood permitted the third and most active aspect of citizenship, the mediation of power within the community between government and citizens. The state built its own margins, distancing itself from and doubting the political belonging of the marginal community, and was transformed as this community spoke back and argued for its inclusion. Loyalty to the distant sovereign permitted the anti-colonial rebels to reconstruct order and government in their midst; in the years that followed, confirmed subjects to the state’s strictures of obedience were able to use this performance of obedience to direct governmental power within their local political struggles and border vulnerabilities. Through the state’s perception of the border as a political dichotomy that cast them under suspicion, borderlanders were able to engage in the shaping of the power to which they presented themselves subject. Their citizenship incorporated subjecthood, the rights they claimed from the state and their means of expressing these claims a matter of ‘tactical bricolage’ drawing on the dynamics of authority inherited from the colonial monarchy, as on the democratic or Republican rhetoric of the postcolonial order.² The borderland population did not attempt to disrupt the distinction of people and power, did not make the claim of liberal citizenship that ‘civil society’ had a right to inclusion in governmental decisions, but nevertheless invoked and influenced these decisions as matters of obligation to a faithful subject and an active, loyal

¹ Talal Asad, “Where Are the Margins of the State?” In *Anthropology and the Margins of the State*, ed. Veena Das and Deborah Poole (Santa Fe, CA: School of American Research Press, 2004), 279–288, p. 285.

² cf. Robins, Cornwall, and von Lieres, “Rethinking ‘Citizenship’,” p. 1079.

citizen.

Such is the dynamism and interrelation of citizen and subject, state and society, political linkage and political community, as performed on the northern border of Burundi across its most crucial decade of transition. But for all its complexity, there is a paradox in this border, one that challenges the premise of this investigation. The disruption of the dichotomy between the powerful and the powerless has been a consistent concern throughout this thesis, seeking the complexity of interaction and conflict that integrates people and state. The contradictions of the border, both a battleline and a path of integration and contact, bringing people together as it kept them apart, have similarly been fundamental to the stories that have been told. These are the fascinating details that microhistory can reveal, breaking down the constructions we have made on the basis of generalisation and a distant simplification, which ignores the contradictions in order to achieve the comfort of a sense of comprehension. The recognition and equal treatment of these conflicting details of individual action is a valuable and necessary reward for adopting the narrow lens. But throughout this study, it becomes clear that the interpretive dichotomies of state and society, of the border as a barrier, that we seek to disrupt through close examination, were precisely the generalisations and simplifications pursued by those involved in these conversations and contests at the time. Even as we seek to dismantle our presumptions of polarities, we find them reconstructed by all sides of the political debate on the border.

The border itself was the clearest subject of this simplification. It was a political resource of action and expression, but most crucially it was a political framework of comprehension. This was true for the actors involved at the time as for the modern scholar. The border, despite its manifold complexity, provided a basis of caricature by which to interpret and project intricate political contest. When expressed in terms of the border local conflicts were no longer deeply personal, dependent on the pride and jealousy, injustice and avarice of their intimate combatants, but simple matters of Rwandan malice and Barundi benevolence. This act of simplification was not merely reductionism, but a valuable and powerful political tactic both for the borderlanders and the governmental agents who adopted it. 'Collaboration' with

Rwanda was not a continuous worry for those in the border; occasionally it led to fire and terror, but largely such contact with the foreign nation was an innocuous matter of trade and social interaction for all. But as chiaroscuro it permitted them to speak to their state and attach themselves to it. Similarly, the state in all its successive forms was truly terrified of its internal schisms, its own members who were cut out from power and persecuted; if they received support from Rwanda it was alarming and dangerous, but this was only an exacerbation of its pre-existing problems. Yet the simplification of the border permitted the externalisation of the state's insecurity, leaving, as it hoped, no space for popular support to lie anywhere but in its orthodoxy. It was a complex border, but it was in the interests of all to speak of it in the starkest, most manichean terms.

This political utility of simplification is equally recognisable in the function of the political community. The institutional link that knew both people and state most intimately was routinely elided or absorbed; the patrimonial call and response between above and below that displaced this link required no personal knowledge one of the other. Either end of the hierarchy could view the other in a largely homogenous, or at least vastly simplified form. Smoothing over the details and investing in a mythologised polarity was of benefit to both. The rural population on the border made little distinction between the catalogues of ministers installed, dismissed, accused and executed across the 1960s, nor disaggregated the genocidal state from the person of Micombero. Similarly, governments approached the *banyagihugu* as a peasant mass, blind to their local individualities and conflicts, perceiving only the divisions that coincided with their own preoccupations of the time. The interaction between above and below gave some substance to these stereotypes, as there was political utility in conforming to them. But they remained simplifications, at times almost illusions, of a hierarchy and a population that was at every level vastly more complex and nuanced than even those acting within the hierarchy would or could acknowledge. The linkage that blurs the line between people and state was broken or reduced to the simplest imagery of orphans and distant fathers, most often by the orphans themselves. *Politique par la bas* tended towards the creation of its own framework of polarity, yet through loyalty to the idea of the state rather than in outright

confrontation with it. Microhistory may disrupt the discourses of power and the simplifications of historical narrative, but it must not blind the historian to the value and potential that lay in these discourses, adopted and promoted by those for whom it could be a shield from the eyes and suspicions of a watching state.

The experience of 1972 was the reversal of this intricate game. The border was turned against the population, and state brutality created subjects of its targets. The political community was narrowed, retracted to definitions limited by ethnicity, region and the use of force against the subject population held beneath it. No longer would loyal subjects retain the possibility of shaping and partaking in power through their loyalty. Through extraordinary violence, citizen and subject were given the distinction by which scholars have often conceived them, and the victimised subject left without recourse to the protection and engagement of acts of citizenship. The border inverted, distant political linkage displaced by penetrating coercive domination, the possibilities of the simultaneous citizen and subject sundered: *Ikiza* was the total destruction of the political community as it had found its way in paranoia and crisis for a decade. The totalitarian rule was short, and opportunities would again emerge for the subject population to lay their claim on a paternalist state, but the strategies of politics on the border would have to be learnt anew. The border that had been constructed between state suspicion and the endorsement of citizens had been demolished, its possibilities transformed. Once it had been used as a prison gate, closed against the people, it would always be viewed as an escape, offering the possibility not of encountering the state, but of eluding it.

7.2 Vigilant Citizens

Border histories reveal crucial peculiarities of their own situation and experience, and the border has been explored here for all its own exceptional story, its particular role in the community and nation within it, its paramount place in the political contest, expression and self-conception of the state within it. As Chrétien has argued, history might have been different had Rwanda and Burundi not been neighbours, as politicians and people south of the border watched the north with apprehension and creeping, growing anxiety that they were next,

until some chose to act in anticipation of what they feared would be done to them.³ The self-fulfilling prophecy of ethnic violence, forever justified as a pre-emptive strike against a plotted massacre, was born in part from watching and fearing the world beyond the frontier. The interpretations and contestations explored here derived their acuity from the close similarity of the two nations and their political divides. The people on the edge stood at the vanguard of this anxiety and paranoia, even if they themselves only lately came to include themselves in the cosmology of ethnicity as a political designation, and were incorporated into the cycles of extermination. However, inasmuch as their experience was exceptional, what can it say to the life of their neighbours and fellows in the wider community, beyond the truism of state paranoia and fatal instability?

In order to reflect this, we must identify the refraction of their encounter with power. The integration of the border, political linkage, and the tensions and possibilities of citizenship and subjecthood within the political community of the nation, are encapsulated in the strongest line of consistency throughout the scattering of acts and crises explored here. From the overt vigilante actions of the Mparamirundi rebels, controlling and punishing their political rivals as criminals, to the actions of popular border guards, the surveillance of political deviance amongst the bourgmestres, and the direct order to the JRR that realised the tyranny of 1972, vigilance was the mode of popular action that defined the community's involvement and investment in the political issues of the day.

Here on the border vigilance emerged as the dominant mode and expression of political community as a whole, and its relationship to the state. Vigilance is a border phenomenon, and while anthropologists have argued cogently for the extrapolation of this conception beyond physical borders to moral, temporal and conceptual boundary zones,⁴ it is on the legal and physical border of the Kanyaru river that it would be most clearly performed as an act of political participation and display. It was vigilance at the service of the state, literally and horrifically so in 1972, but consistently nevertheless beforehand. By their acts of surveillance,

³ Rugero, "Jean-Pierre Chrétien."

⁴ cf. Pratten, "The Politics of Vigilance"; Abrahams, *Vigilant Citizens*.

arrest and correction of the criminal or the invader, the border inhabitants showed themselves to be citizens partaking in the political community defined by the state, working in a degree of partnership to build the border as a political barrier, to identify and 'advise' the deviants among them. Vigilance was the practice that reproduced the political community of the nation, and substantially reproduced it in the image of the paranoid state. By taking on the responsibilities of border vigilance, its practitioners assumed the boundary-making powers of the state, and ensured that the construction of the political community was to a degree a shared project, given harsh form by the state's suspicion and given reality by active citizens.

Vigilance was thus the clearest and most powerful expression of citizenship available on the border; it denoted inclusion in the political community, it reproduced it within society by enforcing its boundaries, and it was the practical means by which power was directed to the active, vigilant citizen's purposes. It was substantially a responsive behaviour, reflecting the aspect of subjecthood as it displayed conformity to the state's distinctions, but nevertheless it was the supreme act and expression of citizenship, both a shield and a tool. In place of inclusion in the deliberation of governmental decisions, vigilance permitted the citizen-subject to partake in the power of governance. State and society spoke to each other through the articulation of modes of vigilance. Talking politics and watching the border brought them together in a tense and revelatory encounter.

