

The White Fathers' Mission in Rwanda

1900-1932

by

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ABSTRACT

The White Fathers in Rwanda confronted two acute problems: a feudal stratification of society in which the ruling class was anti-Christian, and regional variation within the State such that uniform mission policy was inappropriate. Their initial recruitment was thanks to the strong-arm methods of Ganda catechists and limited to the poorest Rwandans seeking powerful patrons.

German commitment to the Tutsi nobility, as agents for the administration of an understaffed colony, reinforced Monsignor Hirth's desire to convert the chiefs. The Tutsi first ostracised Christians then tried from 1909 to control them by clientship relations. Tensions arose between Fathers advocating an apostolate to the ruling class and those favouring regionalism and fuller support for the peasant Church. Mission Superiors became a law-unto-themselves causing disputes with Administration, and indirectly resulting in Father Classe's recall to Europe. When he returned in 1922 as Vicar-Apostolic, the Belgian regime, after some indecision, wanted to rule through a Tutsi elite.

Educational qualifications for chieftancy increased the power of the Catholic Mission which alone could provide teachers and schools; the nobility split into traditionalists and those seeking further accommodation with the Europeans. The rush into Church schools heralded a wave of Tutsi

conversions and the removal of the king, Musinga, as the traditionalists' figurehead. Rudahigwa, the catechumen king, spelt the end of the Hutu Church and a new era of 'court catholicism' in which a Tutsi State Church was born.

From 1900-1932 the White Fathers' Mission was assimilated by Rwandan society and shaped by the conflicting demands of ruling class and peasantry. The Rwandan Church that came into being was thus marked by clientship and social conflict as well as the express policies of the Society of White Fathers.

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The encounter between Roman Catholicism and Rwandan society apparently provides an ideal topic for a 'culture contact' study. But the model of one culture meeting another to generate within it far-reaching changes seems inappropriate in the case of Rwanda; it neglects both the homeostasis and dialectical development of Rwandan society. There were only a handful of colonial officers and some dispersed missionaries set in a large State and ranged against an ancient monarchy. Indeed, the policy of Indirect Rule in Africa has been a tacit admission that in some circumstances such a model is both incongruous and impracticable.

'The Hamites', whom colonial administrators took to be superior races, were granted, at least in theory, a right to a history and a future almost as noble as their European cousins. In the tinkering, post-military phase of Indirect Rule, it was commonsense to assess the 'direction' and internal dynamics of pre-colonial 'Hamitic' States, even to worry about the sources of conflict and dysfunction within them. So the historian who tries to set missionary activity into the framework of the internal evolution of an African State, whether Fulani or Tutsi, is not doing anything essentially new. He is

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1. In the case of Northern Nigeria, the combination of Islam and a Fulani 'Hamitic' aristocracy was an important

perhaps more aware of the pitfalls; firstly the ever-present danger of a facile evolutionary and linear reduction of a complex history: secondly the near impossibility of separating any structure or direction from the historiographical premises behind an orally transmitted history.

Rwanda's oral traditions provide a case study of the subservience of history to political ends.<sup>1</sup> Rene Lemarchand makes the point concisely:

All cultures are myth sustained in that they derive their legitimacy from a body of values and beliefs which tend to embellish or falsify historical truth. But some more so than others.<sup>2</sup>

If the writer is forced to discuss first the historiography of Rwanda, it is not just that the country's oral and written history provides a pre-eminent example of the effects of ideological restraints, but also that a particular account of the past, shaped in the Tutsi court and promulgated by the Catholic clergy, influenced the political

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factor in Residents' refusal to allow any culture contact; every attempt was made to exclude the Church Missionary Society from major muslim towns. See Church Missionary Society Archives G3/ A9/ 01- 04, Hausaland 1899 - 1914 Series, London.

1. Vansina J. Oral Tradition London 1965, 164-171

2. Lemarchand R. Rwanda and Burundi London 1970, 31



consciousness of both Rwandans and Europeans. The racist pre-conceptions of the Hamitic hypothesis found spurious confirmation in the apparently ethnic basis of the divisions in Rwanda's stratified society. Colonial and related mission policies guaranteed that erroneous prophecies, based on racist premises, would be fulfilled. The writing down of Rwandan history, part of the cultural work undertaken by the Catholic Church, has to be considered alongside its socio-economic and educational activities. Rwandan Catholic history contributed to a view of society in which pluralism gave way to dualism, the stark confrontation between Hutu and Tutsi.

Father Pagès' Un Royaume Hamite au Centre de l'Afrique,<sup>1</sup> first published in 1933 and the earliest of the Catholic 'Hamitic' histories, was far from the propaganda of a court historian. The important point for Pagès was that the 'Hamites' had once been Christian; the White Fathers were taking up where Coptic Christianity had left off, on the borders of Ethiopia.<sup>2</sup> While drawing heavily on Tutsi informants and court traditions, ibitekerezo, he was too sophisticated to be unaware of bias. Descartes appears most relevantly in the introduction.

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1. Pagès Rev. Père A. Un Royaume Hamite au Centre de l'Afrique Institut Royal Colonial Belge, Section des Sciences Morales et Politiques, Mémoires in 8° Brussels 1933. Henceforth publications in this series will be referred to as I.R.C.B. Brussels.

2. ibid. 8

S'ils ne changent ni n'augment<sup>ent</sup> les choses pour les rendre plus dignes d'être lues, les historiens en omettent presque toujours les plus basses et les moins illustres, d'où vient que le reste ne paraît pas ce qu'il est.<sup>1</sup>

The second mainstay of Catholic orthodoxy in the colonial period was an equally fascinating book by Chanoine de Iacger, Le Ruanda.<sup>2</sup> He elaborates on Pagès' work to present Rwanda's pre-colonial history as the type of an African Old Testament. A romantic assessment of European feudal society is projected into the Hamitic past, and, since the book was stimulated by a massive influx of Tutsi into the Church, he is naturally disinclined to subject colonial Catholic society to deep criticism. Yet the historical superiority of the Tutsi and their divine right to rule is offset by panegyrics to the Hutu peasant.

C'est le cultivateur qui s'empare de la terre, la transforme, lui imprime un cachet d'humanité, crée le paysage historique... Au Ruanda ce conquérant, ce transformateur ce fût le paysan bantou, le muhutu. C'est lui qui a fait reculer la forêt, a tracé le premier réseau de sentes durables, a parsemé

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1. ibid. 4 This may be found in Descartes R. Discours de la Méthode Tome I Paris 1898, 14

2. De Iacger L. Chanoine Le Ruanda Kabgayi 1939. The copy used contained an appendix written by Rev. Père Dominic Nothomb which took the history up to 1959 on an extended pagination of the 1939 edition.



la campagne d'enclos verts et de foyers; lui, qui, se multipliant comme les étoiles du ciel et le sable des mers, a rempli de sa présence les soixante mille kilomètres carrés où se parle sa langue.<sup>1</sup>

Because its aim is to describe the birth of a Christian kingdom, the book supports the court version, yet de Lacger's biblicism and mediaevalism protect him from the racist excesses of Belgian writers and push him almost to a class analysis of Rwandan society.

The Rwandan court found its first conscious and talented propagandist when Abbé Alexis Kagame began writing in 1938. Coming from a family of abiru, court historians, he had unique access to the royal esoteric codes. In his work the cultural riches of the court are presented from the viewpoint of a Tutsi nationalist historian.<sup>2</sup> If Pagès is obeying the directives of his Society and dipping into local culture, and de Lacger writing the edifying story of the first Christian State after Ethiopia, Kagame is skilfully setting out the cultural and historical justification for the future independence of Church and State under Tutsi control.

To quote Vansina's harsh verdict, these three clerics:

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1. *ibid.* 32

2. *Répertoire Bibliographique de Monsieur l'Abbé Alexis Kagame: 1938 - 1966* MS cyclostyled, University of Butare, Butare, Rwanda.

produced 'un déformation systématique' of Rwanda's history.<sup>1</sup> On the authority of Kagame, the Tutsi Nyiginya dynasty was given a spurious longevity and continuity. By using an Île-de-France model of the nuclear Rwandan State, ( see Map One), projecting the clientship relationship of ubuhake into the past, and ignoring the important question of the ancient clan system, Rwanda's history was presented as a progressive domination of other Tutsi states and minor Hutu kingdoms through conquest and the institution of ubuhake. The direction of this process was expansion, consolidation by clientship and centralisation of power in the person of the Nyiginya mwami, ( pl. abami).<sup>3</sup> Like the portrayal of Africans in the old colonial histories, the Hutus' role in this saga was that of passive recipients of more-or-less good Tutsi government. Obviously a gross oversimplification, this was essentially the story gleaned by missionaries and Residents from the Catholic-court orthodoxy.

Vansina's seminal essay, L'Évolution du royaume rwanda des origines à 1900,<sup>2</sup> researched before 1961 in a period of mounting political consciousness amongst educated Hutu, went

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1. Vansina J. L'Évolution du royaume rwanda des origines à 1900 Académie Royal des Sciences d'Outre-Mer, Mémoires in 8<sup>o</sup>, Vol. 26, Brussels 1962, 9. Henceforth abbreviated to A.R.S.O.M.

