

A Thousand Hills

Rwanda's Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamed It

By Stephen Kinzer, 2010

"In 1994, the world stood idly by as Rwanda was devastated by the most horrifying genocide since the Holocaust. Now this tiny, land-locked nation in east central Africa stands poised to stun the world again – but in a very different way. Killers and survivors have embarked on a breathtaking path toward strictly imposed reconciliation, and Rwanda has become one of the most promising countries in the developing world. Well more than 800,000 Tutsi were slaughtered in only 100 days of government sponsored mayhem. How did this happen?"

"In *A Thousand Hills*, Stephen Kinzer tells the dramatic story of Paul Kagame, whose rebel army stopped the genocide and whose government is turning Rwanda into a new star of Africa. Kagame grew up as a wretched refugee, shaped one of the most audacious covert operations in the history of clandestine warfare, and then emerged as a visionary leader with radical ideas about how poor countries can climb out of their misery. Whether his experiment can succeed is a question that has begun to fascinate people across Africa and beyond."

"A Thousand Hills tells Kagame's astonishing story more fully than it has ever been told before. Drawing on extensive interviews with Kagame, and with people who have known him at every stage of his life, Kinzer recounts one of the great untold stories of modern revolution. He traces Kagame through his years as a very smart but bitterly angry student, in what was then Zaire, details his early fascination with men of action, ranging from Che Guevara to James Bond, and explains how he built a secret revolutionary army in a way no one ever had before."

"With the dramatic flair that led the *Washington Post* to place him "among the best in foreign policy storytelling," Kinzer then traces the three-and-a-half-year war Kagame waged in the Rwandan bush – a war that stopped a genocide, changed the destiny of a nation, and set in motion one of the most exciting social and political experiments now underway anywhere in the world."

"Stephen Kinzer is an award-winning foreign correspondent who has reportedly worked in more than 50 countries on five continents. He has been a *New York Times* bureau chief in Istanbul, Berlin, and Nicaragua. Among several other books, he is the coauthor of *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*."

In Rwanda today, police officers might stop a car for a seat belt check, or for littering. Government is widely perceived as corruption free, and all people seem to feel free. Under President Paul Kagame, this tiny, very isolated country is looking more like the Switzerland of Africa.

Reconciliation as a national policy is forced on the people, because, what alternative is there? The greatest sin in this forward-looking country seems to be fermenting revenge or violence in any form, or probably even asking another person if he or she is a Tutsi or a Hutu. Known perpetrators have been taken to local courts, quickly convicted, and then returned to live in their own old communities after relatively very short sentences. These *genocidaires*, after their public confessions and mild punishments, are then protected from further retribution, etc. There is no tolerance at all for crimes thereafter committed against them by their former victims.

(Note: "Hutu" and "Tutsi" are hereafter used, as by Stephen Kinzer, as both the singular and plural form.)

This has not always been the case, as early on, following the so called "100 days of Hell," from April 6 through the July 18, 1994 ceasefire, Kagame's guerilla army reportedly killed hundreds of thousands of Hutu, often in revenge, though always claimed as necessary to restore security. Obviously, life had been totally devalued in a then dead country, with little but despair. Today, remaining Kagame is the country's single biggest hope, with his enormous energy and enlightened vision, but he is also known by some as a vengeful authoritarian who had best not be crossed.

The first organized opposition between the Hutu majority and the formerly ruling Tutsi, under King Mutara III Rudahigwa, emerged after the King was probably poisoned by Belgian authorities on a visit to Burundi on July 25, 1959. Tutsi activists took revenge against a well known Hutu activist, sparking an incessant series of violent attacks against the former Tutsi ruling class all over the country. In astonishing speed, the long oppressed Hutu majority had control of the land, and the Tutsi were terrorized and brutalized in a long series of pogroms, which continued until July 1994. Belgian authorities quickly switched sides to thereafter support the Hutu.

The decolonization of Rwanda was first proclaimed at a meeting of 2,500 mayors and other town leaders in the south central town of Gitarama, where the Republic was proclaimed on January 28, 1961, to replace the deposed monarchy. Formal independence from Belgium was then granted on July 1, 1962.

Hundreds of thousands of Tutsi left Rwanda for neighboring lands after 1959. Sporadic raids back into Rwanda by the *inyenzi* fighters led to more brutal “reprisals” by then President Gregoire Kayibanda, as he fought viciously to secure the long oppressed Hutu’s return to power. Kayibanda was formerly a Catholic seminarian, and was successful in securing implicit church backing for his campaign to solidify his goal of total Hutu control.