It is in this mode of vigilance that we may find the strongest implications for life away from the frontier. We must follow the anthropologists' call and see the borders away from the border. Within its legal boundaries, the state sought to erect political barriers of orthodoxy and heresy, defining itself against the demonology of ethnic politics, of dissent against the monarchy, party or Republican rule. Away from the frontier, vigilance became expected of the population just as from those under the suspicion of direct contact with Rwanda. The JRR's call to *Vigilance* was a national one, reflecting less the threat of border incursion than the peril of political heresy. For those in the hinterland the political resource of the frontier and the performance of loyalty upon it were not available. But the act of vigilance was nevertheless required of them, and thus its tactic, as a means of laying claim to the state's attention,

involving themselves in the political community, and mediating the power within it, remained a possibility. Vigilance as a weapon of the weak, not in resistance to domineering power but in engagement with it, offers the key to the political community of such a paranoid state.

We may equally pursue the same mode of vigilance on the other side of the border. Rwanda too, for all its militant confidence and legendary arrogance in the region, stood anxious at the threat beyond its borders. The ‘*inyenzi*’ attacks were potential mortal threats, and the view from Kigali saw a real danger in Burundi even if the latter only felt achingly vulnerable. As such, vigilance was of even greater pertinence to the political community in Rwanda than it was south of the Kanyaru, since the threat was real and a demonstrable peril for the state and the divided nation. A personal narrative remains in the Bujumbura archives that exhibits the modes and limitations of vigilance north of the border powerfully.⁵ It is the story of a Tutsi student at the university in Butare, who chose to flee in 1967 with one companion, as they saw all the rest of their friends accused and imprisoned for supporting the ‘*inyenzi*’. His account is colourful and thrilling, telling of the daring flight southwards to the border, the strategies taken to deflect suspicion from local officials and, crucially, from the borderland population. The two students claimed they were conducting research, inspecting the educational system in the *collines*; the borderlanders remained skeptical, and handed them over to their local administrator. From there, they began a farcical cycle of suspicion and delegation, as they were sent from one figure to another, each suspicious of their activity and their stereotypical Tutsi appearance, each performing a duty of vigilance, but none invested enough to follow through and charge them. The students were released, attempted flight again, were suspected and challenged again and again, despaired as they waded across a river only to discover they were still in Rwanda, until eventually, tired and petrified, they swam across the Kanyaru and fell into the arms of Burundi police.

Theirs was the dramatised story of escape, but in the endless gates of vigilance with which they were confronted it reveals the pertinence of this mode of political action beyond the border. And in particular, their account is crucial for the limits of vigilance it reveals.

⁵ ANB, BI 6 (120), Bayingana Fidèle, *Refuge au Burundi*, 24 August 1967.

Despite the tone of futility and terror, the story of escape most powerfully expressed the rote performance of vigilance, rather than the political conviction of a Parmehutu nation. Borderlanders did their duty to prove their own loyalty to the state; local politicians did likewise, to demonstrate their reliability to their superiors. Vigilance was an act directed at those that collaborated in it; the victims of its watchfulness were almost coincidental, as they served to mark the boundaries of the political community from which they were excluded. Shaped and performed on the border, the politics of vigilant citizenship opens the door to the study of power, authority and community across the region, at this time of transition and crisis.

7.3 Border Histories

The final act of opening out is an obligation of microhistory. The delineation of the border community for this study was not entirely natural, although it was reasoned and viable. The microhistorical lens is not fixed, and must be recognised as a construction of the historian. The stories themselves could not be contained within its sketched outline around Busiga and Kabarore; they spilled out into neighbouring hills, across the Kanyaru to Rwanda, reached out to Bujumbura, Kigali, Congo and further. It is not the duty of the microhistory to chase all these arcing strands, but they must nevertheless be a reminder that the community chosen for close study is part of many larger, and indeed smaller, communities, cosmologies and worlds. The conclusions and understandings that may be gleaned from the history of the borderland must be made to speak to these wider and narrower pasts.

The Matryoshka doll of histories and experiences was expressed wryly by Magenge Patrice of Cendajuru *colline*, rising high above the Kanyaru-haut border post. Asked what he remembered of Bucumi Côme, his local bourgmestre at Independence, he chuckled and shrugged. ‘*Umutware mwiza*,’ he said, a good chief.⁶ But he had nothing more to say about the bourgmestre. ‘*Ntihica umwami, hica abagabo*,’ he added eventually: the king does not kill,

⁶ Magenge Patrice, interview in Cendajuru (Busiga), 26 April 2011.

men do. ‘Misdeeds are always attributed to the entourage of power,’ reinterprets Rodegem.⁷ Questions of Bucumi were an irrelevance to him. For Magenge, the bourgmestre was the distant power, a distant peak of authority, while those who truly affected his life for good or ill were Bucumi’s subordinates, the men who took power over the *colline* itself. His interests were local, and it was local relationships, within the world of the *colline*, that concerned him. For all its detail, the microhistory could focus still further.

Yet equally, it must pull back, and recognise the dislocations there are between the stories that have been told and the larger narratives around them. This study began with the narrative of national history. Certain elements coincide with the border experience to an exceptional degree, and the microhistory provides valuable close detail of moments and themes of national significance, from the contest of Uprona and the PDC to the experience of *Ikiza*. But many other details and contradictions among *banyagihugu* of the borderland are unrecognised in the history of the nation. 1965 constituted the fundamental crisis of early Independent Burundi, beginning with the calamity of Prime Minister Ngendandumwe’s assassination and ending with the massacre of both Hutu politicians and *banyagihugu* in Muramvya province. But the disasters of this year are scarcely remarked on the border. For them, their crisis was a year earlier, as Kabarore burned, revolution and invasion were in the air, and martial law persecuted the population. Yet in turn, this conflict does not register in the history of Burundi. The particular personalities, acts and circumstances of downfall for local bourgmestres are part of a national story of state purgation, but as statistics, not the faces and fates of the individual men known and remembered in the community. The detail of life with which this history has been filled fits poorly with the trajectory of the nation.

These dislocations can be uncomfortable. Many of those in the borderland prefer not to tell a history of their local community; their history, as they tell it, is the legend of the nation, as seen from their own vantage point. Local politics was frequently messy, ambiguous, perhaps even unpleasant. It is history, and an important one at that, that shows a community and individuals within it living their lives and coping with great pressures, restrictions and

⁷ See Proverbs 3351 and 3352 in Rodegem, *Paroles*.

dangers in their political setting. But it could also be a dangerous history. There is refuge and power in sublimating the dislocations of local, personal and national histories, recalling and investing in the history of the state. ‘We compose our memories to make sense of our past and present lives,’ writes Thomson; ‘There is a constant negotiation between experience and sense, private and public memory . . . We seek composure, an alignment of our past, present and future selves.’⁸ This may be expanded, to reflect how equally we seek composure in the alignment of pasts across varying, and sometimes conflicting, scales of community and belonging. For some on the border, a history dwelling on the linkages and encounters between the *banyagihugu* and the state cuts below what they recognise and tell of their past; for others it is a distant uncertainty. Still others thrived at the chance to speak of the history they knew best, could tell personally, and was peopled by names and faces they had known, loved and hated. Microhistory is not the history of the community; it must be an incision of history, exposing a section of life and experience that provides the grain of action, expression and motivation, that cuts at the reticulation of many personal, local and wider histories and behaviours.

The construction of the border in northern Burundi and the politics that played between individuals and communities around it are essential for their own sake, lives and ingenuities and sufferings that deserve to be told. The microhistory of the border catches glimpses of the wider world that crosses and connects at this frontier, while it encapsulated the vigilance that ruled the tensions of the day. People and state encountered each other on the edge of the nation, but everywhere they watched each other cautiously, spoke to each other carefully, and acted together to build and break their societies. This is the line that we may trace out from the border, winding round the frontiers of the Great Lakes and out into the communities between them. The close manoeuvres and strategies of the border are the gateway to the contests and concepts of citizenship and subject, belonging and exclusion, the construction of a political community through tense, mutual vigilance. It was the edge of the nation, but

⁸ Alistair Thomson, “The Anzac Legend: Exploring National Myth and Memory in Australia,” in *The Myths We Live By*, ed. Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (London: Routledge, 1990), 73–82, p. 78.

the heart of the region, and its fractures exposed the practices of power that would ebb and swell across the following decades. This history has studied the border; its conclusions may be chased far beyond it.

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Maps



Figure A.1: Rwanda and Burundi in Africa.