2. ibid.



a long way towards a demythologisation of 'Hamitic' history. He demonstrated convincingly the devices used in traditions to disguise defeats and foreign conquests which overthrew dynasties. By laying bare the stereotypes and disposing off many early abami as mythical, he reduced Kagame's chronology by some four hundred years and lent weight to the hypothesis that the supposedly Nyiginya hero king, Ruganzu Ndori, was a usurper from Karagwe. But he did not go far enough. D'Hertefelt was able to accuse him justifiably of 'pan-tuutsisme'<sup>1</sup> in his uncritical acceptance of 'Tutsi' clans whose class distribution, d'Hertefelt demonstrated, indicates a Hutu origin.<sup>2</sup>

D'Hertefelt was the first author to address himself to the problem of the multi-class character of Rwandan clans. Using numerical data from election returns, he put the social structure of the pre-colonial State in a new perspective. His analysis of class distribution demonstrated that marriage between Hutu and Tutsi was not the rarity that had formerly been supposed; Hutu became ennobled while Tutsi slipped into the agricultural stratum of society through poverty or misfortune. In contrast to Maquet's picture of a closed caste system, in which

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1. D'Hertefelt M. Les Clans du Rwanda Ancien éléments d'ethnosociologie et d'ethnohistoire Annales Serie in 8° Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, Tervuren, Vol. 70 1971, 45. Henceforth abbreviated to M.R.A.C.
  2. *ibid.* 21 - 47. As a heuristic device, the Hutu-Tutsi distinction has no value at this time of course.

impoverished Tutsi were supported by their peers,<sup>1</sup> d'Hertefeldt,<sup>2</sup> like de Iacger,<sup>3</sup> emphasised the importance of social mobility and rejected Maquet's alleged 'récupération fonctionnelle'.<sup>3</sup> The Tutsi-Hutu distinction seems only to have taken on overriding importance at the end of the nineteenth century with increasing stratification of society and colonial rule; at least it is useful as an observer's construct for understanding society at this time.

Thus the use of the term 'caste' is inappropriate in the light of d'Hertefeldt's research and the term 'class' will be used in its place. That this distinction between a cattle-owning aristocracy and a subject peasantry came finally to be understood and lived as one of ethnic origin is typical of situations of class conflict in which language, religion or physical attributes provide a shorthand for identifying groups whose true natures require an objective view of the total society. This is not to say, though, that the Rwandan revolution of 1959-1961

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1. Maquet J.J. Le système des relations sociales dans le Rwanda ancien M.R.A.C. Vol. 1, 1954, 162 - 164

2. De Iacger Ruanda 60 - 61. For an example of impoverished Tutsi slipping into the Hutu class, see Rapports annuels des missionnaires de Notre Dame d'Afrique 1906-7, 158. Henceforth abbreviated to Rapports annuels.

3. D'Hertefeldt: Les Clans 62. A similar stress on social mobility is found in Holy L. 'Social Stratification in Rwanda' in Social Stratification in Tribal Africa ed. Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, Prague 1968, 90



was a class struggle rather than a competition between two elites, and little merit can be claimed for the term 'class' other than convenience.<sup>1</sup>

Ontogeny does not recapitulate phylogeny nor can the Rwandan hierarchy of Tutsi, Hutu and Twa be neatly dismantled into three historical stages. Any such escape from the ethnographic present, or the ethnographic 1930s, is illusory. The Hutu certainly owned cattle before the arrival of the Tutsi,<sup>2</sup> so the hunter-gatherer, agriculturalist and pastoralist modes of life offer no evolutionary sequence.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, since much of Rwanda was once forested, its earliest inhabitants must have relied heavily on hunting and gathering, supplemented perhaps by a few crops planted in clearings and along the edge of swamps. Rwanda's agriculturalists are known to have made iron hoes and 'roulette' decorated pottery, planted sorghum and made inroads on the primeval forest.<sup>4</sup>

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1. For a discussion of the weakness of a class analysis in the Rwandan conflict see Lemarchand Rwanda and Burundi 3 - 9. For a purely racial analysis of the conflict, marred by its essentially static approach see Kuper L. 'Race structure in the social consciousness' Civilisations Vol. 20 1970, 88 - 103

2. Rennie J.K. 'The precolonial kingdom of Rwanda: a reinterpretation' Transafrican Journal of History Vol. 2 No. 2 1972, 15

3. Hiernaux J. 'Note sur une ancienne population du Ruanda-Urundi: les Renge' Zaire April 1956, 351-360, suggests that hunter-gatherer Twa displaced Renge

The smallest Hutu social unit is, today, the minor patrilineage, inzu, of up to six generations in depth; in the north the major patrilineage, umuryango, is functionally a more important grouping. Hutu lineages together make up a clan, ubgoko, which may be divided into sub-clans, ischanga. Land is held communally by the head of an inzu and his descendants, although only the lineage head has the right to grant vacant cleared land; uncultivated land could be allocated to sons and strangers. It seems likely that this form of weak lineage and clan leadership is ancient and perhaps typical of the pre-Tutsi period, though this is mere conjecture.

As long as there remained forest to be cleared population increase could be accommodated and new arrivals settled. During the colonial period in Bugoyi, usufruct rights over a piece of land might be given by lineage heads for a year, kwatisha, in exchange for hoes and part of the pea harvest. Rights for an indefinite period, gufaha, required the presentation of a goat and beer at each subsequent harvest. True patron-client relationships grew up in the system of ubukonde in which land was alienated and marked out by limiting trees or a ditch. The client was allowed two years in which to cultivate the land and would send the occasional calabash of beer to the patron; after this period the client had to provide two days labour:

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agriculturalists.

in the sowing season, October and November, and during the May sorghum harvest. Often the umukonde formed a blood pact with the client or a marriage alliance with his inzu.<sup>1</sup> Each inzu held an inalienable plot handed on from father to sons; on leaving the region an inzu returned the plot to the clan but had the right to reclaim it.<sup>2</sup> This type of land ownership was typical of the rich volcanic plain of the north west, ( see Map Three), and extended into Uganda.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1930s when the Belgians turned an anthropological eye on Rwanda, they found a wide range of socio-economic relationships in Hutu society, none of which co-incided with the Western concept of contract. Relationships within the patrilineage involved the provision of land and labour and were characterised by mutual help and protection. Relationships across lineage lines were recorded by the exchange of land, women, animals or hoes, and implied a degree of subordination. Vendettas could be ended by the provision of a woman to give birth to a substitute for the dead member of the inzu,

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1. Pagès A. 'Notes sur le régime des biens dans la Province du Bugoyi' Congo (Revue générale de la Colonie Belge) 1938, 8-9

2. Classe to Mortehan 3 May 1928 Correspondence Officielle White Fathers' Archives, Archbishop's House, Kigali, Rwanda. Henceforth abbreviated to C.O.

3. c.f. Edel M.M. The Chiga of Western Uganda Oxford 1957, 93 - 104



and the payment of eight cows or goats.<sup>1</sup>

Lineage religion was centred on the veneration and appeasement of ancestors whose invisible presence was felt to be important for the well-being of the inzu. Deceased lineage members were offered symbolic sacrifices of small pieces of food, and sometimes 'married' to young girls who attended their spirit-houses. The ancestral spirits, abazimu, were generally thought to be malevolent in their activity and personal misfortunes were attributed to them after divination by an umupfumu.<sup>2</sup> The lineage head was in charge of the spiritual well-being of the inzu with the same communal responsibility as he exercised over the conceptually related land.

The link between the local umuryango and the scattered widespread clan was of a purely ritual kind, a common totem and annual sacrifice to an eponymous ancestor at the Erythrina or sycamore tree. Representatives of the imiryango provided food and beer which were offered with prayers by the clan head. The Singa of Bugoyi sent three cows for clan ceremonies in Mulera, one of which was sacrificed while the other two passed into the herd of the clan head. Strangers claiming clan membership were asked to pray at the Erythrina tree to test their allegiance to the clan ancestors.

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1. De Iacger Ruanda 76

2. Pauwels Rev. Père M. Imana et le Culte des Mânes au Ruanda A.R.S.O.M. Vol. 17 1958, gives details.



Amongst the Shobyos of Bugoyi, the head of the sub-clan was considered to be filled with a spirit of the eponymous ancestor; clad in a civet head-dress he blew the spirit into an antelope horn. The assembled elders followed suit. The horn then represented the permanent presence of the ancestor for the sub-clan and was used to cure the sick and impart spiritual power to those about to go into battle. Several of the northern Hutu clans appear to have kept such ritual objects as blocks of hyaline quartz and ivory horns as clan fetishes.<sup>1</sup> An essential element in such supra-lineage religion was the provision of powerful spiritual protection to clan members. This type of organisation surviving in the north-west, in which the head of the umuryango was the sole effective political agent, elected and assisted by elders, was probably an exception in Central Rwanda after the arrival of the Tutsi.

It seems likely that lineages from the Singa, Sindi, Zigaba, Gesera, Banda, Cyaba and Ungura clans, through a combination of land ownership and ritual expertise, managed to impose themselves on settlers from diverse clans to form small priest-led kingdoms.<sup>2</sup> The kingdoms that survived!