In time, the displaced Rwandans were expected to dissipate and assimilate in the countries to which they travelled, but over decades, most did not. Indeed Kagame had met up with hundreds of other Rwandans, and eventually he joined the Ugandan army and began secretly organizing thousands of other Rwandans within the army, where he trained them for their eventual move back into Rwanda. (Note: Congo became known as “Zaire” under Mobutu, between 10/17/71 and 5/17/97 when it then became Democratic Republic of the Congo as it remains today.)

After being battle trained, and accustomed to suffering great deprivation in the field, Kagame and his troops had become an army within the Ugandan army. The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) had been born with Kagame’s friend Fred Rwigyema as its commander, and 3,000 Rwandan troops being (secretly) trained within the Ugandan army.

Hutu President Habyarimana was beset by an economic crash in the coffee market and lots of strife within the local population, along with demands for a democratic government. Upon learning of the weakness and strife at home, the RPF decided to make itself known, but Kagame found time to first meet his arranged wife (Jeannette) and marry on 6/10/89. He was then sent by Uganda, with her, to the US Army Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. When it was clear that the RPF invasion was about to begin, however, he settled his affairs and left the US about 10/8/90, while the Ugandan president Museveni was attending a meeting of the UN in New York, along with Rwandan’s President Habyarimana.

Masquerading no more, the RPF, *inkotanyi*, surged across the Ugandan border on 10/1/90, but their commander, Fred Rwigyema, was lost in the very first days of the attack, before Kagame was able to return to Rwanda. Kagame had dropped his pregnant wife off in Belgium, while he was making his way back from the US to Rwanda, via Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. At some point he had been betrayed, and people were actively searching for him, especially at Addis Ababa, but he made it through, into Entebbe Airport in Uganda, and to the Rwanda border crossing by car.

The invasion force by this time was extremely demoralized, having been beaten not so much by the Rwandan army, but by French artillery and helicopter attack forces. The 700 French paratroopers were then joined by 400 elite Belgian soldiers, among others. Kagame finally reached the scene and secretly retreated into the very inhospitable and isolated Virunga Mountain range, very near the home of the mountain gorillas, nearly two miles into the equatorial sky. Reportedly with the acquiescence, if not the direct aid of Ugandan President Museveni, they were allowed to pass back and forth over the Ugandan border. Frigid conditions took a great toll, but gradually with supporters sending food, clothing, and more volunteer recruits, things finally started to straighten out.

The fast growing number of recruits was subjected to rigid discipline, including a code consisting of 11 capital offenses as well as 24 lesser offenses, which subjected violators to corporal punishment in many cases. Every fighting unit had political commissars assigned to it to ensure that all members were fully politicized about the RPF and its causes. The highly effective rebel army of Uganda was always the model of the *inkotanyi*.

After almost four months of intense training, completely out of sight of President Habyarimana, 700 *inkotanyi* conducted their first shocking and highly successful raid on the provincial capital of Ruhengeri on January 22, 1991. The *akazu* Hutu leaders led the growing push to annihilate the rebels and all other Tutsi who had not earlier fled the country. They were sure the *inkotanyi* were bent on once again enslaving the Hutu majority. French President Francois Mitterrand was widely acclaimed in Rwanda for his strong support of the Hutu government.

With major financing from France, too, tiny Rwanda became the third largest arms importer in Africa, as the French desperately sought to maintain the strongest bastion of French influence in Africa.

Whereas almost all of Rwanda’s educated class was French speaking, nearly all of the RPF leaders grew up in Uganda and were English speaking. Never had an African country been brought out of the Francophone to move under Anglo Saxon influence. The Hutu leaders at the time believed that no matter what happened, they would enjoy constant and unquestioning major support from Paris. Mitterrand’s son was reportedly widely known as a close friend and business partner of Habyarimana’s son, Jean-Christophe, in some very questionable enterprises.

The *akazu* continued to broadly propagandize hatred and fear, to stir up anti-Tutsi emotions, even during the brief period when the President looked as though some accommodation of the rebels might have been possible. In the meantime, there was a deepening chasm between the displaced Tutsi returning as the RPF and the Tutsi who had grown up in Rwanda. Kagame was widely viewed as the enemy by “native” Tutsi in many parts of the country. Ugandan President Museveni on the other hand got over his rage at Kagame for his and his troops’ covert actions within his army. He had come to realize that a friendly RPF regime in Rwanda would be good for him.