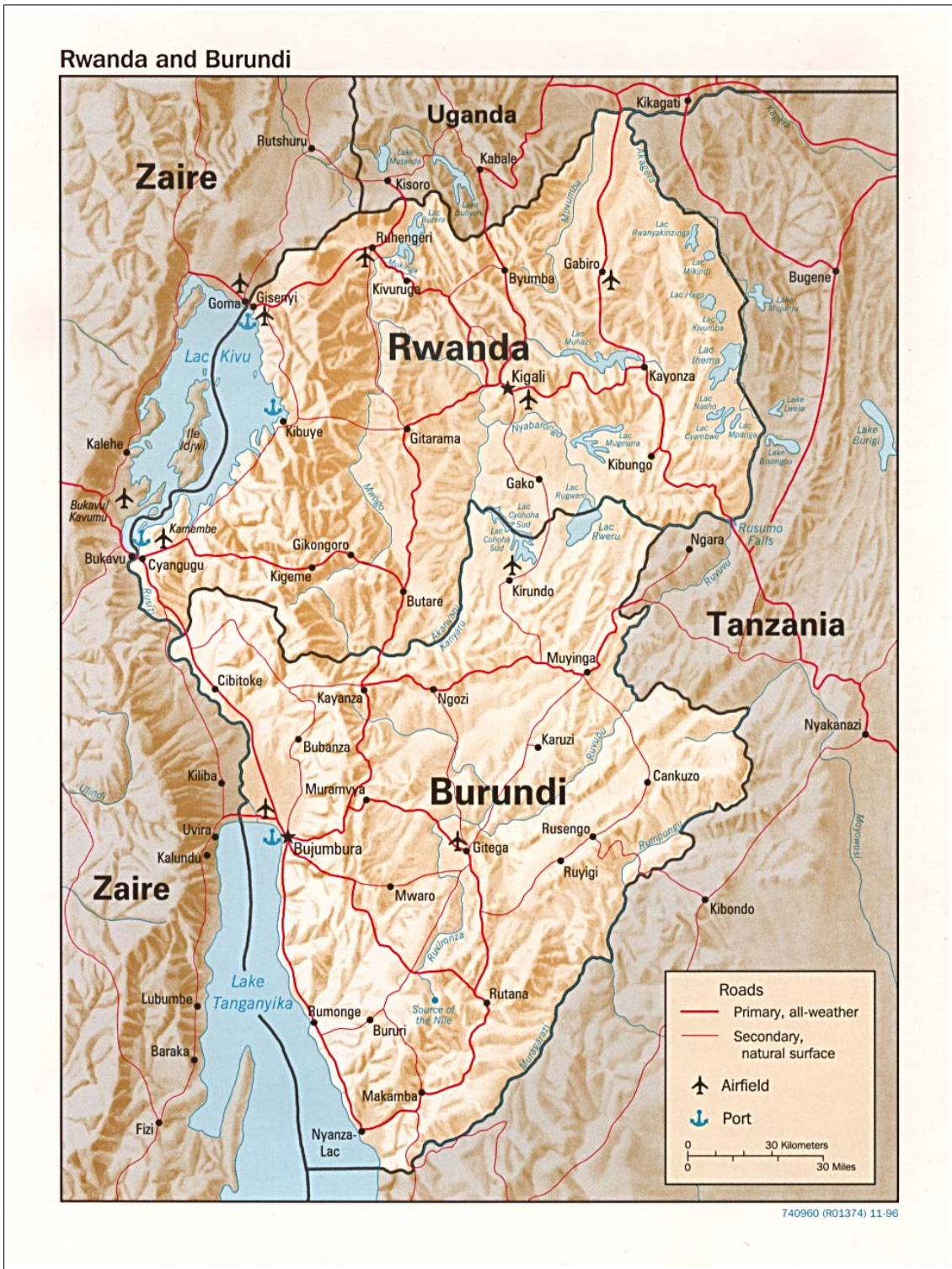


Figure A.2: Rwanda and Burundi, main towns and roads. From the UN.

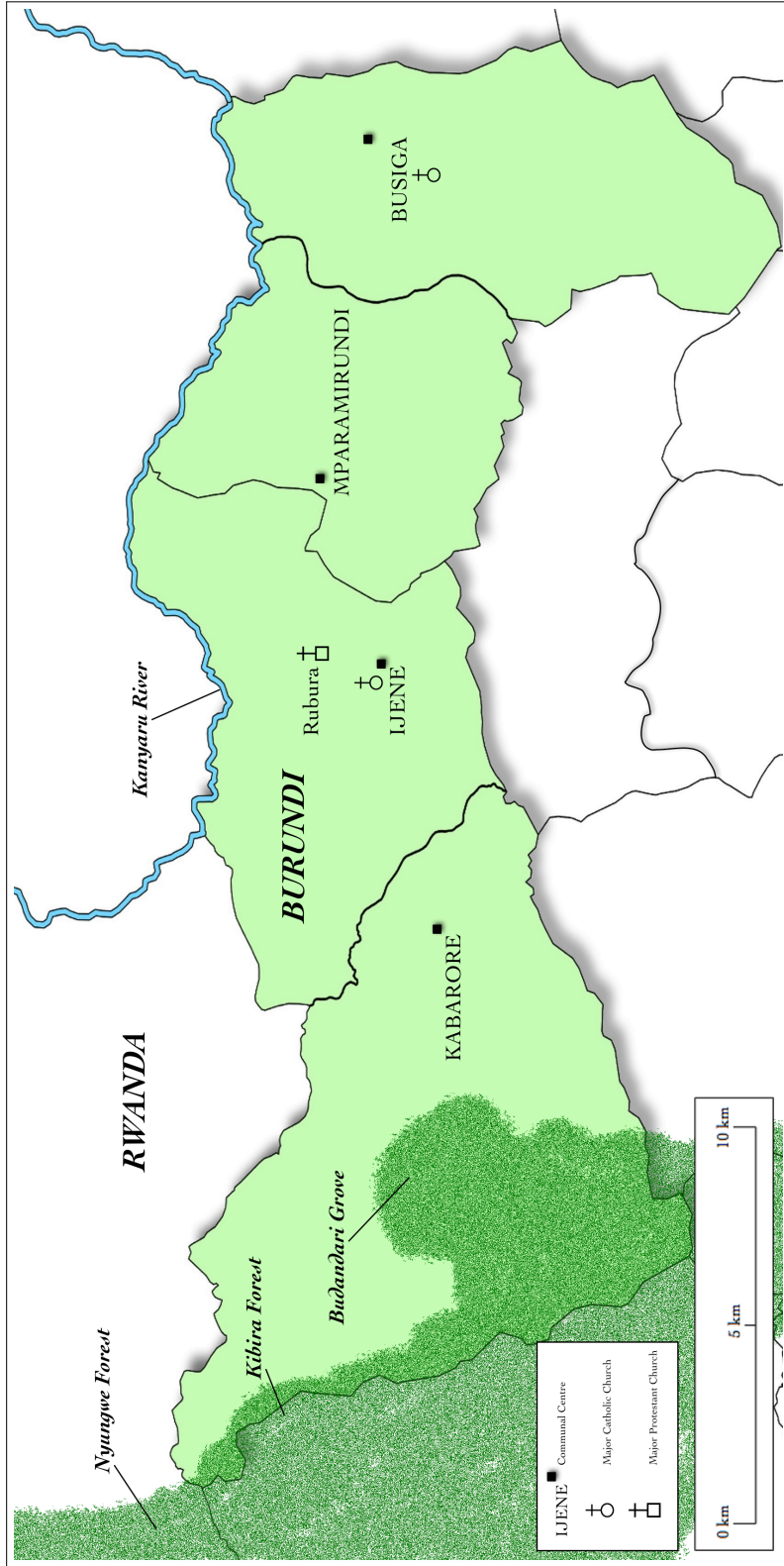


Figure A.3: The border region in 1962. The communal offices of Busiga are in Milhigo, but the commune is named after the Catholic mission.

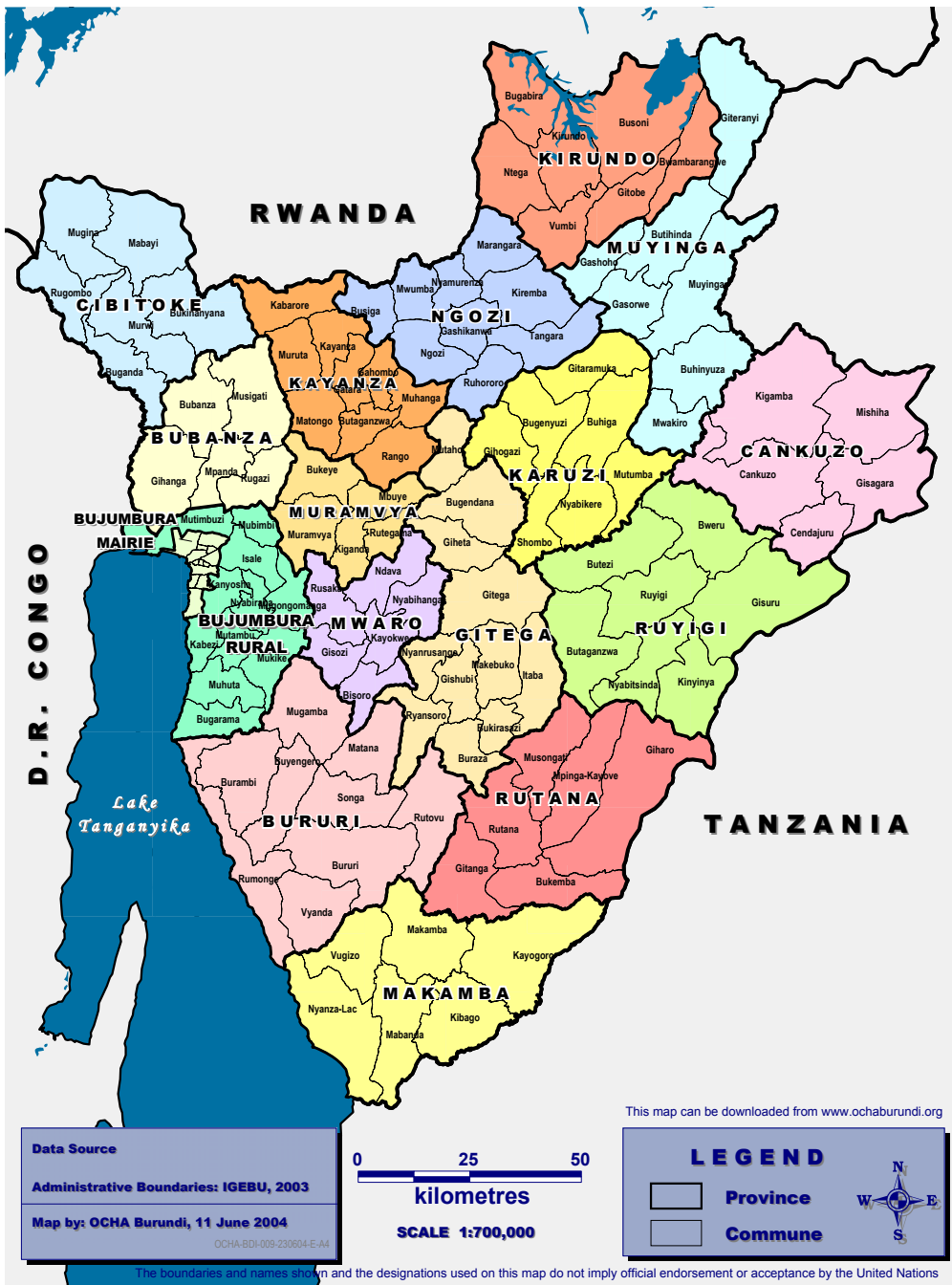
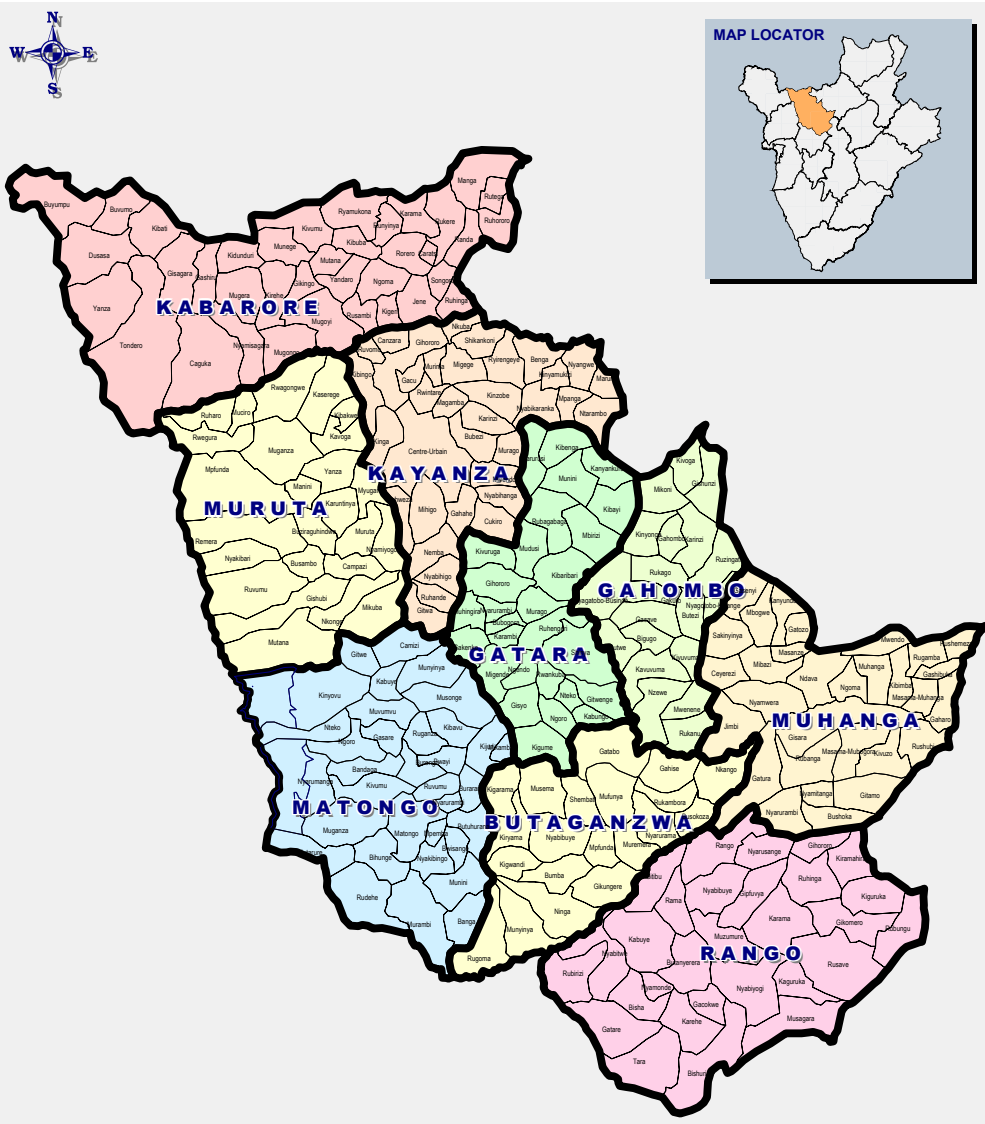