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1. De Iacger Ruanda 79 - 80

2. Such a model of 'State' formation is suggested in Horton R. 'Stateless societies in the history of West Africa' in History of West Africa Vol. I ed. Ajayi J.F.A. & Crowder M. London 1971, 114-115

into the twentieth century relied on the belief in the religious powers of the Hutu priest-king, called umwami in the south-west and umuhinza elsewhere. Such kingdoms were certainly privileged remnants, isolated by forest and unsuitable for cattle-grazing, of a more extensive and ancient type of organisation.<sup>1</sup>

The umuhinza of Busozo in south-west Rwanda ( see Map Five) lived in complete seclusion until a male heir reached seven years of age. He wore only barkcloth and always conferred with his elders from behind a partition. All food given him had to be carefully washed, covered by banana leaves, and only tasted by pre-pubertal children. No person with sores or deformities was allowed to approach the royal enclosure and the king himself was not permitted to cross a nearby river. He ruled in conjunction with a Queen-Mother, herself constantly attended by two applauding women; all visitors left her presence bent double with hands touching the ground. A future umuhinza was believed to be born clasping a calabash of milk in one hand and seeds in the other; after the age of seven he had to be secluded in the royal enclosure.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Rennie The precolonial kingdom 18 - 25.

2. The most detailed description of Hutu kingship is contained in a rambling article by Pauwels M. 'Le Bushiru et son Muhinza ou roitelet Hutu' Annali Lateranensi Vol. 31, 1967, 205 - 322. The primary source is the Mibirisi Mission Diary, White Fathers' Archives, Rome. Henceforth abbreviated to WEAR.



An umuhinza, like heads of imiryango, could grant land cleared from the forest in exchange for a sickle. People who alienated land, in exchange for two or three hoes or a goat per hectare, paid one hoe to the umuhinza. Delimitation of cleared land required the presence of the local Twa chief who received a goat for the right to 'open up the forest', urwagururo. All land-owners sent the first fruits of the harvest to the umuhinza for the first-fruit ceremonies.<sup>1</sup> Thus although the prior rights of the forest hunting Twa were acknowledged, once the land was planted, it fell under the jurisdiction of the umuhinza. Land was not reified property, rather different groups claimed spiritual jurisdiction over different aspects of its creative potential. The spiritual authority of the umuhinza hinged on the belief that he could control rainfall and crop pests; he was mwami w'imvura.<sup>2</sup> Ndagano, the priest-king of Bukunzi, for example, was said to sometimes live in the clouds.<sup>2</sup>

The divinised persons of the Hutu kings performed a similar functional role to that of eponymous ancestors; they were symbols of unity and watched over the part of life that fell outside the narrow confines of the inzu. The land of the inzu was linked to lineage spirits while the umuhinza presided over the destiny of the whole kingdom.

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1. Pauwels: Le Bushiru 310 - 312.

2. Mibirisi Diary 14 April 1904

The aseity and structural position of the Hutu king made it conceptually necessary to believe that his spirit passed through a number of transformations; it did not immediately become an umuzimu at death. The body was smoked and dried and the spirit thought to pass first into a worm and then into a leopard.<sup>1</sup>

Oral tradition indicates that during the reign of the Rwandan mwami Kigeri I Mukobanya in the early sixteenth century Nduga was such a kingdom led by a Banda clan territorial cult medium.<sup>2</sup> Formation of politico-religious units above the clan level may have been accelerated by interaction between Hutu and newly arrived Tutsi clans, cultural and economic interchange, or defence needs, throwing up new leaders. Whatever, there is no reason to posit the 'diffusion' of divine kingship along lines of Tutsi immigration from a source outside Rwanda.

The dating of the Tutsi's arrival is largely conjecture; the thirteenth century from south-west Ethiopia as a dispersal point have been suggested, and their language

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1. The Tutsi mwami was believed to undergo comparable transformations. For similar beliefs amongst the neighbouring Havu, see Verdonck Rev. Père 'Décès du Mwami Rushombo; Intronisation du Mwami Bahole' Congo I 1928, 294 - 308
  2. Delmas; Rev. Père L. Généalogies de la noblesse du Ruanda; Kabgayi 1950, 183; Pages; Un Royaume 543 - 546.  
Twaddle M. 'The Genesis of Interlacustrine Kingship' 24 October 1973, seminar paper at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, dates Mukobanya as fifteenth century.



may have been Cushitic.<sup>1</sup> More convincing is de Heusch's study of the Cwezi cycle of myths which suggests an immigration route through Karagwe and Uzinza via Gisaka.<sup>2</sup> The cattle-herding Tutsi would have settled along the valleys of south-east Rwanda where they perhaps traded milk, skins and meat for local grains. Clans which today have over 30% Tutsi membership and so may be assumed to have formed part of the original migrations are the Kono, Ha, Shinga, Nyakarama, Sita, Shambo, Tsoke, Nyiginya and Ongera.<sup>3</sup> However, the multi-class character of Rwandan clans make such projections tentative.

Vansina has identified Ndahiro Ruyange in the Rwandan king-list as the first non-mythical figure of the Nyiginya dynasty.<sup>4</sup> Thus, probably for reasons of defence, Tutsi lineages around Lake Mohasi in Buganza had developed a

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1. This appears to be the opinion of Prof. A. Coupez of the Institut National de Recherches Scientifiques at Butare, see Des Forges A. Defeat is the only bad news: Rwanda under Musiinga 1896 - 1931 Doctoral dissertation at the University of Yale, 1972, 1
  2. De Heusch L. Le Rwanda et la Civilisation Interlacustre Institut de Sociologie de l'Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1966, 342 - 348.
  3. D'Hertefeldt Les Clans Appendix Table 3
  4. Vansina L'Évolution 48; Rennie The precolonial kingdom 25. Owing to the current debate on interlacustrine chronology, it may only safely be stated that the reign of Ruyange comes at the end of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century.

major chieftancy by the turn of the fifteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The king was doubtless little more than primus inter pares of a number of cattle-rich and nomadic chiefs. The cohesion of the nascent Rwandan State was probably no greater than that of the Hutu kingdoms with their ritually powerful abahinza, a congeries of warlords gathered together for raids and to protect their herds.

The rise of Rwandan kingship and the expansion of the Rwandan State cannot be dated accurately, though some of the processes may be tentatively reconstructed. The assimilation of neighbouring kingdoms would have involved a number of related events: colonisation by pastoralists, formation of secondary vassal kingdoms, and the incorporation of religious specialists into the entourage of the Rwandan mwami. Cattle, used to recruit followers and reward military service, was probably the basis of the king's power; his weakness lay in only tenuous claims to rights over land and hence ritual authority. The Hutu leaders incorporated as ritual specialists around the mwami would have partially filled both these deficiencies.

Vansina does suggest that Tsoke lineages were incorporated as abiru at court as a result of mwami Mukobanya's conquests in the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Such officials could have bolstered the Tutsi monarchy with rituals and ideology drawn, at least in part, from pre-existing Hutu kingship.

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<sup>1</sup> Vansina L'Évolution 47, 63. Dr. Michael Twaddle would date this conquest in the fifteenth century but the point still holds.



The Gesera, Zigaba and Singa clans, abasangwabutaka, 'those who were found on the land', were still required in the colonial period to legitimate Tutsi settlement and the installation of huts on new land. When royal residences were being built, officials of the Zigaba clan acted as intermediaries with Hutu spirits and interceded for the mwami. The Zigaba are therefore known as the abase of the leading Tutsi clans, Nyiginya and Ega; the Singa are in the same relationship with the Sita. The presence of the wagtail, inyamanza, the Gesera totem, was also said to be necessary before any Tutsi would contemplate settling on a hill.<sup>1</sup>

There seems to have been a range of response to the politico-religious forces encountered in subjugated neighbouring kingdoms. While the Tsobe became the important figures at court, dangerous ritualists like Mashira of Nduga were simply executed and their country invaded.<sup>2</sup> Privileged Hutu kingdoms had the impression of retaining their autonomy, or were truly independent, while the Rwandan mwami manipulated their prestige and power. By a combination of matrimonial alliances, blood pacts and open conquest, the Rwandan kingdom expanded

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1. Bourgeois R. Banyarwanda et Barundi Vol. I 1957; 43-44 Brussels. These are clearly vestiges of the days when the Hutu were landowners and the Tutsi, settlers.

2. Pages: Un Royaume 555 - 573; Vansina L'Évolution 85

northwards, ( see Map One and Two).<sup>1</sup>

The invasion of Nduga was the result of raids from warlike clans from the Bunyoro region of Uganda; the young State had been in retreat and seriously defeated.<sup>2</sup> Vansina has suggested that these defeats were a spur to the development of what was to be the key to Rwandan expansion, its well organised army. Each regiment, ngabo, was put under an army chief, umutware, who gathered around him an elite core of troops known as ntore. Whole lineages were recruited en bloc for major raids and the royal ntore were well trained, highly competent soldiers and athletes.<sup>3</sup>

The willingness of lineage heads to join an ngabo may have been dictated by the need for protection and support in interfamilial and interclan disputes. There was no effective way of enforcing verdicts given by an umuhinza in Hutu kingdoms, and disruptive vendettas were common in the north. The social significance of the ngabo was that it provided scattered lineages with a new corporate identity and source of strength, the regiment. Each ngabo had its title and recruited from a wide area; its exploits were built into a body of traditions familiar to its members. An umutware could add to his stock of cattle by raiding; and distribution of booty, plus judgement of disputes between lineages and kinsmen, allowed him to become a territorial chief as much as a representative

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1. Rennie The precolonial kingdom 29-31      2. *ibid.* 30

3. Vansina L'Évolution 66-67



of the mwami. On coming to power a new mwami formed his own ngabo and could reduce the power of rival regiments by summoning their elite troops.<sup>1</sup>

The proliferation of ngabo and the successful raiding of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may have provided conditions conducive to the growth of cults above the level of lineage and clan religion. In this sense, the spread of the cult of Iyangombe and the success of Mithraism in the lower ranks of the Roman army were perhaps comparable developments.<sup>2</sup> The mandwa spirits of the Iyangombe cult are of a higher order than lineage spirits against whose malevolent designs they are said to provide protection. They related the initiate to a spiritual world more extensive than that of the inzu and hill settlement, just as the ngabo united the peasant to lineages scattered throughout the Rwandan State. A sacrificial warrior hero, Iyangombe, headed the spirit order.