By July 14, 1992, a short-lived cease-fire agreement was reached between the RPF and the government, after strong insistence from French and Belgian governments. There were some attempts at rearranging the government, but street protests often turned violent, and invariably turned into more reasons to attack the Tutsi. Many Tutsi who had returned from Ethiopia were beaten and then thrown into the Nyabarongo River, as the “best way to send them back to Ethiopia.” The *akazu* by early 1993 were advocating very publicly for a “final solution” of the Tutsi problem, by killing or forcing more than a million to flee. There was a second cease-fire on August 4, 1993, after a major RPF raid on the outskirts of Kigali.

From mid 1993 the *akazu* members financed a major radio station (RTML), to broadcast a steady diet of blood curdling threats against the Tutsi, as Rwanda neared the impending genocide. Other *akazu* organized the importation of hundreds of thousands of axes, knives, scythes, and other “agricultural tools” which would soon be distributed to become the tools of the final solution. Habyarimana’s wife was among the most visible leaders of the *akazu*, organizing death squads, along with others who had directed the first wave of massacres between 1959 and 1963.

French-Canadian Major General Roméo Dallaire was appointed in mid-1993 to supervise a supposed UN peacekeeping mission in Rwanda. Dallaire arrived in Rwanda on August 19, 1993, with just an 18-member survey team. His request for 8,000 UN troops was cut to 4,500, and then at the urging primarily of the US and France, the actual force was cut to 2,548. Madeline Albright suggested further cutting the force to just 500 peacekeepers, and at every point worked to keep the force as small and weak as possible. Paris-educated UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali could see things only through the Francophone lens.

On October 3, 1993, two Black Hawk helicopters were shot down in Somalia, where US troops’ bodies were then dragged through the streets, further reducing US appetite for becoming involved in another east African peacekeeping mission. The UN mission in Rwanda was greatly limited to monitoring observance of the cease-fire arrangement.

Dallaire and his troops, numbering barely more than 100 by November 1, moved from their initial headquarters at Hotel de Mille Collines to Amahoro Stadium. By year-end the force was closer to 500, including many Belgians, but supplies of all sorts were nowhere near sufficient to support their subsistence, even in the country. Other moves in December included the departure of 90 percent of the 1,100 French troops, and 600 *inkotanyi* to the Parliament Building, to protect the half dozen RPF leaders who temporarily assumed positions in the temporary government.

General Dallaire was constantly, and probably continuously, rebuffed by the UN when he tried to get any kind of authorization to act against the forces who he knew were preparing for the great Rwandan genocide. He could get no clearance to take any action at all primarily because France, the US, and Britain aligned against him.

Dallaire had unequivocal evidence of what was coming as early as January 1994, but the controlling powers saw nothing, and in some cases, even hid Dallaire’s information. The spectre of Somalia weighed very heavily, and the western governments were clearly supporting what they saw as the rightful (Hutu) majority. The Clinton administration, Dallaire wrote, was especially wary of becoming involved in another African conflict. The Americans reportedly kept themselves “in willful ignorance” of the huge impending calamity.

Preparing for the final solution

General Dallaire had abundant evidence of the elaborate Hutu plans to simply annihilate the Tutsi, but he could get no additional troops, or even any authority to defend anyone if he and his troops were present. He knew in detail of the death squads and how they would carry out their bloody work. More and more moderate Hutu were brutally killed, often they tried to speak out against the *akazu* leadership, so intent on maintaining its power.

RTLM, the so-called killer radio station, steadily increased the level of its constant threats to terrorize the Tutsi and anyone who would support or aid them. Tutsi were demonized as the “cockroaches” who must be squashed to protect the nation. Newspapers joined with a similar intensifying barrage of hate during February and March, 1994. They predicted on April 3, that the sound of bullets and grenades were “imminent,” and it was too late to escape.

When the UN Security Council met on April 4, the peacekeeping mission in Somalia was in final collapse. In Bosnia, Serbian troops stormed across the UN lines to attack the supposedly safe haven of Gorzade. And reportedly, Dallaire’s frantic communications with Security Council’s chair Boutros-Ghali were purposely kept from Council members. Additionally, the Rwandan ambassador happened to be sitting on the Council that spring, so Habyarimana knew in advance the Council would continue to rebuff Dallaire. The Rwandan ambassador also continued to swear at the UN that all parties in his land were fully committed to the peace process, which had for several years promised a sharing of power (Arusha Accord) that never materialized.