Figure A.4: The modern system of communes and provinces. Kabareore now resides within Kayanza Province, Busiga in Ngozi Province. From OCHA.



Data Source Administrative Boundaries:
IGEBU, 2003
Map by: OCHA Burundi, 14 July 2004
OCHA-BDI-035-140704-E-A4



Scale: 1:270,000

This map can be downloaded from
www.ochaburundi.org

LEGEND
 **Commune**
 **Colline**

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

Figure A.5: The modern *collines* and communes of Kayanza Province. From OCHA.

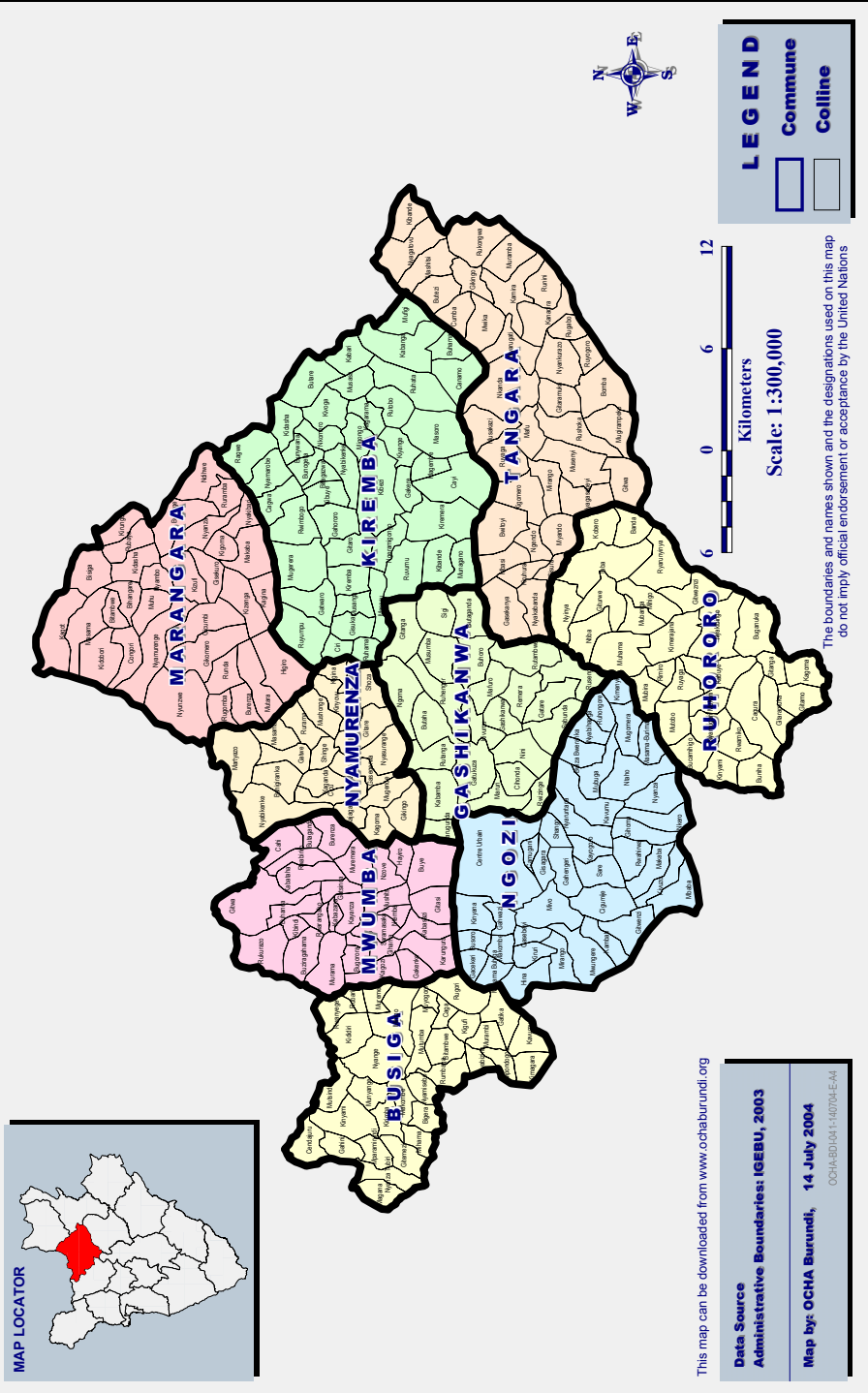


Figure A.6: The modern *collines* and communes of Ngozi Province. From OCHA.

Lists of Names, 1972

Kiremba Commune, 5 August 1972

Arrested, accused of carrying weapons and plotting violence:

Ntahonkiriye Gaspard	Midende Hirari	Kazobagerayo Gaspard
Simbarakiye	Magaramake Aloys	Minani Luc
Gasago Vito	Bucacanya	Ruganda Pangrasse
Misago	Minani Clairo	

ANB, BI 6 (146), Nzisabira Salvator, Letter to Military Governor, 5 August 1972. See p. 235.

Ngozi Prison, 8 May 1972

Killed during a 'prison revolt':

Mbunza Agricole	Sindayigaya	Bucumi
Ntakimazi	Serudomekera	Gisomampene Jean
Busokoza Anatole	Ndayishimiye	Ruzuba Pontien
Karenzo Joseph	Miburo Sumbi	Gasago
Nahimana Mathias	Muhitira	Shingure Barthérmy
Gatosho Antoine	Ruryaruryamye	Muzohori
Nyamuhuna	Sindihebura Melchior	Nzimbaha Léonidas
Mbunde Sébastien	Ciza Pascal	Budima
Gahungu André	Makobero	Ndayambaje
Ryoya	Senani	Rutotozi
Kinonko	Dogwedogwe	Bamboneyeho Phocace
Musahara	Misago	Birabaye Pierre Claver
Misigaro Pascal	Ndorere	Burarame
Ciza Zacharie	Bukukuru Mathias	Ndiracuza Colonel
Nyavyago Jean	Basabose	Burundi

Bahebura	Nyabenda	Bicabakecuru
Kiyumvise	Niboye Louis	Ndabambarire
Nkurikiye Melchior	Mphekurera Jean	Ndaryicaiye
Misigaro	Baryamwabo	Ntahompagaze
Bizicanyi	Kidahigima Gaspard	Njangwa André
Kabanyegeye	Gahungu Gaspard	Tunuguru
Budigoma Michel	Ntakimazi	

ANB, BI 6 (146), Havyarimana Zacharie, *Détenus morts*, 26 July 1972. See p. 237.