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1. For a full account of military organisation and history, see Kagame Abbé A. Le Code des Institutions Politiques du Rwanda Précolonial I.R.C.B. Vol. 26 1952, 17-73 & L'Histoire des Armées-bovines dans l'Ancien Rwanda A.R.S.O.M. Vol. 25 1961
  2. Pastor Ernst Johanssen made this comparison in a little known paper: 'Mysterien eines Bantu-Völkes. Der Mandwa-Kult der Nyaruanda verglichen mit dem antiken Mithras-Kult' Leipzig 1925. A copy of this paper is in the possession of Prof. Marcel d'Hertefeldt, I.N.R.S. Butare, Rwanda.

It is possible that under the influence of ngabo service protective ceremonies formerly associated with clan heads became more popular, incorporated warrior heroes, and came to encompass non-clan members. From traditions that link Iyangombe to a conflict with the usurper mwami, Ruganzu Ndori, the cult hero may be identified as an umuhinza from the marches of either Ndorwa or Burundi whose defeat and death in a Rwandan conquest is disguised in the cult mythology. The Nduga umuhinza, Mashira, does turn up as a mandwa spirit in the cult.<sup>1</sup> The model of a progressive assimilation of foreign religious sources of power<sup>2</sup> is consistent with the idea that the Rwandan State should tolerate a cult dissipating popular discontent in a theatrical cathartic liturgy addressed to deceased heroes.

Cult membership is controlled by diviners who diagnose the need for mandwa protection. In his first initiation, the neophyte undergoes the usual humiliations of transition rites; he is dragged along naked, accused of

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1. Geraud F. Rev. Père 'The Settlement of the Bakiga' in: A History of Kigezi in south-west Uganda ed. Denoon D. 1972, 31, suggests that Iyangombe was king of 'Gitara, Muzingo and Muriro' on the Ndorwa border. On the other hand, Pages Un Royaume 361, gives a tradition in which Iyangombe came from Kibingo in Nyakale Province. Many of his exploits are associated with the Save region, ibid. 626-633

2. The theme of religious assimilation by the Rwandan court forms the topic of an important unpublished paper



being a rebel, umugome, and covered in cow dung. The neophyte then has the right to attend cult sacrifices without fear of being chased away by the representative of Binego, the second major spirit.<sup>1</sup> He has entered a new family and may later take a second grade to become one of the thirty or so spirit mediums who represent the mandwa spirits. Iyangombe possession confers on the medium the right to be treated and referred to as umwami.

Initiation guaranteed protection from dangerous lineage spirits and eternal bliss with the mandwa in an afterlife on Muhavura volcano. The lobelia growing round the crater of this volcano, in the north-west of modern Rwanda, were said to be tobacco plantations guarded by Iyangombe's sacred sheep and cow. The future paradise was a mundane utopia with a liberal supply of beer, meat and tobacco. The uninitiated were condemned to perdition inside the crater of a second, active, volcano called Nyim gongo, where they would be imprisoned by Iyangombe's warriors. The salvific theme recurred in traditions which presented Iyangombe as a sacrificial saviour, a stereotype also to be found associated with some Nyiginya abami, the

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by Catherine Robins: 'Rwanda: A case study in religious assimilation' Dar-es-Salaam/UCLA Conference on the History of African Religions Dar-es-Salaam June 1970

1. Arnoux Rev. Père A. 'Le culte de la Société Secrète des Imandwa au Ruanda' Anthropos VII 1912, 278-295  
529-558, 840-875

abatabazi, kings who died to save their people.<sup>1</sup> Since these volcanoes remained outside the Rwandan State until the nineteenth century, and were distant from the 'nuclear' kingdom, the mandwa may only have been moulded into a culte de salut during the traumatic upheavals of Rwabugiri's reign, just before the Europeans' arrival.

According to Kagame, initiation for everyone was first prescribed by court diviners during an epidemic in the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> This may be an explanation for the first major movement of noble lineages into the cult.

Vansina dates the first arrival of mandwa mediums at court a century later.<sup>3</sup> From this time onwards there was a permanent group of court mediums, the mpara, headed by a delegate of the king, the mwami w'imandwa. The mwami himself remained ineligible for initiation. Cult organisation was not centralised however; the mpara exerted no more control over mediums on the hills than was exercised by the royal diviners over local abapfumu.

The ritual purity of the realm came to be the responsibility of the mwami w'imandwa who was said to send

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1. De Heusch Le Rwanda 163; de Iacger Ruanda 266-270.

De Iacger gives a remarkable account of an umutabazi who was nailed to a tree and brought back to life by Imana, suggesting some Christian contamination of traditions, *ibid.* 541-543

2. Kagame A. Les Milices du Rwanda Précolonial A.R.S.O.M.  
Vol. 28 1963, 62

3. Vansina L'Évolution 70



mpara to escort albinos, underdeveloped girls, and the deformed out of the kingdom to perish in the Ndorwa swamps.<sup>1</sup> Mpara were convoked for periods of two to three months court service when they guarded the mwami's residence in groups of six to ten.<sup>2</sup> The king used them as a spiritual shield just as a peasant would seek mandwa protection from troublesome lineage spirits; it is significant that mpara were formed at court at the same time as royal votive huts to deceased members of the royal lineage were built.<sup>3</sup>

The question whether the cult was functionally integrative or a contestation of the established order,<sup>4</sup> is only meaningful given two major premises: that the cult underwent no historical development and that the Hutu-Tutsi division was manifest at this time. Neither seems likely. The ritual transformation of defeated kings to glory as saving spirits did not directly threaten the Rwandan State. On the other hand, no Rwandan abami featured in the cult.

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1. Delmas Généalogies 96

2. Arnoux Le Culte 291

3. Vansina L'Évolution 69-70. It is clear from Burundi evidence that the cult to deceased kings at royal graves and the mandwa are, moreover, distinct in origin, see Chrétien J.P. & Mworoha E. 'Les tombeaux des bami du Burundi: un aspect de la monarchie sacrée en Afrique orientale' Cahiers d'Études Africaines 37 Vol. 10 1970, 70. The implication is that the mandwa are being called in as a protection against Nyiginya ancestors' spirits.

4. De Heusch Le Rwanda 279-280, 237-240

'La geste des Imandwa se déroule', as de Iacger wrote, 'en marge des annales glorieuses de la patrie'.<sup>1</sup>

Vidal's portrayal of the spirit-representation and initiation rites as a type of morality play re-inforcing the values of kingship seems plausible, but may it simply be assumed that the religious actors experienced this re-inforced commitment to the Rwandan order?<sup>2</sup> The cult was not integrative in the colonial period if by this is meant that the Tutsi and Hutu came together in some liminal fraternity. Some Tutsi lineages frowned on the cult; no noble passed through the humiliations attendant on the initiation of a lowly peasant. One Tutsi might be found in a group of twenty mediums, and vice-versa, a rich Hutu might get into a Tutsi group. This was hardly 'integrative'.<sup>3</sup> The Iyangombe cult speaks more of the religious needs of lineages swept up into the world of ngabo and warfare, and more of the assimilative capacity of the court, than of the ritual resolution of an anachronistic Hutu-Tutsi conflict.

As the Iyangombe cult reached the court, Rwandan kingship was re-inforced by the accretion of religious mystique; the mwami was held to be endowed with Imana,

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1. De Iacger Ruanda 288

2. Vidal C. 'Anthropologie et histoire; le cas du Ruanda' Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie Vol. 43 1967, 143-157.

3. Personal Communication from Prof. Marcel d'Hertefeldt  
May 1973.



the creative power of the spirit-world, and therefore to have supernatural powers.<sup>1</sup> A royal ideology developed which emphasised the eternal and cyclical nature of the Rwandan kings; abami followed each other in a cycle of four rulers: Kigeri following a Mutara or Cyilima, Mibambwe after Kigeri and a Yuhi after Mibambwe, the reign of each exemplifying a particular value like conquest or peace. The number of abiru was increased, perhaps to reduce the power of individual Tsoke lineages which controlled the succession, and a Queen Mother was chosen from four lineages in order to avoid fratricidal strife.<sup>2</sup> As more lineages came to have access to power at court so the mwami became divinised and 'detached'.<sup>3</sup>

A major expansion of the Rwandan State began at the end of the eighteenth century, (see Map Two). Mwami Cyilima Rujigira pushed out the frontiers into Bugoyi and the north; Ndorwa was subdued and a royal residence built there. As the independent states of Gisaka and Bugesera were defeated large numbers of men and rich tracts of land were brought under at least nominal Rwandan jurisdiction. But in most regions this expansion was not followed up by effective colonisation. In the small Hutu kingdoms:

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1. Nothomb D. Rev. Père Un Humanisme Africain Brussels 1969, 91-111, gives a stimulating, though surely christianised account of the Rwandan concept of Imana. See also de Lager Ruanda 154-183.