Habyarimana was returning from Dares Salaam following a meeting with the leaders of neighboring Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, and Burundi, all of whom insisted that Rwanda comply with the still never implemented peace accord. His plane, however, was shot down, from the ground, at about 8:20 PM on April 6, 1994.

Probably accomplished by more militant Hutu, rather than Tutsi, the President's murder was *not* the reason for the immediately following genocide, according to Kinzer, but was rather its first act. The killing began in full intensity, all over the country, within an hour after the President died.

Colonel Bagdasora proclaimed a new military government two hours later, and announced that Prime Minister Madame Agatha was no longer qualified to serve. She was later that night given up by the 15 UN soldiers who came to try to protect her, and she too was murdered. Much of April 7 was spent seeking out and killing other Hutu "traitors" all over the country. Rwanda's "descent into Hell" was well underway by April 7.

Later that same day, Dallaire found the brutalized bodies of 10 Belgian troops, among the 15 who had tried to protect Prime Minister Agatha. All 10 had been shot, stabbed, and beaten to death near the hospital. Obviously, they were killed to guarantee that the rest of the Belgian members of the UN force, and soon thereafter all of the remaining UN forces, would be withdrawn if they were not strengthened. Since Dallaire's boss at the UN, Kofi Annan, gave him no hint of support, all Dallaire could do was to try to keep Kagame and the RPF from invading Kigali.

In the meantime, major evacuations of about 4,000 foreign nationals were effected by Belgian, French, and other European forces. They were not much impeded by the militia as they evacuated white people from the sanctuary at Mille Collines Hotel and other places all over the country, because the government militia reasoned there would then be fewer witnesses to the mayhem they were causing, and the killing would be easier. The French did take with them a few dozen Rwandans, including Madame Habyarimana and key members of the *akazu* who were warmly welcomed in France.

Both Washington and the UN in New York stiff-armed Dallaire at every turn, totally ignoring the genocide, and insisting that he remain absolutely "neutral." Kagame and his RPF troops moved south to try to thwart the government forces while a final total of about 450 UN forces, mostly Ghanaian, just watched. The more Kagame advanced, the more quickly the government forces killed "their Tutsi brothers." In the western district of Kibuye alone, Tutsi were reduced from 252,000 to just 8,000.

In a look back, Kagame was criticized by some, including Dallaire, for moving "too slowly" in moving the *inkatonyi* toward Kigali to stop the killing. Kagame, of course, pointed out that with the sanctions imposed on him by the UN to keep weapons out of his hands via the Ugandan border, and the lack of troops as well, and vehicles to move them, he could not have moved any faster. He said in actual troops he was outnumbered four or five to one. Meanwhile the scrupulously neutral Red Cross decried the massacre in the most powerful terms it had ever written.

In April, May, and June, 1994 many thousands of Tutsi and sympathetic Hutu were killed in the mostly Catholic churches all over the country, where they had always found safety during previous attacks. Once everyone was inside, Hutu militia attacked the churches with hand grenades, and then hacked any survivors to death. The Rwandan clergy had always been very intimate with the Habyarimana regime, which strongly supported Archbishop Nsengiyumua. When the rebels reached Kigali, they reportedly executed the archbishop and 13 other priests and bishops they found at the cathedral there. In some cases, UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) troops enhanced the illusion of safety by standing guard outside churches and schools, and then leaving as soon as the government militia arrived.

Much the same situation seemed to exist at the Mille Collines Hotel ("Hotel Rwanda") where UNAMIR forces also stood guard. Tutsi in the area were allowed in, along with hundreds of white foreigners. At the hotel, however, the Tunisian UN guards stayed in place. A very resourceful hotel manager, Paul Rusesabagina, bribed and cajoled many of the militia leaders who actually continued to eat and drink in other parts of the hotel during the entire killing period, and no one inside this refuge died.

Extensive interviews conducted with imprisoned *genocidaires* confirmed that more than anything, the killers were moved *en masse* by constant if not incessant radio broadcasts to "kill the snakes" and "kill the cockroaches," etc. They had suffered no consequences following the 1959 Tutsi murders, so why would things be different now? This is eerily similar to the Nazi logic that if the world hardly noticed the massacre of the Armenian's by the Turks, why would the world bother itself now, during WWII, concerning the murder of five million Jews?