Gatara Commune, May–June 1972

Teachers imprisoned or in flight:

Bankibigwira	Ntibaramvuma Adolphe	Munyika Gabriel
Sinzinkayo Phillipe	Nikobamyé Anane	Sibomana Nicolas
Bucumi Clément	Ndikuncanti Lauréat	Nkenguburundi Victor
Ntigacika Joseph	Bucumi Melchior	Bucumi Mathias
Ngendakumana Célestin	Hakizimana Macaire	Murekambanze Aloys
Mfatavyanka Thomas	Maraguma Etienne	Mosozi Jean
Ngendabanka Agricole	Ntirutinama Jean	

ANB, BI 6 (146), Basemba Fidèle, *Statistiques scolaire*, 25 July 1972. See p. 242.

Secteur administratif de *Rango*, 7 August 1972

Accused, sent to the *Procureur de la République*:

Masunzu Maxime	Bayizeye Oscar	Nyabenda Japhet
Gihuna Marc	Kabeba Bernard	Bahuwumbuye Abraham
Mpfundiko Marc	Ntasigayandi Louis	Kinyamushahu Marc
Nzokirantevye Mathias	Kasimbi André	Karuhuye Bernard
Niyondagara Michel	Barasokoroza Cyprien	Nyeshatsi Remy
Ntawe Vital	Rurikungore Jean	Ntawe Antoine
Mitunu Sabbin		

ANB, BI 6 (146), Tharcisse Sinankwa, Letter to Prosecutor, 7 August 1972. See p. 244.

Biographical Notes

Baganzicaha Paul

PDC Minister for Technical Affairs in the transitional government of 1961. Fleeing to Rwanda after the victory of Uprona, he was rumoured to fund opposition to Uprona (Chapter 4). Returned to Burundi around 1971.

Baranyanka Pierre

Illustrious chief, symbolic leader of the *Batare* Ganwa and of the PDC. Father of Biroli and Ntidendereza. Very close to both the German and Belgian Administrations. Took command of the territory of Nkiko-Mugamba in 1920 to bring it under control after the death of Kirima, and was a greatly powerful ruler (Chapter 2). Despised Rwagasore, and was considered by Uprona to be plotting to usurp Mwambutsa. The principal target of the 1961 Mparamirundi rebellion (Chapter 3). Retired into relative obscurity after Independence, following the defeat of the PDC and the execution of two of his sons for involvement in the assassination of Rwagasore.

Batigura Gérard

An Uprona propagandist of Ijene, involved in a personal feud with Kaburazosi that contributed significantly to the latter's dismissal, imprisonment and death (Chapter 5).

Biroli Joseph

Son of Baranyanka, brother of Ntidendereza. Burundi's first University graduate, he attended the *Académie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer* in Belgium and St Anthony's College, Oxford in the United Kingdom. Founder of the PDC. In 1963 he was hanged for involvement in the assassination of Rwagasore (Chapter 3).

Bizimana Septime

Member of the *Conseil supérieur du Pays*, elected as an Uprona *Député* in 1961. Served in the Ministry of Justice. Governor of Ngozi in 1962. Presided over the elimination of Buzubona and Kaburazosi as bourgmestres (Chapter 5). Became Governor of Bururi in 1966 before the *coup d'état*. In 1972 he was Governor of Gitega. Known as *Mulele-le-terreur* and Septime the Severe, he was a ferocious propagandist for Uprona, and ruled his territories with an iron fist.

Bizoza Joseph

Army commandant and military Governor of Ngozi province in 1972 (Chapter 6). From Bururi, he led ferocious repression against Hutu in Ngozi.

Bucumi Côme

Early recruit to Uprona, deeply engaged in the political campaign against Banyankana. Elected bourgmestre of Busiga commune in 1960 as a member of the PDR, and Uprona *Député* in 1961 (Chapter 3). Lost reelection as *Député* in 1965 to a PP candidate. Fell foul of the Republican regime in 1967, engaged in a long-running feud with Sakubu Lucien. Eventually dismissed following accusations from his former collaborator Ntigacika, then prosecuted for misuse of communal funds. Imprisoned and died in jail (Chapter 5).

Budonderwa

Leading Uproniste of Bigera, Mparamirundi. Became one of the key propagandists in the northern regions. Imprisoned in 1961 along with Minani Bernard, contributing to the rebellion of June 1961 (Chapter 3).

Buzubona Julien

PDC bourgmestre of Kabarore elected in 1960. Considered incompetent and deeply suspicious by the Uprona government post-Independence. Accused of ethnic hatred of Tutsi, he was convicted of an assault on the internal security of the state in 1964 following the Kabarore burnings (Chapter 4).

Ciza Pacifique

Leading Uproniste of Katara commune. Resisted arrest until 28 June 1961, when several of his supporters were killed by Belgian paratroopers (Chapter 3). President of the local Committee of Uprona. Arrested again in 1964 during the border violence, but Governor Bizimana personally interceded on his behalf (Chapter 4).

Congera Damien

Army Commandant who took part in the 1966 coup, and made Governor of Ngozi. Took a strong hand to ensuring the political orthodoxy of the provincial administration, but was accused of pro-Hutu politics and removed from power within months (Chapter 5).

Furuguta

Leading Uprniste in Ijene commune, known to smuggle political tracts into the country from Rwanda (Chapter 3). Attempted to export the Mparamirundi uprising to Ijene in 1961. An associate of Batigura, who opposed Kaburazosi and brought about his downfall in 1964 (Chapter 5), he was arrested during the border violence later that year (Chapter 4). Survived, and was an Uprona councillor in 1968.

Gahiro, Antoine

Civilian Governor of Ngozi Province in 1972 (Chapter 6). Fled the country during the violence, fearing for his life.

Gahungu Zacharie

Commissaire d'arrondissement of Ngozi in 1972. While he was Tutsi and actively engaged in the repression, he too was killed under orders of Military Governor Bizoza (Chapter 6).

Harroy, Jean-Paul

Vice-Governor General of Ruanda-Urundi, March 1955–1960; Resident-General of Ruanda-Urundi, 1960–1 July 1962. Believed in the political awakening of the Hutu ethnicity. Despised Uprona, welcomed the victory of Parmehutu in Rwanda.

Inamuhandi

A female *umupfumu*, prophetess and healer, who led a revolt against Baranyanka and Belgian rule in 1934, based in Kibira rainforest (Chapter 2). Her followers were largely Hutu and Twa, the number of the latter particularly notable. Eventually captured and imprisoned.

Kabanda Samson

A resident of Budumo *colline* in Kabarore. Following the Kabarore burnings in 1964 he described numerous public meetings in Rwanda in which Mirerekano and Nigane plotted ethnic civil war (Chapter 4).

Kaburazosi Zacharie

PP bourgmestre of Ijene, elected 1960, and Vice President of the party 1963. Came under early suspicion for importing Rwandan ethnic politics into the borderland, but worked hard to stay on the Administration's good side. Involved in a personal feud with the Uproniste Batigura. Removed and imprisoned in 1965 amidst allegations of alliance with Rwanda (Chapter 5). Died in prison, possibly in 1972.

Karabona

Son of Mwezi Gisabo, chief in Kirimiro. Rumoured to be Mwambutsa's true father (Chapters 2 and 4).

Karolero Evariste

Made Commandant in the army for his support of the 1966 coup, he was briefly Governor of Ngozi in 1967, during which time he dismissed Bucumi Côme (Chapter 5). Was transferred to Bubanza within two months.

Kayabo Siméon

Uproniste *Député* for Ndora, Cibitoke in 1961. Was said to have led attacks in Cibitoke parallel to the Kabarore burnings (Chapter 4). Later a leading figure among Hutu-supremacists in exile in Kigali.

Kazohera Gaspard

Vice-President of the Uprona-aligned *Union des Hutu-Tutsi-Twa* du Burundi in 1960, was a colonial assistant, then *Commissaire d'Arrondissement* in Rutana in his native Bururi in 1962. Transferred to Kayanza in mid-1963. Presided over the elimination of Kaburazosi, Buzubona and Ntahorwamiye as bourgmestres (Chapters 5 and 6). Replaced by Sakubu Lucien shortly after the military coup, becoming Governor of Bururi Province some time later. He survived the Hutu uprising in 1972 by fleeing to the bush and hiding up a tree.

Kirima

Probably coming from areas in Eastern Congo, Kirima claimed to be the rightful mwami at the time when Europeans first arrived in Burundi, opposed to Mwezi Gisabo. Used as an ally by the Germans, he was also exiled for rebellion. Associated with anti-Tutsi violence (Chapter 2). After his death, much of his territory was given to Baranyanka.

Micombero Michel

As an army captain, Micombero led the response to the attempted coup of October 1965 and directed the repression against Hutu in Muramvya province. In 1966 he assisted Charles Ndizeye in deposing Mwambutsa, and was appointed Prime Minister aged 26. In November 1966, he abolished the monarchy and declared himself President of the Republic of Burundi. Presided over the consolidation of power into the hands of Tutsi from his native Bururi province, and in power during the 1972 genocide (Chapter 6). Deposed in 1976 by Colonel Jean-Baptiste Bagaza. Went into exile and died in Somalia in 1981, aged 41.

Minani Bernard

Leading Upruniste of Bigera, Mparamirundi. Communal Councillor. Became one of the key propagandists in the northern regions. Was imprisoned by Baranyanka for refusing his orders in 1960, and again in 1961; his second imprisonment contributed significantly to the increase in violence in the region, triggering the rebellion of June 1961 (Chapter 3).