2. Vansina L'Évolution 68

3. Beattie J. The Nyoro State Oxford 1971, 98 for the term.

and clan lands of the north, considerable resistance was met, collection of ikoro, tribute in crops and commodities, was erratic and depended largely on the degree to which it was in the interest of lineage heads to gain the mwami's support in local feuds.<sup>1</sup> When Yuhi Gahindiro put an ennobled Twa over the province of Buhoma, its umuhinza led a major revolt. Bushiru was never effectively colonised until Belgian times.<sup>2</sup>

As frontier posts controlled by permanent abatware were set up in response to raids from Burundi, Ndorwa and Gisaka, the number of land-owning nobles increased.<sup>3</sup> These nobles were sufficiently powerful for the mwami Yuhi Gahindiro to delegate a new type of chieftancy with rights over pasture land, the abanyamukenke. The king also increased his own land-holdings and clients by granting ibikingi, one to several hills, as pastoral fiefs to his agents, often not men drawn from noble lineages.<sup>4</sup> By such land grants throughout the kingdom, cutting into the nobles' pastures, and by the extensive use of Twa spies, the

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1. Interview with Leon Rukeratabaro, Rubona Hill, at Rwaza mission, June 1973.

2. 'Enquête Générale' Province du Bushiru 1925 Derscheid Papers

3. Vansina L'Évolution 69

4. Rwabukumba J. & Mudandagizi V. 'Les formes historiques de la dépendance personnelle dans l'État rwandais' Cahiers d'Études Africaines Vol. XIV No. 53 1974, 13



Rwandan king was able to keep the pretensions of powerful landowners under control. At the same time, he again increased the number of abiru to stop any one lineage gaining a monopoly of the esoteric code. The mwami was surrounded by abashobya who performed sacrifices and abahennyi who cursed his enemies, together with a host of minor officials and retainers.<sup>1</sup>

The increased size of the Rwandan court did not alter its essentially nomadic character. The abami circulated round the royal residences placing a wife and retainers in each; the land was controlled by permanent province chiefs, abanyabutaka, often kinsmen, who provisioned the residences from the peasants' fields. By usurping the position of local lineage heads through sheer force, or by interfering in land disputes and litigation, the chiefs came to control more and more land and to exact crops, dues and labour from the clients this afforded them. Bananas, that were possibly introduced on a large-scale in the wake of invasions from Uganda,<sup>2</sup> increased the value of already scarce land.<sup>3</sup>

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1. D'Hertefeldt M. & Coupez A. La Royauté Sacrée de l'Ancien Rwanda M.R.A.C. No.52 1964, illustrates the elaboration of court life and ceremonial and contains the rubrics.

2. Vansina L'Évolution 65-66

3. The ease of banana cultivation and resultant freeing of manpower for military service has been discussed by Wrigley C.C. Buganda: an Outline Economic History Economic History Review Series 2 1957, 71 & by Kottak C.P.

'Ecological Variables in the Origin and Evolution of

The expansion of Rwandan State control in the course of the nineteenth century meant for the Hutu peasants increasing oppression and insecurity. Individuals began to seek the protection of powerful nobles in whose patronage they might avoid the onerous ubuletwa, forced labour that the Tutsi chiefs began to impose. Such commendation was usually not, it seems, the result of a considered alliance between peasant and pastoralist, rather the product of a power struggle between a nuclear feudal cluster gathered round a noble and a local Hutu lineage - in which the latter was worsted.<sup>1</sup> The client was often obliged to pay court for a considerable time before the patron accepted him in ubuhake. Commendation took the form of the Hutu presenting the shebuja with a symbolic sheaf of grass; in exchange he was given usufruct rights over a cow. The bonded man umugaragu, was obliged to render his lord customary service, the most important duty being the repair of his enclosure; if a garagu failed to perform this duty annually all ubuhake cattle<sup>2</sup> were forfeit and the relationship terminated.

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African States: The Buganda Example' Comparative Studies in Society and History Vol. 14 No.3 June 1972, 355-357

1. Gravel P.B. Remera a community in Eastern Rwanda.  
Hague 1968, 163, 179

2. For the spread of ubuhake into Kinyaga, see Newbury C.  
'Deux lignages au Kinyaga' Cahiers d'Études Africaines.  
Vol. XIV. No. 53. 1974, 26-39



The spread of ubuhake weakened the Hutu since individuals increasingly sought protection with the rich rather than in the solidarity of their lineage.<sup>1</sup> Despite the defiant taunt that to be without a lineage was to be 'like a dog'<sup>2</sup> the umuryango began to break down as some members communally fulfilled obligations to abatware and abanyabutaka while others sought individual immunity in the patronage of a powerful noble.<sup>3</sup> Weakened, the Hutu were ruthlessly exploited;<sup>4</sup> by the end of the nineteenth century, the imposition of Tutsi rule had reduced many peasants to the level of journeymen wandering in search of work, food and protection.<sup>5</sup>

The breakdown of the Hutu lineage in regions controlled by the Rwandan State was correlated with the transformation of the Tutsi nobility into a well-defined class whose eating habits, deportment, culture and ideology was designed to instil, in Maquet's famous phrase 'a premise of

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1. Newbury 'Deux lignages' 37-38

2. Vidal C. 'Enquête sur le Rwanda traditionnel; conscience historique et traditions orales' Cahiers d'Études Africaines Vol. XI No. 44 1971, 532

3. Newbury 'Deux lignages' 36

4. Pagès A. 'Au Rwanda: Droits et pouvoirs des chefs sous la suzeraineté du roi hamite. Quelques abus du système'. Zaire April 1949, 372; Bourgeois R. 'Rapport de sortie de charge' Shangugu 1934 Derscheid Papers

5. Vidal C. 'Économie de la société féodale rwandaise' Cahiers d'Études Africaines Vol. XIV No. 53, 62-67

inequality'<sup>1</sup> which was the charter for their monopoly of the surplus wealth created by Hutu labour. Ntore were schooled in the three principal values of Tutsi society: ubutare, military prowess, ubugabo, manliness and fidelity, and itondo, self-mastery.<sup>2</sup> Articulatness and self-control were the virtues of the Tutsi home. Ownership of cattle defined broad class lines which were reinforced by a training that gave even minor families a sense that they had the right to rule.

Court traditions extolled the glories of the Nyiginya dynasty and the valour of the Rwandan regiments. Social stratification was explained and justified by a Tutsi genesis myth: Kigwa descended from heaven and had three sons, Gatwa, Gahutu and Gatutsi. A calabash of milk was entrusted to each for the night. In the morning, Gatwa had drunk the milk, Gahutu had spilt it and only Gatutsi was watchful and guarded it safely. Therefore only Gatutsi was suited to command. Gatwa personified the stereotype of the Twa glutton and Gahutu, that of the clumsy peasant. Cattle were given far more respect and adulation in Tutsi poetry than the two lower orders in society; the cow hung like a great ikon over the peasantry, for it no praise was too great and for it, a man would

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1. Maquet J.J. The Premise of Inequality in Ruanda Oxford 1961, 160

2. A good summary of class behaviour is provided by Lemarchand Rwanda and Burundi 41-44



alienate both self and family. A cow was the sign of ubuhake, a noble relationship for a poor Tutsi, a source of protection and income for a Hutu.<sup>1</sup>

The ideas of the ruling class are in each epoch the ruling ideas; that means that the class which is ruling material power in society is, at the same time, its ruling spiritual power. The ruling ideas are nothing but the ideological expressions of the ruling material conditions; they are the ruling material conditions conceived as ideas.<sup>2</sup>

Possession of cows was the first step on the social ladder that led into the land and cattle-owning class. A garagu's humiliating duties, the nightwatch, bringing beer, accompanying his lord on journeys and clearing his nightsoil, were compensated by ownership of cattle and freedom from ubuletwa. A socially acceptable outlet for feelings was a joking relationship with the shebuja in which mutual insults were exchanged.<sup>3</sup> Around the Tutsi household the peasant was able to learn the sophisticated language and ways of the ruling class, and keep in touch with intrigues. The ladder was in reality narrow and a shebuja was more likely to sleep with his clients' wives and daughters than accept his garagu's sons as husbands for the Tutsikazi of

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1. Vidal 'Économie de la société féodale' 70-74

2. Marx K. & Engels F. Die Deutsche Ideologie Berlin 1953, 44

3. Gravel P.B. 'Life on the Manor in Gitsaka (Rwanda)' Journal of African History Vi, 3 1965, 328

the house. Enough did pass up it for a garagu to cherish the illusion that his humiliations were the first painful steps to ennoblement and riches. But, confronted with the elaborate paraphernalia of court life, with its nuanced poetry<sup>1</sup> and measured disdain, the peasant outside Tutsi patronage readily came to believe that, apart from being physically smaller and materially poorer, he was intellectually and morally inferior.