There appears to be no doubt that the whole world knew all about the ongoing killings. According to the Red Cross leaders who were there, "no one can say they didn't know. Everyone knew." This was a gigantic campaign of mass murder, and was denounced as "genocide by the Vatican before the end of April. *Le Nouvelle Observateur* wrote that it was "a systematic extermination of those opposed to the government, which is armed and supported by France."

The willful indifference there most certainly also included President Clinton, whose staff resolutely refused to admit that a genocide was occurring, even after the death toll exceeded 500,000. The closest the Administration came was to agree that there were “acts of genocide.”

France, in the meantime, exhibited paranoid fear that the growing RPF forces were going to again humiliate France in the loss of control of another French-speaking nation as they had in Indochina and Algeria. As late as mid June, France dispatched two 40-ton planeloads of fragmentation grenades, and other weapons, but the RPF was now growing quickly. French efforts calling for world powers to now enforce a ceasefire were described as similar to wanting Hitler to reach a ceasefire with the Jews, in 1943.

By Mid June, several thousand elite French troops arrived in Rwanda with a UN sanction to “protect” some two million Hutu in a western area consisting of about one fifth of the country, called the Turquoise Zone. The first rebel forces entered Kigali on July 4, after the government fled. On July 18 Kagame declared a ceasefire, as there were no more enemy to fight.

The defeated regime was settling in Zaire (Congo). Several top UN commanders including Dallaire left the country in severe mental distress after fully realizing the enormity of the death and carnage. Visitors likewise recalled at the magnitude of the killing and the hundreds of thousands of still unburied Rwandans dominating the landscape of this once beautiful land. More than 1 million Hutu refugees were now crowded into squalid refugee camps. “They quickly became another version of hell.” The Hutu militia came to the camps with all of their weaponry, and in some cases were even transported with it on international refugee flights. In short, the world opened its arms and purses to the *genocidaires* in the squalid camp, whereas it had hardly noticed when the Tutsi were earlier in the same condition. Rwanda itself on the other hand, was not half-empty.

*Meanwhile, Kagame was thwarted at every turn about getting the now much larger UN force in the refugee areas to disarm the Hutu militia, especially by Madeline Albright. Kinzer identifies Albright as the single biggest factor in assuring that no effective UN force controlled the camp, other than the ex FAR and interahamwe commanders.

Revenge killings after the war were common although strongly discouraged by the Kagame forces. Kagame is widely viewed as underestimating their frequency, but admitted that new young recruits whose families had in many, if not most, cases been brutalized, had not yet received adequate training to keep them always under control. As Hutu raids continued into 1995, Kagame forces, unable to detect the attacking Hutu forces themselves, often indiscriminately killed their sympathizers, trying to restore order. The well supported and cross border raids, however, continued destabilizing the new government.

It is important to remember, too, that it seems very difficult to solidly assess blame for any party in this country, which has endured so much for so long, except probably to blame the colonial powers who controlled so much here. Remember, too, that before the Tutsi were treated so badly from 1959 through the 1994 genocide, it was the Tutsi who were in charge, very much lording their colonial power over the Hutu. Tracy Kidder’s book, *STRENGTH IN WHAT REMAINS*, provides excellent accompaniment for this (appropriately) pro Kagame story.

Rwandan prisons, built to house 10,000, had 70,000 inmates by 1996, and ultimately up to 130,000. Sometimes inmates were so crowded in that there was no place for them to sit down, never mind lie down. Hence another very solid reason why reconciliation was the only sustainable policy.

In 1995, the UN established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, in Tanzania, and very ineffectively pursued and prosecuted leaders of the genocide. The tribunal spent more than \$1 billion in doing very very little. Prisoners were kept in luxury type confinement while their trials dragged on and on, much as they tend to in the US. These UN trials were viewed with great disdain in Rwanda.

Meanwhile, it became more and more apparent to Kagame that his tiny nation would have to attack 96 times larger nation Zaire (Congo) and the despot dictator there, Mobutu Sese Seho. Kagame reasoned that if he didn’t overturn Mobutu there would be no end to the number of times Mobutu would permit attacks against Rwanda from Zaire. Fortunately, Kagame was able to ally with anti Mobutu forces there, at a time when France, Belgium, and the US were all (only coincidentally) cancelling their longtime support for the dictator.