Mirerekano Paul

Brilliant propagandist of Uprona, considered by himself and some others to be Rwagasore's right hand man and designated successor. Spent much of 1960 in exile in Léopoldville, from where he wrote many letters appealing for foreign assistance against the Belgians. Upon return to Burundi, he was shut out of power. Became a key figure for the 'Monrovia' faction of Uprona that came to be associated with Hutu causes. Alternately persecuted and accommodated, frequently forced into exile, he was held responsible for the 1964 border violence in Kabarore and convicted in absence, but returned in 1965 to be elected *Député* in Bujumbura (Chapter 4). He was executed for participation in the October 1965 coup attempt.

Muhirwa, André

An Uproniste of the *Batare* Ganwa and son-in-law of Mwambutsa. He was selected as Prime Minister by Mwambutsa following Rwagasore's assassination, and struggled with Mirerekano over the leadership in 1962 (Chapter 2). Principal member of the Casablanca faction. His government was dismissed in 1963, and he was succeeded by Ngendandumwe. Remained a powerful figure, associated with Charles Ndizeye's rise to power in 1966.

Mulele, Pierre

Congolese Minister of Education under Patrice Lumumba, led the Kwilu rebellion against Mobutu in 1964, taking Stanleyville in August, driven out by Belgian troops with US support in November and fleeing to Brazzaville. Returned from exile in 1968 and was brutally murdered. A common point of reference in Burundi, his rebellion provided the context of crisis during the Kabarore burnings (Chapter 4), his reputation inspired the nickname of Governor Bizimana Septime (Chapter 5), and the battle cry of his troops was heard among the Hutu rebels in Bururi province in 1972 (Chapter 6).

Mwambutsa Bangiricenge

Mwami of Burundi, 1915–1966. Son of Mutaga Mbikije, or, it was rumoured, of Mutaga's brother Karabona. Widely believed to support his son Rwagasore's Uprona party, he also collaborated with Belgian attempts to distance himself from all party politics. His actions following Rwagasore's assassination are attributed with preventing a civil war. After Independence he became very involved in the formation and dismissal of governments, but also left the country for extended periods of time. Was deposed by his son, Ntare (Charles) Ndiziye, while in Switzerland in 1966. There he died in 1977. In 2012 there was an attempt to have his remains exhumed and repatriated as part of the historical reconciliation process, but this was prevented in particular by his niece Esther Kamatari, who invoked his will to prove that it was Mwambutsa's wish never to return to Burundi, even after death.

Mwezi Gisabo

Mwami of Burundi, c. 1850–1908. His reign was marked by lengthy wars to control subordinate chiefs and satellite regions, until the arrival of the Germans. The central German authority wished to keep peace and recruit him as an indirect ruler, but local army officers waged a brutal war of conquest against him. Died in 1908 and was succeeded by his son, Mutaga. Ancestor of the *Bezi* Ganwa.

Nahagere Gabriel

Leading Uproniste of Bigera, Mparamirundi. Communal Councillor, former *sous-chef*. Became the key propagandist in the northern regions and quasi-leader of the rebellion of June 1961. Was imprisoned by Baranyanka for refusing orders in 1960, and again in 1961 for his involvement in the rebellion (Chapter 3). After Independence he was the President of the communal wing of Uprona, and was petitioned by sections of the population to take action against Ntahorwamiye. Eventually succeeding in having him dismissed, Nahagere was named bourgmestre in his place for a short period before Mparamirundi commune was merged with Busiga, at which point Bucumi Côme took control (Chapter 5). After Bucumi's dismissal and the subsequent purge of personnel in the region, Nahagere was appointed once again to the communal 'advisory' council in 1967.

Ndizeye Charles

Son of Mwambutsa, younger brother of Rwagasore. Deposed his father in 1966, and was crowned as Ntare V. Swiftly deposed by Micombero at the creation of the Republic in November, he lived in exile in Switzerland and Uganda for several years. In 1972 he returned to Burundi as a private citizen, supposedly under an agreement with Micombero; other accounts claim that there was no agreement, but that he was kidnapped by Idi Amin and delivered as a prisoner. In either respect he was arrested upon arrival, charged with employing white mercenaries to launch a coup attempt. At the start of the Hutu uprising in Bururi he was promptly murdered (Chapter 6).

Ngendandumwe Pierre

An early, leading Uproniste. Worked as an assistant to the *Tutelle* in Kayanza in 1960, from which position he monitored Baranyanka's persecution of Upronistes (Chapter 3). Took the only Uprona position in the transitional government of 1961 as Minister of Finances. Became Burundi's first Hutu Prime Minister in 1963, and engaged in a serious conflict with President Kayibanda of Rwanda over what he considered to be a genocide of Tutsi in 1964. Dismissed in April 1964, he was reappointed in January 1965 but assassinated days later.

Nigane Emmanuel

Leader of the PP in 1960, he served as Minister of Social Affairs in the transitional government, during which time he chaired the *Comité d'élite* that sent an

inspection team to monitor the 1961 Mparamirundi rebellion, prejudging it as a feud between the aristocracy (Chapter 3). Went into exile after the victory of Uprona. He was believed to be living in Rwanda and plotting a Hutu revolution with Mirerekano, the two convicted in absence for backing the 1964 border violence in Kabarore. Received PP propagandists and gave supported them with money when they visited him in Butare (Chapter 4). Later wrote a petition to the government in June 1966 on behalf of the exiled Barundi, requesting that steps be taken to enable a peaceful return.

Ntaganzwa Matthias

Sous-chef for the region of Mparamirundi under Baranyanka, he was the principal leader of the PDC during the 1961 revolt (Chapter 3).

Ntahorwamiye Joseph

A member of the PP, elected bourgmestre of Mparamirundi commune in 1960. Although an ally of Baranyanka and Ntawe, he attempted to play both sides and keep peace with the Upronistes of Bigera while identifying them for elimination (Chapter 3). After Independence he defected to Uprona, but was the subject of a lengthy sequence of complaints ranging from collaboration with Rwanda to polygamy and witchcraft. Removed in 1965, later imprisoned and alleged to be the inspiration for a plot to murder Tutsi in the region (Chapter 5). Killed in 1972 (Chapter 6).

Ntare V

Regnal name of Charles Ndizeye.

Ntawe Jean

Assistant in Muhinga, 1960, and *Administrateur de Province in Kayanza*, 1961. Despised by Upronistes for his flagrant partisan support for the PDC, and considered weak and incompetent by the *Tutelle*. Became the central figure of the rebellion of June 1961 after he was threatened with death and driven out of Mparamirundi (Chapter 3).

Ntidendereza Jean-Baptiste

Son of Baranyanka, brother of Biroli. Founder of the PDC. Became Minister of the Interior in the interim government of 1961, and monitored the Mparamirundi rebellion extensively (Chapter 3). In 1963 he was hanged for involvement in the assassination of Rwagasore.

Ntigacika Jean

A mason, one of the Uprona propagandists of Busiga in 1961, considered a leader in the rebellion and arrested during an immense Belgian military operation (Chapter 3). Worked as deputy bourgmestre for Bucumi Côme in 1962, but launched a claim in 1965 for money owed to him from the commune, a claim that precipitated Bucumi's downfall (Chapter 5).

Nyamoya, Albin

Key Uproniste, related by marriage to Mwami Mwambutsa. Central member of the 'Casablanca' wing of Uprona after Independence. Appointed Prime Minister in April 1964, dismissed in January 1965. Arrested for implication in the assassination of Ngendandumwe, but released. Became Prime Minister again in July 1972. He attempted to regulate some of the plundering and other crimes contingent to the genocide, leading a failed campaign for national reconciliation (Chapter 6). Dismissed once again, he retired to private life until 1984, when he once again joined parliament.

Rubuza François

Communal councillor in Busiga, installed following the deposition of Bucumi Côme as bourgmestre in 1967. Censured for low tax receipts and poor sales of Uprona membership cards in his territory. Was in prison in 1970 for tax infractions, but still in place as a councillor in 1972, when he helped people escape to the border (Chapter 6).

Rukushi Isaac

A PP propagandist from Kabamba commune, he was accused of threatening his Uproniste neighbours with mutilation in 1964. Travelled to Ijene to stay with his brother, from where the two went to Rwanda to seek support from exiled politicians. Spoke at length to Baganzicaha, received money from Nigane (Chapter 4).

Rusiga Paul

A sympathiser of the PDC at Independence, he was a leading officer in the repression of October 1965, and as Commandant was appointed Governor of Ngozi in 1967 (Chapter 5). Considered one of the most accomplished soldiers in Burundi, rumours circulated that he was a secret monarchist and he was dismissed as Governor in 1969. Opposed the arrest of the army officers accused of a coup attempt in 1971, and was himself arrested in 1972 when on his way to attend their sentencing, although he was freed a fortnight later. Subsequently retired to Ngozi.

Ryckmans, Pierre

First Belgian *Résident* of Ruanda-Urundi, and later Governor-General of Belgian Congo.

Rwagasore, Prince Louis

Eldest son of Mwami Mwambutsa, associated with the *Bezi* Ganwa, leader of Uprona. Elected Prime Minister and assassinated 1961. Today considered the first 'Hero of Burundi'.

Sakubu Lucien

A *sous-lieutenant* at the end of 1965, became *Commissaire d'Arrondissement* of Kayanza in 1967. Engaged in a bitter feud with Bucumi Côme of Busiga, eventually succeeding in having him deposed and imprisoned (Chapter 5). Sakubu was later Governor of Ruyigi in 1972 and a major in the *Conseil Suprême Révolutionnaire* that, in 1976, overthrew Micombero to establish the Second Republic. He was made bourgmestre of Bujumbura in the early 1980s, but killed in the early actions of the civil war in 1994.

Seryobagi

Leading Uproniste of Bigera, Mparamirundi. Communal Councillor. Became a key propagandist in the northern regions and a leader of the rebellion of June 1961 (Chapter 3). Was imprisoned in 1961 for his involvement in the rebellion. A Hutu, in 1965 he signed a letter accusing Ntahorwamiye of plotting anti-Tutsi violence (Chapter 5).