Although the prevailing ideology accentuated an ethnic distinction between Hutu and Tutsi,<sup>2</sup> the underlying class structure was more complex. The Tutsi were divided into a ruling minority of a few dozen families owning herds of tens of thousands of cattle, and the majority with only one hundred or so. Many poor Tutsi had less cattle than rich Hutu who, themselves, were a minority on top of the main body of the peasantry. At the bottom of the scale was an indeterminate number of journeymen despised by all and little better than the Twa outcasts.<sup>3</sup> Rich Hutu were able to obtain labour from clients, two days out of five as in ubuletwa, by giving impoverished peasants a hoe.<sup>4</sup> In the north, the abakonde had permanent clients on their land.

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1. Coupez A. & Kamanzi T. Littérature de cour au Rwanda  
Oxford 1970

2. D'Hertefelt M. 'Mythes et Idéologies dans le Rwanda Ancien et Contemporain' in The Historian in Tropical Africa ed. Vansina J., Mauny R., & Thomas L.V. London 1964, 219-238

3. Vidal 'Économie de la société féodale' 56-67

4. *ibid.* 61



Under such circumstances, religion might justly be called the opium of the Hutu; while Hutu hero-spirits in the mandwa pantheon ruled in concert with a classless divine king, the genitals of defeated abahinza adorned the Nyiginya dynastic drum, Kalinga, and the Hutu were turned into serfs.

In the north-east, though, religion was more the expression of local dissidence. Nyabingi was probably a late eighteenth century 'queen' of Ndorwa; after the kingdom had been destroyed by repeated invasions a cult to her spirit grew up with mediums who broadcast her alleged wishes.<sup>1</sup> The spirit was known as Mugole, the Lady. Cattle traders from Gisaka made contact with Nyabingi mediums in Uzinza and claimed on their return to be possessed by a powerful foreign mandwa. This innovation gained them the opposition of the Lyangombe cult officials since the new mediums rallied opposition against Tutsi rule and had a considerable following amongst the peasantry. When they began collecting tribute to the detriment of the mwami's ikoro, an expedition was mounted against them.<sup>2</sup>

By manipulating the traditional symbols of kingship and claiming supernatural powers, the Nyabingi priestesses

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1. Freedman J. 'Ritual and History: the case of Nyabingi' Cahiers d'Études Africaines Vol. XIV NO. 53, 170-181

2. Nicolet P. Rev. Père 'Notes sur quelques traditions religieuses au Lukyiga (Kabale) et Mpololo et sur le cas "Nyabingi" en Lukyiga-Ruanda' handwritten MS 1928 W.F.A.R.; Philips J.E.T. 'The Nabingi. An Anti-European secret society in Africa, in British Ruanda, Ndorwa and the Congo (Kivu) Congo I 1928, 313-314



remained a potential focus for opposition to the Rwandan mwami throughout the nineteenth century. Later observers described them as 'une autorité révolutionnaire, un État dans l'État; elle abuse de la haine née du "muhutu" pour tout pouvoir établi et fait tourner cette haine à son profit'.<sup>1</sup> Their main centre remained Mpororo and the northern marches of the Rwandan State where Tutsi control was sporadic, little more than infrequent raids and sorties from isolated residences. Rutajira Kijuna (c.1870) was accorded the royal greeting 'kasinje' and given the praise names 'Rutatangira omu Muhanda', she who is unstoppable, and 'Akiz'abantu', saviour of the people. Political organisation aped that of the mwami; mediums maintained a number of 'temples' and clients, bagirwa, who shared in the leading priestess' spiritual powers. Like abahinza, they gave audiences from behind a partition and, it was said, they could perform miraculous cures. Unlike the Iyangombe mediums whose mandwa served the established order at court, Nyabingi shamans moved freely over the hills offering the Hutu a genuine contestation of the Rwandan order.<sup>2</sup>

It was during the long and militarily spectacular reign of mwami Rwabugiri<sup>3</sup> that the contours of the Rwanda seen by

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1. Nicolet ibid.

2. Bessel M.J. 'Nyabingi' Uganda Journal 1938-1939 Vol.VI 73-74; Nicolet ibid.

3. Newbury D. 'Les Campagnes de Rwabugiri: chronologie et bibliographie' Cahiers d'Études Africaines Vol.XIV No.53 1974, 181-192



Europeans were formed. In a series of over sixteen major campaigns, lasting from 1860 - 1895, Rwabugiri raided as far north as Nkole, into south Kivu and onto the island of Idjwi, and into northern Burundi, while keeping hold of Gisaka and the east. This incessant military activity produced a supply of cattle and pastures new to keep royal favourites well rewarded and threatening nobles fully occupied. With the Ega providing four successive Queen Mothers in a row, Rwabugiri inherited both inter and intra-lineage tensions amongst the leading Tutsi families; these he kept in check by terror and selective assassination. By taking over the hereditary principalities of murdered chiefs, and multiplying the number of royal residences, Rwabugiri's reign took on the character of an absolute monarchy.<sup>1</sup>

The need to provision his ngabo and newly formed residences and to recruit troops for new-campaigns dictated a policy of co-operation with Hutu authorities. A Tutsi ambassador was sent to the kingdom of Busozo to demand a mere annual tribute of honey; he never set foot in the region. Bukunzi sent a boy from the Yombo lineage and a girl from the Chuku. They were known as the king's pillows, imisego y'umwami; the latter became the mwami's concubine while the former was killed and his blood used.

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1. Bourgeois Banyarwanda Vol. I 145-165; Vansina L'Évolution  
71-73

for ritual purposes.<sup>1</sup> The first fruits from the little kingdom of Bumbogo were sent to Rwabugiri who sent back a hoe.<sup>2</sup> Such kingdoms retained their autonomy. Agents, ibisonga, were dispatched to the northern provinces to reside and collect tribute but more often than not they were driven away.<sup>3</sup>

It is broadly true that the mwami's effective rule decreased with distance from the old nuclear kingdom of the sixteenth century, but the political map is best described as a temporal and spatial patchwork, (see Maps One and Two). The prestige of Rwabugiri would have assured successful collection of ikoro while he remained at a residence; when he left the people seem to have been refractory and rebellious to his representatives. The mwami was not even safe from attack at Save in the Rwandan heartland.<sup>4</sup>

Rwabugiri's policy of breaking the great Tutsi families and relying on ennobled Hutu favourites and Twa spies

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1. Bourgeois 'Rapport de sortie de charge' Shangugu 1934  
Derscheid Papers
  2. Martin Rev. Père 'Notes sur la province du Bumbogo'  
23 November 1924 Derscheid Papers
  3. Wouters 'Territoire de Mulera.' Rapport établi en réponse au questionnaire adressé en 1929 par M. le Gouverneur du Ruanda-Urundi à l'Administrateur du territoire du Mulera'. Derscheid Papers. Hereafter called Mulem Report 1929.
  4. A story of an attack by the people of Save Hill on a passing mwami is still recounted with relish around Save Mission, with details of ambushers in trees firing arrows.



earnt him the image of 'bon pour le peuple, terrible pour les Batutsi'<sup>1</sup>; the average life expectancy of Tutsi given political commands over Rwanda's twenty or so provinces was about ten years.<sup>2</sup> Like a northern Shaka, Rwabugiri forged the modern Rwanda through a mixture of military skill, shrewd politics and utter ruthlessness, though part of his power came from his success in monopolising long-distance trade.

European trade goods first appeared in the country in the reign of Yuhi Gahndiro at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Rwabugiri did not underestimate their importance; ivory and skins were taken east through Gisaka to his agent, Chief Runyange of Mirenge province, who exchanged them for cloth and trade goods coming from Bukoba. An attempt by Chief Kabaka of Gihunya province to divert trade led to his assassination. The mwami's foreign goods included a gun and an umbrella; the bulk of cloth was handed on to nobles who paid for it in cattle added to the royal herds.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Kabgayi Mission Diary, 7 February 1906

2. An example of six abatware appointed and executed in a province in thirty years is given in Vidal C. 'Le Rwanda des anthropologues ou le fétichisme de la vache' Cahiers d'Études Africaines No. 35 1969, 398. Province histories in the Derscheid Papers give an average of four to five chiefs for the period of Rwabugiri's reign.

3. Testimonies collected by Kagame A. in Grands Lacs 15 September 1950, 9-10. No sources are cited for the traditions collected in this half-centenary issue.