During the fall of 1996 more than a million Hutu returned from the refuge camps in Zaire as well as from others in Tanzania as Kagame and his army invaded the d p camps and pushed the refugees toward home. Eventually 2.5 million Hutu were repatriated.

Kagame’s forces indeed travelled more than a thousand miles “as a hardy crow would fly” to break through on the other side of the dense jungle to take Kinshasa and quickly depose Mobutu. Zairian defenses crumbled and Mobutu was spirited off by French friends to asylum in Morocco. Kagame’s rebel allies in Zambia proclaimed their new regime on May 1, 1999 when rebel leader Kabila became president.

Rwanda's Habyarimana's missing body, the *inkotonya* discovered, had been enshrined in a private museum in Kinshasa, but was cremated by Mobutu before he departed to Morocco. Following the coup, Kabila renamed Zaire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In a remarkably short time, early 1997, however, Kabila switched allegiances and once again welcomed ex FAR militia to stage its attacks once more from DRC into Rwanda. The Hutu attackers were very active in night raids against Tutsi families and gatherings and Tutsi continued to die in large numbers. By 1998 Kabila's support of such attacks across the border had reached a level that Kagame invaded DRC (Congo) for a second time.

Twenty-two convicted *genocidaires* were shot in public stadiums causing many others to confess and be somewhat absolved, before Rwanda then abolished its death penalty. Genocidaires and other apologists for Kagame denounced the severe rule of Kagame, but eventually actively arranged to get noncooperative Hutu out of office and get reasonable leaders, and then financial backers in.

*The northern areas were the strongest Hutu area in Rwanda, and there Kagame faced his toughest challenge in securing a buy-in for stable government and reconciliation. To build trust with the people there, he appointed Boniface Rucagu as governor, rather than try him as a *genocidaire*. This was done against the advice of many Kagame supporters, but it worked, and with Rucagu campaigning vigorously for reconciliation all over his area, the government continued to focus on the future not the past. Building security was absolutely the very first priority of the new government, and by 1999 the insurgency was mostly wound down.

After the assassination of President Kabila in the Congo (DRC) on January 16, 2001 Rwanda signed a peace accord with Kabila's successor son, Joseph, who pledged to disarm the remaining Hutu troops in Congo, which he mostly did. France continued to be roundly criticized throughout Africa for its role in arming and encouraging these Hutu fighters 'til the very end.

In 1996, The Washington Post described Vice President Kagame as "the effective, if unelected, leader of the Rwandan government." Early on, when Kagame was still fighting the insurgents this role worked well. As time went on, however, it was clear that President Bizimungu had misplaced his priorities, such as when Rwanda was about to buy a fleet of Mercedes Benzes for many of its government ministers. After Bizimungu resigned, Parliament voted to appoint Vice President Kagame, who was installed as president on April 22, 2000.

With the façade of multi-ethnicity gone, and former president Bizimungu arrested for threatening a Hutu uprising, Kagame was forced clearly into the role of an embattled military dictator. He established an extensive series of goals and priorities and established a new formal program "Vision 2010." Its principal goal was to make Rwanda the trade and commercial hub of East and Central Africa, especially since the country itself had so little in natural resources. By 2002 or 2003 Rwanda had been brought from chaos and devastation to peace and stability.

Rwandans are Serious

Sometimes referred to as the "Prussia of Africa," Rwanda insists on enormous self-discipline from every citizen. Everything must work well, and on time. Streets must be clean and regulations followed. Shops must display tax certificates, and there is extraordinarily little graft on corruption. Houses built without permits are summarily bulldozed. Vagrants are arrested when they become "visible" in Kigali. Justice is swift and highly authoritarian. There is little interest in doing what the European powers suggest, about much of anything. "These were the people who abandoned us." Using a public post for personal gain is one of the worst offenses. Government is at all times rigorous and absolutist.

Some elements of the very visible good order in Kigali are the result of homeless people, begging children, and poverty simply not being allowed there. There is certainly still great poverty in this country where average annual income in 2010 still listed as less than \$400. Paul Rusesabagina of Hotel Rwanda (Hotel Mille Collines) fame, has become an active opponent of the Kagame government, and is roundly criticized in return by Kagame.

Population Control

As the most densely populated country in Africa, one of Rwanda's biggest problems today is its runaway overpopulation. In 2007, the country established a coercive birth control program limiting all families now to a maximum of three children per family. Rwanda aspires to be like Thailand, which recently achieved zero population growth within about one generation, doubling its average annual income in the process.