Vandenbulcke, Valère

Territorial agent, first posted to Muhinga in 1948 aged 23, before moving to the Kayanza post in Ngozi in 1951. As part of his duties he was the provincial accountant, *officier de police judiciaire*, *juge de police*, prison guardian and postmaster. Unusually for a Belgian agent he spoke Kirundi, and was kept in place for a second term in Ngozi. Maintained broadly good relations with the people in his territory. As *Administrateur de Territoire* of Ngozi in 1961 he led the response to the June revolt, commanding metropolitan troops and arresting suspected leaders of the rebellion (Chapter 3).

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Interviews Cited

Bahimanga Paul (pseud.) Interview in Ruhororo (Kabarore), 27 April 2011.

Kirundi (English translation). Born in 1944. An impromptu interview with a number of friends. Volunteered his ethnicity as Hutu, to the anger of his friends, but continued to speak most during the interview.

Bamboneyo Thaddée. Interview in Mihigo (Busiga), 23 February 2011.

Kirundi (French translation). 74 years old. Nine children, four died of illness. Interviewed individually, at the house of his friend Rwageze. In 1961 he hid in the forest for three months during the political violence, pursued by members of the PDC.

Barakamanye Paul. Interview in Bitambwe (Busiga), 2 March 2011.

Kirundi (French translation). 66 years old. Originally from Kavuvu, married a woman from Magara. Unusually, he did not travel to Rwanda in the 1950s or 1960s. Interviewed along with four friends and a large crowd of spectators.

Bariyuntura Daniel (pseud.) Interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 19 April 2011.

Kirundi (English translation). Born in 1932 in Kirimba. Interview cut short when joined by Ndikumana.

Bitariho Damien (pseud.) Interview in Nyange (Busiga), 21 February 2011.

Kirundi (French translation). 70 years old, from Kididiri colline, married a woman from Mwumba. Fled to Rwanda in 1972, but stayed only a few nights before returning due to persistent insecurity.

Gahungu François (pseud.) Interview in Nyanza-Tubiri (Busiga), 20 April 2011.

Kirundi (English translation). Born in 1942. Ran a business importing bicycle parts from Rwanda in the 1960s. Was in Kigali during the crisis in December 1963, and was arrested as a foreign agent along with other Barundi in the Rwandan capital. In 1972 Gahungu fled to Rwanda, where he was well received.

Havyarimana Marie (pseud.) Interview in Ngoma (Kabarore), 10 March 2011.

Kirundi (French translation). 61 years old. Interviewed individually in her home, joined later by her husband, who stayed silent. Daughter of one of Baranyanka's local messengers, who was whipped for disobedience. Related by marriage to Kaburazosi Zacharie.

Macaire, Abbé. Conversation in Jene (Kabarore), 7 March 2011.

French. Informal conversations held over dinner while staying as a guest at the Jene Parish Church.

Magenge Patrice. Interview in Cendajuru (Busiga), 26 April 2011.

Kirundi (English translation). 78 years old. Born in Ijene, moved to Cendajuru with his wife in 1960. Interviewed with a friend, Barengayabo Antoine, aged 73.

Majombora. Interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 18 April 2011.

Kirundi, (English translation) Unknown age. Married a women from Nkuba, Kayanza commune. Was beaten and whipped under Baranyanka's rule, and forced to flee to Rwanda on occasion to escape the colonial tax regime.

Manirabona Kizera. Interview in Karama (Kabarore), 8 March 2011.

Kirundi (French translation). 60 years old. Along with two other women, joined an on-going interview with local men.

Mbazumutima Thérèse (pseud.) Interview in Ryamukona (Kabarore), 9 March 2011.

Kirundi (French translation). 70 years old, six children, lived all her life in Ryamukona. Interviewed with one other woman and two men. Particularly firm and clear in correcting her male companions' claims.

Munose Venant. Interview in Ryamukona (Kabarore), 9 March 2011.

Kirundi (French translation). 65 years old. Interviewed in a group of five, for whom he was often the spokesperson, but by whom he was frequently corrected.

Musavyi Daniel (pseud.) Interview in Ruhororo (Kabarore), 27 April 2011.

Kirundi (English translation). Born in 1956. An impromptu interview, when Musavyi provided shelter in his home from a sudden storm. Joined by Bahimanga and other neighbours. Reacted angrily to Bahimanga's statement of ethnicity.

Ndabahariye Bernadette (pseud.) Interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 18 April 2011.

Kirundi (English translation). Born 1962. Hutu, she is married to a Tutsi man also from Mparamirundi. Her uncle was a teacher and victim of the genocidal violence of 1972. She and her husband later sheltered refugees from Rwanda, but fell under suspicion from neighbours following the assassination of President Ndadaye due to her husband's ethnicity and the family's links to Rwanda. The family was persecuted at home and in refuge across the border, but were protected by others in Mparamirundi.

Ndakoze Pierre (pseud.) Interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 27 April 2011.

Kirundi (English translation). Invited to join the interview by Ndikumana. 57 years old, a farmer. Recalls light ethnic difficulties before 1972 ameliorated by common intermarriage, utterly transformed by the genocide.

Ndayizeye Pascal (pseud.) Interview in Cendajuru (Busiga), 26 April 2011.

Kirundi (English translation). Born in 1952 in Mihama. Father was an important Pédéciste in the region, Ndayizeye one of the few to speak of such a connection to the PDC.

Ndikumana David (pseud.) Interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 19 April 2011.

Kirundi (English translation). Invited Ndakoze to join the interview. 59 years old, and a leader in the JRR from 1968 onwards (beginning aged 16). In 1972 he manned the barricades preventing the escape of Hutu fleeing from the south, and followed orders to apprehend those whose names were given for elimination.

Ndikumogongo Victor. Interview in Rwanyege (Busiga), 28 February 2011.

Kirundi (French translation). Born 1919 in Mwumba, moved to Rwanyege in 1931 following his parents' divorce. Sixteen children, all still living, first born in 1958. Brother of Bucumi Côme. Worked as a border guard at Kanyaru-bas with Bitariho Damien, with whom he was interviewed.

Nduhiye Marcus. Interview in Kibuba (Kabarore), 30 November 2010.

Kirundi (French translation). Born 1920. Attended the execution of Biroli and Ntidentereza in 1963. Worked temporarily in Butare, Rwanda, in 1965.

Ngerenranya Daniel. Interview in Munege (Kabarore), 14 March 2011.

Kirundi (French translation). 65 years old, lived in Munege all his life. At the start of the interview the *chef de colline* was present, but soon left and was replaced by a number of Ngerenranya's old friends, both male and female, who formed a greatly productive conversation between them.

Niyongabo Côme (pseud.) Interview in Karama (Kabarore), 8 March 2011.

Kirundi (French translation). 75 years old, six children. Welcomed me with an embrace, recalling that once people used to run at the sight of a European, now they greet them with warmth. Interviewed in a mixed group of men and women.

Ntimbonero Déo. Interview in Caga (Busiga), 2 March 2011.

Kirundi (French translation). 85 years old. Individual interview, near the Catholic seat of Busiga. Worked for the Belgians as a chauffeur, travelling to Rwanda and Gitega regularly. Later became a mason.

Ntiruvakure Sévérin. Interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 21 April 2011.

Kirundi (English translation). 81 years old, born in Gahini, wife from Bigera. Travelled to Save in Rwanda in 1958 to earn money for the personal tax. Joined by a friend, 67 year-old Barabonerana Lazare from Nyanza-Tubiri.

Nyamuhashi Sabène. Interview in Nyanza-Tubiri (Busiga), 20 April 2011.

Kirundi (English translation) and French. 73 years old. Formerly a primary school headmaster. Invited a friend to join the interview in his home.

Nzisabira Joseph (pseud.) Interview in Muremera (Busiga), 1 March 2011.

Kirundi (French translation). Aged 73 and seven days at the time of interview, understood French questions but answered in Kirundi. Interrupted and largely took over an interview with two women who said they remembered nothing of their past. A JRR leader in 1972, he was remarkably open about the crisis, volunteering most of the information cited above himself.

Ruranyaga Jean (pseud.) Interview in Rukere (Kabarore), 7 March 2011.

———. Interview in Rukere (Kabarore), 15 March 2011.

Kirundi (French translation). Born 1919. First interviewed with family and friends in attendance, second interview alone. Protestant. His son fled the country in 1972, and now lives in South Africa; they have not seen each other since.

Rwageze Pierre. Interview in Mihigo (Busiga), 23 February 2011.

Kirundi (French translation). 70 years old, with ten children born between 1965 and 1988. Born in Busiga, went to secondary school in Bukavu, 1955–1958, and college at Karuzi. Settled in Mihigo in 1993.

Rwasa David (pseud.) Interview in Munege (Kabarore), 14 March 2011.

Kirundi (French translation). 70 years old. Interviewed with friends. Very knowledgeable about affairs on the Rwandan side of the border. An active Uproniste and member of the JRR in his youth.

Sibomana Justine (pseud.) Interview in Mparamirundi (Busiga), 20 April 2011.

Kirundi (English translation). 63 years old. Born near Kayanza. An enthusiastic Uproniste who sang and danced with other women at party rallies, she was also related by marriage to bourgmestre Ntahorwamiye, whom she describes as an Uproniste.

Vandenbulcke, Valère. Interview in Westrozebeke (Belgium), 21 July 2011.

———. Interview in Westrozebeke (Belgium), 12 September 2011.

Dutch/English. Flemish Territorial, 1948–1962. See also his entry in Appendix D. Worked as a clerk before following his brother to the colonial service aged 23, posted to Muhinga and then Ngozi. Interviewed with his wife, Henriëtte, who lived with him in Burundi where she gave birth to their first child. After returning to Belgium Vandenbulcke worked for a major butcher's company.