Yet, despite a meeting with the Arab slaver, Rimaliza, on the Ruzizi river, Rwabugiri spurned the possibilities of the slave trade. Although a slave market grew up at Kivumu for caravans from eastern Kivu, visiting Arabs were attacked or poisoned on the mwami's orders. The Tutsi seem to have frowned on the slave trade and the selling of women and children only flourished in times of dire famine and did not involve the nobility. At its peak the trade probably did not amount to more than 1,000 Rwandans per year taken into Tanganyika territory.<sup>1</sup>

The Hutu had a number of important markets. At Kamembe in the south-west, goats and cattle from Rwanda were exchanged for iron hoes manufactured by the Bunyabungo. Rwerere, at the foot of the volcanoes, was a major centre for tobacco and fibre bracelets, ubutega, while salt from distant Katwe came down to markets in Buberuka.<sup>2</sup> These local markets were not under the mwami's direct control, though specialist produce of a region, the important items of exchange, were demanded by the court in annual ikoro; <sup>3</sup> Rwerere and Nyundo markets, for example, were taxed by

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1. De Lacger Ruanda 344-346. The estimate is: Father Brard's made in 1899. See Brard Alphonse 'Au Ruanda' handwritten MS 1900 WFAW

2. Leurquin P. Le Niveau de Vie <sup>des populations rurales</sup> du Ruanda-Urundi Louvain 1960, 42-47. An example of the salt trade is: Bugoyi is contained in the Nyundo Mission Diary 24 December 1911

3. A typical list of items sent in ikoro is contained in Servranckx 'Rapport de sortie de charge' Shangugu 10 May 1930 Derscheid Papers



clan heads.<sup>1</sup> Mwami Musinga set up a market at Gitwi c.1896 to control the importation of cloth from Bujumbura.<sup>2</sup>

With the exception of royal residences where large numbers of Hutu had to be in attendance, markets provided one of the few centres at which Hutu from different hills could meet together and exchange news. They were at the periphery of the Rwandan State. For the northern Hutu the other principal centres were the courts of the Nyabingi prophetesses. A 'Queen of Ndorwa' became sufficiently powerful for Rwabugiri to engineer her death at the hands of the chief of Bufumbiro, and later to find it politic to deny all responsibility.<sup>3</sup> The tradition states that her severed head upbraided the mwami, a nice allegory for cult figures who arose hydra-like at intervals until the 1920s.<sup>4</sup> Stanley in 1876 spoke of a priestess 'Wanyavingi' and called her 'Empress of Rwanda'.<sup>5</sup> Emin Pasha gave

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1. The Gwabiwo clan head taxed Nyundo and the Sekwa head, Rwerere market, see Pages Notes sur le régime 36

2. Classe to Resident 4 January 1928 C.O.

3. Bessel Nyabingi 76

4. Hopkins E. 'The Nyabingi Cult of south-western Uganda' in Protést and Power in Black Africa eds. Rotberg R.I. & Mazrui A.I. Oxford 1970, 258-337, gives an exhaustive coverage of the movements from archival sources. Jim Freedman of Yale University has undertaken extensive fieldwork on the movement for a doctoral dissertation.

5. Stanley H.M. Through the Dark Continent Vol.I London 1878, 454

another interesting account of such a priestess in 1891.

The Queen of Mpororo... said to be a woman named Njavingi... has never been seen by anyone, not even her own subjects. All that they ever get to know of her is a voice heard behind a curtain of bark-cloth. Such theatrical practices have gained for her, throughout Karagwe, Nkole etc. the reputation of a great sorceress.<sup>1</sup>

The threat of Nyabingi was only fully to be realised in the colonial period.

Rwabugiri's most immediate problems lay closer to home in the corporate power of the abiru who controlled the succession. Some were sent to distant fiefs and others murdered until their power was broken. Their ritual prohibitions were then ignored in the selection of the mwami's successor, Rutalindwa. In Rwabugiri's cavalier treatment of tradition, as Gravel wrote of Gisaka politics, 'sheer power... determined the rules'.<sup>2</sup>

The mwami's first encounter with Europeans is alleged to have taken place on Lake Edward during the Nkole campaign of 1892-1893. He was impressed by their use of written messages which, it is said, he interpreted as proof of an occult power that allowed Europeans to read people's

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1. Schweitzer G. Emin Pasha His Life and Work Vol. II  
Westminster 1898, 173, 177

2. Gravel Remera 179



thoughts and words. He is said to have invited them to come to Rwanda to manufacture cloth.<sup>1</sup> A skirmish with Von Götzen's troops in 1894 must have changed this first favourable impression. News of the Europeans' cannon, umuzinga, reached the king who sent messengers to Karagwe to consult the neighbouring Haya chiefs, thought to have more experience of the Whites. News came back that the Europeans were invincible and should be greeted in a friendly fashion but the court was divided and cows were sacrificed to decide whether the kingdom needed the sacrificial death of an umutabazi or an offensive war. Traditions maintain that the final decision was that the Whites should be greeted peaceably but the mwami shielded from their supernatural powers.<sup>2</sup>

Rutalindwa's mother was dead when he was appointed heir in 1889 and a substitute Queen Mother, Kanjogera, was selected from the Ega. This was not only contrary to all precedent but unwise; Kanjogera had a son of her own and enjoyed the support of the powerful Ega statesmen, Kabare and Ruhinankiko. Within a year of Rwabugiri's death in 1894, Rutalindwa was dethroned in an Ega coup and Musinga made mwami. By flouting tradition Rwabugiri had delivered the kingdom into Ega hands. The young Rutalindwa suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Belgians at

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1. Kagame Grands Lacs 10 ( see p.46 n.3)

2. ibid. 14

Shangi.<sup>1</sup> Humiliated and with his abiru supporters depleted by assassinations, he was easy prey for the prepared Ega.

When the Germans marched into Rwanda in 1897 Musinga and Kanjogera had barely been in power a few weeks. Meeting with Mparamugamba, head of the mandwa who posed as the mwami, the Germans offered protection against the Belgians, support for the king, and left the Tutsi in no doubt as to their military might.<sup>2</sup> Only three years later was it realised that Mparamugamba was an imposter. The offer of support was timely; followers of Rutalindwa had risen in revolt and the Teke sub-clan in northern Rwanda took the opportunity to drive out the Tutsi sparking off waves of Hutu attacks. A leader, Bilegeya, arose claiming to be a son of Rwabugiri but the northern revolt, fragmented and unco-ordinated was quickly quelled by Musinga's regiments.<sup>3</sup>

The Ega consolidated their position by killing Nyiginya nobles. The situation was intrinsically unstable with a Nyiginya mwami in an Ega-dominated court, a usurper.

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1. Testimony of Kayambe, who claimed to be a son of Rutalindwa, given to J.M. Derscheid 1 January 1931, Derscheid Papers. For Ega machinations in this period, see Des Forges Rwanda under Musinga 18-22
  2. Kagame Grands Lacs 16. On the other hand Pages Un Royaume 359, suggests that Sharangabo was head of the mandwa at this time and first met the Germans.
  3. Des Forges Rwanda under Musinga 25-27



brought to power after the suicide of the legitimate heir. Rwabugiri's brilliant career as a warrior-hero lay behind and the mwami's effective area of jurisdiction had already shrunk since his father's glorious days. Poised on Rwanda's borders were Europeans whose military might was uncontested and whose supernatural powers might be a grave threat to the realm.

The murderous court politics and general Tutsi disarray only touched the northern Hutu where isolated settlers could be chased out without fear of reprisal. The fate of the Central Rwanda Hutu was too closely tied to the ruling class through ubuhake for revolt. Yet there were still Hutu who owned cattle in their own right and resisted demands for ubuletwa. The term umuhinza came to mean 'an opponent of the mwami' so it may be imagined that the autonomous Hutu kingdoms kept alive memories of resistance.<sup>1</sup> The Hutu lineages were never entirely shattered by ubuhake; they retained their local history and veneration of their ancestral spirits in opposition to the growing strength of the Tutsi households with their cluster of retainers.

On the eve of missionary penetration, the Hutu masses were suffering a process that might be called 'infeudation' and that had gathered momentum in the nineteenth century. Marc Bloch's comprehensive definition of feudal society does not seem inappropriate to this part

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1. Interview with Dominique Baziraka, Rukubankanda Hill, Rwaza Mission, June 1973

of Rwanda.

A subject peasantry; widespread use of the service tenement ( i.e. the fief) instead of salary, which was out of the question; the supremacy of a class of specialised warriors; ties of obedience which bind man to man...fragmentation of authority - leading inevitably to disorder; and in the midst of all this, the survival of other forms of association, family and state.<sup>1</sup>

Since the term 'fief' comes from a Germanic root meaning cattle, it is suitable for the particular modality of Rwandan clientship, the recording of a grant of benefice by transfer of cattle.

On the other hand, the loose use of the feudal model applied to African societies has come in for some weighty criticism. Redmayne was the first to suggest that comparison with other African societies might be more fruitful than slavish application of European terminology.<sup>2</sup> Goody wanted analysis 'with less worn counters, with more operational concepts' than 'feudalism'.<sup>3</sup> Beattie later found the concept of feudality inadequate as a description of

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1. Bloch M. Feudal Society Vol. II London 1971, 446

2. Redmayne A. The Concept of Feudalism in African Ethnology B. Litt. thesis at the University of Oxford 1961. I am indebted to Dr. Redmayne for her permission to consult this thesis which, of course, pre-dates the published discussion on the use of feudal terminology.

3. Goody J. 'Feudalism in Africa?' Journal of African History Vol. IV No. 1 1963, 16



the Nyoro State.<sup>1</sup> De Heusch,<sup>2</sup> following Mair,<sup>3</sup> preferred to place feudalism in the broader category of clientship States. The most telling part of Goody's recent argument is the disparity between the raised value of land in Europe, created by feudal technology, and the low-yield land of Africa.<sup>4</sup> African technology was too underdeveloped and land too poor to support 'feudalism'.