Since 2007, everyone of childbearing age who enters a hospital for any reason is now counseled in birth control policies and methods, and is given contraceptive devices as applicable. With President Kagame personally promoting the program, it is effectively impossible for anyone else to oppose it. Several prominent American physicians, along with aid workers and American money are providing much counseling and support.

While Rwandan's everywhere continue to suffer from the unbearable burdens of the genocide, Kagame says that "the recovery overall is going better than we expected it could, at the time of the liberation." If we don't get over it, "we suffer twice. You suffer in the

present and you continue to suffer forever.” Yes, he is a strong dictator, but he certainly is an enlightened one, and so far, it has clearly appeared that the only personal gain he seeks is the recovery of his country.

*There are still almost no mental health professionals anywhere in Rwanda in 2012, certainly not native ones, and nothing is offered in terms of familiar anti depressant drugs. Victims only recently have been assigned a name for their genocide related mental issues. They are said to be *ikokamuka*, or “without lungs” or “breathless with fear.”

Trials of the killers

Tens of thousands of *genocidaires* were arrested in the days following the liberation, and many of them were still awaiting trial in June 2008, even as this book was published. On days when trials are held, all stores and businesses in the area are required to shut down. Prisoners are judged, typically, by boards of nine judges selected by their neighbors, trained for a few weeks by the government, and then pronounced to be *inyagamugay*, or persons of integrity. These local tribunals, called *gacaca*, handle lower level killers, while organizers or leaders who are charged with more serious crimes appear before regular courts or before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

The concept is to have the whole population involved, and seen as buying into the process of justice and reconciliation. *Gacaco* courts convene, usually very near where the crimes actually happened, and victims and witnesses are strongly encouraged to speak. Defendants who make full and sincere confessions are most often released, and they are encouraged to rejoin their communities. Lawyers have little role here, and there is strong pressure for the accused to self incriminate.

Since the first trials in 2002, the government had created more than 12,000 local tribunals by 2008. In one six-month period in 2006, 50,000 were judged. Two thirds of this group were then freed, either because of lack of evidence or because they had already served “long enough.”

The *gacaca* tribunal process is widely perceived as effective, but is criticized for dealing only with genocide crimes, at least until 2008, but *not* dealing with RPF liberators for the revenge crimes for which many of them have been charged.

Many foreign dignitaries visited Rwanda soon after the genocide, but most have been perceived as very averse to accepting much blame for their participation by supporting the Hutu or by their willful indifference to the mass murders. Kofi Annan, was chief of the UN’s Department of Peacekeeping Operations, at the time of the UN’s greatest failure. His platitudes and total lack of a sincere apology before all of Rwanda’s leaders reportedly left them “stunned” and “speechless.” At a reception following the speech then President Bizimungu and Vice President Kigame boycotted their own reception for Annan in protest.

Madeline Albright said in a speech to the Organization for African Unity, only that the world “should have been more active.” In 1997 President Clinton in a three-hour stopover in Kigali made some conciliatory remarks about failing to recognize the depth of situation. Prime Minister John Major has never apologized, and John-Christophe Mitterrand has angrily rejected even the notion that he might ever have apologized for his strong support, at so many junctures. His successor, Jacques Chirve, has also failed to apologize although he did apologize for Frances’ significant role in the Holocaust. When Rwanda announced a plan to formally investigate France’s role in the Rwandan genocide, France reacted by charging, in October 2006, that Kagame and nine other RPF *inkatanyi* had assassinated President Habyarimana.

Since then, Kagame has intensified his efforts to weaken French influence throughout Africa. Along with changing the language of government from French to English, he even applied for membership in the British Commonwealth, after breaking diplomatic relations with France. He also closed down things like the French Cultural Center and the French School in Kigali, which he felt were used by the French embassy to create problems for Rwanda.

Through 2007, the only foreign presence in Rwanda to accept responsibility for his or her role in the genocide was General Dallaire, and he was so despondent about that role, he twice attempted suicide. He has rejected as “outright lies” – Bill Clinton’s claims that he did not realize what was happening in Rwanda.

Famous for more than one thing

Although virtually the whole world knows Rwanda because of the genocide, untold millions know it also because it is home to most of the 1,200 mountain gorillas left on earth. Thanks to Dian Fossey’s best selling “GORILLAS IN THE MIST,” and its movie in which Sigorney Weaver played Fossey, the gorillas are very carefully protected and are a significant source of tourist dollars for this small country, far beyond the \$500 per day/per person visitor permit fee (as of 2012), which is supposedly all used to further the gorilla’s well being. Fossey was killed there in 1985, probably by poachers. Fossey’s Karisoke Research Center closed during the RPF stay there because of constant bombardments.