Archives africaines, *Brussels*

Records of the Belgian administration in Ruanda-Urundi, c. 1918–1962. The BUR series collects diverse files relating primarily to political issues in Burundi; the series label is followed by a file number and a sub-file number. Documents from the following files have been cited:

- BUR 65** *Uprona/UPP/VPM*
- BUR 66** *Renseignements à propos de divers partis; Meetings; Litiges politiques*
- BUR 67** *Cartes et listes des populations des communes; Litiges Hutu-Tutsi; Lettres anonymes*
- BUR 73** *Documentation politique 1953, 1961; Troubles, répression des troubles, faux bruits; Politique indigène; Incidents de frontière*

- BUR 74** *Rapports d'état d'esprit des populations; Rapports divers de la sûreté*
- BUR 75** *Plaintes collectives des chefferies; Troubles*
- BUR 77** *Historique des chefferies; Renseignements politiques et agricoles; Ngozi: Documentation diverse*
- BUR 79** *Chefs et sous-chefferies; Plaintes diverses de la population; Retraites des autorités indigènes*
- BUR 80** *Incidents en Urundi, 1959–1961*
- BUR 243** *Presse, publications, incidents, plaintes; Tracts d'information; Dossier "Journal Ndongezi"*

Archives nationales du Burundi, *Bujumbura*

Fonds du territoire de Ngozi

Consisting of 259 files from the colonial period, catalogued according to the Belgian administrative system. The letter 'A' indicates the colonial provenance, the letter 'I' indicates Ngozi Territory, followed by a series number and a file number. Documents from the following files have been cited:

Series AI 5, Organisation judiciaire, procédure et compétence:

- AI 5 (13)** *Affaires judiciaires: Pro-Justitia, 1961*

Series AI 6, Organisation politique et administrative:

- AI 6 (68)** *Insurrection à base des partis politiques, commune Mparamirundi, 1961*
- AI 6 (69)** *Justice: affaire de menaces à l'endroit de Ntawe, 1961*

Series AI 13, Démographie et sociologie:

- AI 13 (12)** *Liste des réfugiés rwandais en province de Ngozi; transfert des réfugiés rwandais à Muyinga; instructions aux administrateurs et bourgmestres, 1961–1962*

Fonds de la province de Ngozi

Consisting of 558 files largely from the post-colonial period. The first 43 files were classified in order of record under the label 'B'. Documents in the following files have been cited:

- B 6** *Associations politiques, économiques et religieuses, 1966–1971*
- B 7** *Défense nationale, 1954, 1962–1965, 1968–1969*
- B 8** *Migrations 1954, 1960, 1964, 1968, 1970; Recensement 1960, 1964, 1970*
- B 9** *Rapports administratifs*
- B 10** *Enquêtes administratives 1964*
- B 11** *Rapports politiques 1960–1970*
- B 12** *Le Parti 1969–1971*
- B 20** *Personnel communal 1960, 1964–1968; régime disciplinaire 1962–1971*
- B 25** *Rapports hebdomadaires du territoire de Ngozi sur les réunions d'Information 1960*

The remaining files were catalogued in series according to the Belgian administrative theme, to permit consistency across the pre- and post-Independence collections. The letter 'B' indicates the post-colonial provenance, the letter 'I' indicates Ngozi Province, followed by a series number and a file number. Files labelled '*Correspondances diverses*' are particularly rich, and include a number of regular reports and other documentation in among letters and telegrams. Dates are approximate. Documents in the following files have been cited:

Series BI 5, Organisation judiciaire, procédure et compétence:

- BI 5 (9)** *Affaires judiciaires, 1962–1964*
- BI 5 (18)** *Affaires judiciaires (plaintes, escroquerie, incendie, l'état d'exception, vol avec violence, meurtre, atteinte à la sûreté intérieur d'état), 1964*
- BI 5 (19)** *Affaires judiciaires (haine raciale, incendies, Mirerekano, tracts Parmehutu, dépolitisation de la masse), 1964–1965*
- BI 5 (22)** *Jugements rendus par la chambre du Conseil de guerre de Ngozi siégeant en matière répressive à Ngozi, 1965*
- BI 5 (32)** *Dossier du Parquet de Ngozi, 1969–1970*

Series BI 6, Organisation politique et administrative:

- BI 6 (34) *Diverses correspondance communale* (Mparamirundi, Busiga, Ijene, Kabarore, Kabuye, Kayanza), 1962–1966
- BI 6 (42) *Correspondance communale diverse, rapports mensuels communaux, rapports sur la situation politique, impôt*, 1964–1970
- BI 6 (53) *Diverse correspondance communales, dossiers communaux* (Busiga, Ngozi, Gatara, Ijene, Kayanza, Banga, Rango, Matongo, Gahomba), 1965–1968
- BI 6 (66) *Correspondances diverses*, 1972
- BI 6 (68) *Rapports sur les réunions d'information*, 1960
- BI 6 (70) *Télégrammes reçues*, Ngozi Province, 1961–1966
- BI 6 (72) *Correspondances et instructions diverses*, 1961–1968
- BI 6 (73) *Correspondances diverses reçues par le Gouverneur de province*, 1962
- BI 6 (75) *Lettres reçues ou expédiées par le Gouverneur de province*, May to December 1962
- BI 6 (77) *Correspondances diverses, doléances de la population, rapports administratifs*, 1962–1964
- BI 6 (79) *Télégrammes envoyés ou reçues par le Gouverneur de province*, 1962–1964
- BI 6 (81) *Télégrammes reçues par le Gouverneur de province*, 1962–1965
- BI 6 (82) *Correspondances diverses (gendarmerie, impôt); proclamations et arrêtés*, 1962–1966
- BI 6 (85) *Correspondances diverses reçues ou expédié par les autorités provinciales*, 1962–1970
- BI 6 (89) *Correspondances diverses (tombeaux des anciens rois, affaires frontalières, réfugiés, régime d'exception militaire, complots, Parti, rapports mensuels)*, 1963–1972
- BI 6 (94) *Télégrammes expédiés par le Gouverneur de province; dossier divers (relations sociales, terres, comptes, réfugiés)*, 1963–1964
- BI 6 (95) *Détention; achat café; réunion bourgmestres et fonctionnaires; comptes-rendus; indépendance festivités et cotisations; jugements*, 1963–1965
- BI 6 (97) *Correspondances diverses des autorités provinciales ou communales*, 1963–1968

- BI 6 (115) *Télégrammes, 1967*
- BI 6 (117) *Lettres et télégrammes envoyés par le Gouverneur de province, 1967*
- BI 6 (118) *Télégrammes adressés au Gouverneur de province, 1967*
- BI 6 (120) *Lettres diverses: rapports administratifs; réfugiés Rwandais; passages illégaux sur le frontière Kanyaru, 1967–1968*
- BI 6 (146) *Lettres et télégrammes: rapports mensuels d'activités des communes; rapports et autres procès-verbaux occasionnels à caractère politique; impôts; fonctionnaires, 1972*
- BI 6 (147) *Elections, 1960–1965*
- BI 6 (149) *Organisations des élections; arrêtés, procès-verbaux, correspondance, 1961–1965*
- BI 6 (155) *Elections législatives, candidats, devoirs des gouverneurs de province, partialité de partis politique, rapport des élections, 1965*
- BI 6 (165) *Le Parti, rapport politique, cartes, correspondance sur les renseignements, création du parti Uprona et de la JRR, 1967*
- BI 6 (166) *Parti Uprona, correspondance; rapports politiques; procès-verbaux occasionnels, 1967*
- BI 6 (168) *Correspondances et rapports relatifs au parti Uprona et ses mouvements intégrés, 1967–1971*
- BI 6 (183) *Situation politiques de l'arrondissement de Kayanza sous la directions de Kazohera Gaspard; bourgmestre Ntatorwamiye Joseph, 1964–1965*
- BI 6 (185) *Rapports administratifs, 1967–1968*
- BI 6 (186) *Rapports annuels, Kayanza et Ngozi, 1963*
- BI 6 (197) *Rapports annuels des communes et pour l'Arrondissement de Kayanza, 1962, 1963, 1966*
- BI 6 (206) *Communes; rapport mensuel de M. Karolero: situation politique, état d'esprit de la population, situation sociale; commerce, achat café parche, 1961–1967*
- BI 6 (213) *Rapport mensuel du Gouverneur; rapport mensuel de la commune Busiga, 1967–1968*

BI 6 (216) *Procès-verbaux des réunions des gouverneurs et des commissaires d'arrondissement, 1964–1968*

BI 6 (220) *Discours et allocutions gouvernementales, 1960–1968*

Series BI 10, Administration du personnel:

BI 10 (7) *Dossier Bucumi Côme, 1966–1967*

BI 10 (17) *Dossiers administrateurs communaux; rapports administratifs; dossiers disciplinaires, 1965–1968*

Series BI 11, Défense nationale, organisation militaire:

BI 11 (3) *Dossier gendarmerie, 1963–1967*

Series BI 12, Police, sûreté, sécurité:

BI 12 (4) *Sûreté, Immigration; contrôle de séjour des étrangers; circulation des personnes, 1966–1967*

The Betts Collection

The collected papers of Tristram Betts, Africa Field Director for Oxfam, part of the Refugee Studies Centre Special Collections at Oxford University. Comprising detailed reports, maps and plans for refugee settlements and rural development projects in Rwanda and Burundi from the UNHCR, Belgian and British NGOs and the respective governments, c. 1964–1976. Boxes 20–40 in particular relate to Burundi.

The Derscheid Collection

The collected papers of Jean-Marie Derscheid, zoologist and wildlife conservationist in Rwanda, Burundi and Eastern Congo 1924–1939, comprising notes on historical inquiries, correspondence, maps and illustrations, some derived from German and Belgian administration records. Consulted online through the University of Florida, George A. Smathers Libraries: <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/derscheid>.

Valère and Henriette Vandembulcke's Collection

The private papers of Valère Vandembulcke, Belgian *Territorial* in Urundi from 1948–1962. Mostly correspondence and documentation relating to his professional career, along with photographs and press cuttings collected by Mr Vandembulcke and his wife, Henriette.

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