When Kagame brought his troops into Rwanda, they soon ensconced themselves in the Virunga Mountains where DRC and Uganda meet along the northern border of Rwanda. Kagame says the gorillas were never a factor for him, but today he and both abutting

nations seem to fully recognize the need to protect and conserve the gorillas. It is a little hard to imagine that irrespective of Kagame's statement that his troops "never saw the gorillas," that some portion of the gorilla population probably helped to feed his several thousand very hungry troops during the 18 months they were camped out there in 1993 and early 1994.

See the book _____ for much more very valuable and well-presented info on the mountain gorillas, which J&B visited in January 2012, along with Skip and Alice Fuller, Christy Regan, Jill Boland, James Smith, and Freddy Umutanguko.

The gorillas inhabit the extinct volcanic hills, at elevations up to 14,000 feet. Hiking in the very thin mountain air is sometimes quite slow and labored, for the mostly not very well acclimated tourists who sometimes travel very steep access paths to meet one of the dozen or so gorilla families, which are themselves acclimated enough to be safe with visitors. Up to seven groups of eight tourists' each may secure permits each day. [One of the Winchester group's trips was quite rigorous, but on the second day we found our (pre-scouted) group in a bamboo forest quite low on the mountain.]

Other major tourist activities certainly include the Kigali Genocide Memorial, Akagera National Park, the National Museum in Butare (south of Kigali), and perhaps the border crossing from Uganda where RPF fighters crossed from Uganda into Kagetomba. Back in Kigali, see the Parliament Building and Amakoro Station (where UNAMIR was based). The Muslim section of Kigali, called Nyamirombo, is a very quaint old part of town where many foreigners live, and where many Rwandan social conventions do not apply. For the most part Nyamirombo was one of the few places in Rwanda where people mostly did not kill their neighbors in 1994.

Another tourist attraction, after a little more development takes place, will likely be the area, which most people now believe is the source of the Nile River (Source du Nil). The Rukarera River which flows into Lake Victoria is said to be the Niles' most distant tributary.

US Support is very high

The most active and influential clergyman in Rwanda, according to Kinzer, is Anglican Bishop John Rucyakona, a Tutsi, who attended an Episcopal seminary in Pittsburgh and traveled widely in the US. He rallied great support for Rwanda in the US, particularly among the more dissident Episcopalians who were supposedly in rebellion against the Anglican hierarchy. The bishop is among several who have since "adopted" dissident American parishes which need to be overseen by a bishop from somewhere, if they maintain their opposition to other much more liberal Episcopalian members in the US.

One of Damson's most successful projects has been a Christian boarding school called Sonrise School, which in 2005 reportedly had the highest test scores in the country four years after its founding. Actually, it sounds much like Agahozo Shalom Youth Village, which opened in January 2009, and in December 2012 is about to graduate its first class of seniors. Originally built for orphans, like ASYV, Sonrise now caters to children of many wealthy Rwandans. Bishop John might be obviously someone very worth meeting when an opportunity presents itself.

Many evangelical Christian leaders are also very active in channeling support to Rwanda, though not through "Bishop John." Many black Americans are sending support, too, reportedly including Sidney Poitier, and South Africa's Nelson Mandela.

An entrepreneur named Gerald Sina (Born in 1963) has been enormously successful processing fruit products along the main road from Kigali to Lak Kivu, where he actually lit up two miles of the highway to support his many interests along the road. Likely now, he is one of East Africa's largest producers of jams, jellies, preserves, and banana beer. Sina teaches farmers to grow the products he processes (at no cost to them), and then encourages the farmers to bring their production to him, traveling mostly by bicycle.

General Dallaire has apparently written a harrowing memoir about his experiences in Rwanda, "Shake hands with the Devil: The failure of Humanity in Rwanda." Human Rights Watch is one international organization particularly detested by Rwandan leaders. Amnesty International similarly harshly criticizes the Kagame regime without ever trying to put things in any sort of perspective.

Kagame is limited to two seven-year terms as president, to end early in 2017. Many people feel that initiating a full democracy that soon could be devastating for Rwanda, but as of early 2013 a successor leader is not yet apparent.

WSC, 8/8/12

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