Two major distinctions are made in these critiques: on the one hand, feudalism in Ganshof's socio-legal sense as 'a body of institutions regulating the obligations of obedience and service - mainly military service - on the part of the free man (the vassal), towards another free man (the Lord), and the obligations of protection and maintenance on the part of the lord with regard to his vassal';<sup>5</sup> on the other, feudalism as a political and governmental category characterised by a type of landholding and relationship between monarchy and nobility. Feudalism in this second sense could take on a strict historicist

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1. Beattie J.H.M. 'Bunyoro: An African Feudality?' Journal of African History Vol.V No.1 1964, 25-36
  2. De Heusch Le Rwanda 401-412
  3. Mair L. 'Clientship in East Africa' Cahiers d'Études Africaines VI 1961, 315-325
  4. Goody J. Technology, Tradition and the State in Africa Oxford 1971
  5. Ganshof F. Feudalism London 1952, xvi

meaning as the unique sequence of social changes in Western Europe, and so preclude all debate; Beattie's discussion of feudalism and Nyoro kingship amounts to this.<sup>1</sup> Kagame similarly points to the existence of an absolute monarchy in nineteenth century Rwanda as a reason for rejecting the term 'feudal';<sup>2</sup> like Maquet,<sup>3</sup> though, he would countenance it in the context of ubuhake in the socio-legal sense of 'Contrat de Servage'.<sup>4</sup>

Pared to their essentials, arguments either spurn the socio-legal definition as too broad to be useful or, taking a 'historicist' position, use a definition too precise to fit the history of any African State. For feudal society was not the result of any breakdown of centralised government in the African context, but more like a stage in the growth of centralised states from clan and lineage based societies. Finally how could it be gainsaid that, if land was not a scarce and coveted resource in pre-colonial Africa, the 'fief' had widely different political significance on the two continents?

Granting all this, there is need to make an exception for Rwanda. In this case, a surfeit of fine scholarly distinctions can end up by obscuring the particular social texture of a State and the dynamics of its development. For example, the difference between political power,

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1. Beattie Bunyoro 25-36

2. Kagame Le Code 7-11

3. Maquet The Premise 133

4. Kagame Le Code 11



administrative office and clientship are convenient categories for the orderly mind but separate functions that may have been intimately related in practice.

D'Hertefelt points out how this was the case in Rwanda.<sup>1</sup>

Ces deux structures politiques et l'institution de clientèle étaient corrélatives. Les fonctions politiques aidaient les Tutsi à accroître le nombre de leurs clients et la structure de clientèle leur permettait d'obtenir des fonctions politiques et de les conserver. Les relations entre le seigneur et le client constituaient un modèle pour les relations entre les gouvernants et leurs sujets.<sup>1</sup>

Political office implied rights in land and rights to military service; this was what gave the Rwandan polity its particular quality. Neither is it true that in Rwanda, with its high population density, extensive banana groves and shortage of pasture land, the land was not coveted and scarce.

Moreover, after the absolutism of Rwabugiri's reign in which the tendency for benefices to become hereditary fiefs was checked, conflict between a 'centrifugal' nobility and a centralising monarchy was an important element in political change. If 'feudal' implies a dynamic political sense of an internal tendency within

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1. D'Hertefelt M. 'Le Rwanda' in Les Anciens Royaumes de la Zone Interlacustre Meridionale ed. D'Hertefelt M. Trouwborst A.A. & Scherer J.H. London 1962, 69

Rwandan society towards an equilibrium in which the Tutsi military aristocracy ruled through a chain of client relationships, checked on one side by the State, and on the other by the Hutu clans, then it has heuristic value. Equally, as a static description of a social order the parallels with English Norman feudalism are too striking to be ignored. Rwanda was a complex pyramid of clientship ties headed by the king; the early type of vassalage was military service in ngabo; a garagu passed through a formal ritual of subordination and exchanged service for protection, while the relationship was recorded by a benefice of movable property over which the peasant had usufruct rights.<sup>1</sup>

What particularly characterised the Rwandan State was not the existence of autonomous clan-lands c.f. the butaka in Buganda, nor a kingship which stood over and against a powerful nobility c.f. the Nyoro Mukama, but that institutions found in other interlacustrine kingdoms had, as it were, following their own internal dynamic and developing under the pressure of conflicts within the entire Rwandan territory, achieved a greater degree of elaboration to the point of luxuriance. The Tutsi class had become almost a closed caste. The mwami, more than a Kabaka or Mukama, had elaborated the kingship into a complex ritual aseity. The rich and mystifying ideology

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1. Gravel Remera 165



of divine kingship and the hierarchy of clientship ties had grown apace to cement the stratification of society and counteract the 'centrifugal' tendencies of powerful nobles and Hutu lineages. The mwami, source of justice, promoter of the lowly, was the negation of the stratified society over which he ruled. 'Le mwami contribue pour une bonne part à cette fusion des races et aux changements brusques de condition', wrote de Lacger. 'La cour, dit-on, foisonne de parvenus'.<sup>1</sup>

The kingship never achieved a monopoly of religious symbolism but its identification with Imana made of the mwami an occult presence in the realm, the projected father-image of the Hutu. Reared in an authoritarian, patrilocal society, Rwandans thought of the king not as a Nyiginya Tutsi struggling to stay in power, but as a transcendental source of creativity and authority. No-one would have faulted Father Brard when he wrote home in 1900:

C'est une grave insulte de dire que le roi et sa mère sont des batousi; ils sont rois (abamis).<sup>2</sup>

-x-x-x-

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1. De Lacger. Ruanda 60

2. Brard. Au Rwanda: 'It is a serious insult to say that the king and his mother are Tutsis; they are kings, abami'.

CHAPTER ONE.

THE WHITE FATHERS' SETTLEMENT

IN RWANDA

1899-1904



The first great period of the Society of the missionaries of Our Lady of Africa came to an end on November 25th. 1892 with the death of Cardinal Charles Lavigerie. He had given the White Fathers a spiritual formation and missiological technique more adapted to Africa than that of any other Catholic missionary body. Founded in the disease and famine ridden city of Algiers in 1868, the Society numbered 172 members in its first ten years; by the turn of the century 48 of these were dead.<sup>1</sup> The rules of the Society emphasised self-discipline, personal sanctification and communal life. Its technique of evangelisation was centred on an intensive four year period of preparation for baptism.

Since the Central African Missions had arisen as an expansion of the Fathers' evangelisation of Islamic North Africa, many features of the Society, like the patient in-depth coverage of one small area, and even dress, may be traced back to missionary practice in Tunis and Algiers. The strength of Islamic culture had impressed on the Society the need for adaptation.

The spirit that must prevail in everything is that we must draw as near as is prudently possible to the African way of life; that is to say in everything

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1. Duchêne Rev. Père Les Pères Blancs 1868-1892 Tome II  
Maison Carrée, Algiers 1902, appendix

compatible with Christian and priestly life.<sup>1</sup>

However, the compatibility of indigenous cultures was a subjective judgement left largely to the missionary in the field. The cultural gulf between North and Equatorial Africa, and the premise of degradation that increasingly motivated the evangelical fervour of Christians for the exploited and underdeveloped,<sup>2</sup> influenced mission thinking and practice.

In the early days the Society had employed Jesuit novice masters who were trained to produce, in Lord Gray's words, 'willing parts of an admirable machine set in motion... for the service of God and humanity'.<sup>3</sup> They set the style of seminary education and, as Retreat masters, re-inforced its impact on priestly life. The authoritarianism of the training gave a strong scaffolding against the shocks of alien cultures, while Ignatian spirituality tempered the steel with the flames of Hell-fire. But the structure had disadvantages. Accurate information about conditions at the local level diminished.

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1. The White Fathers' Rule, quoted in Burridge W. Destiny Africa London 1966; 104

2. The changes that took place in Christian attitudes to mission work is well illustrated by Ajayi A.J.F. Christian Missions in Nigeria: 1841-1891 London 1965

3. Quoted in Ranger T.O. Revolt in Southern Rhodesia: 1896-1897 London 1967, 313



with distance up the Society's hierarchy. And the rules and regulations, detailed and numerous, were imposed uniformly from on high with redress only at infrequent meetings of the General Chapter of the Society.<sup>1</sup>

The renewed study of patristics and early Church History in the nineteenth century offered a number of parallels for those meditating on the christianisation of Africa. At the same time as Liberal, anti-clerical and baleful Socialist Europe was pushing the Church relentlessly into the cloister, the success story of Constantine and Charlemagne had a nostalgic appeal. Was it not possible that in Africa the ground lost in Europe might be made good? It was hardly surprising that when Cardinal Lavigerie turned his thoughts to Central Africa he advocated the patient courting of chiefs.

Whatever the theological self-image of the Roman Catholic Church in the 1890s, it did not in reality transcend the profound class divisions of European society. Cardinal Lavigerie and members of the Conseil Général of the Society moved in the company of Government ministers, aristocrats and officers. Many a missionary in the bush came from a small farming village, went to seminary in a provincial town, left for North Africa and disappeared

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1. In the nineteenth there were seven General Chapters, on average, per twenty years, though the members of the standing Conseil Général, the Society's executive elected at the Chapters, could change more often, as the needs of the Society dictated.

from Europe without having frequented a single salon. The Brothers were 'hewers of wood and drawers of water', highly valued in theory, shabbily treated in practice. It was because Lavigerie's world shared the French Church's elitist and monarchist sentiments that his support for the Republic caused such a stir. For the monarchists, the toast of Algiers was treachery of the worst kind.

As the mission fields of the different Catholic Societies became defined and erected into vicariates under a Vicar-Apostolic, promotion to positions of authority went to those who combined experience with a willing subordination of their personal preferences to authority. The latter ability was as much a product of class behaviour as of spiritual formation, and those whose duty it was to deal with bourgeois colonial officers and their aristocratic superiors generally came from their class, or at least shared their elitist view of government.<sup>1</sup>

In colonial times the hierarchy of Vicar-Apostolic, Father-Superior and missionaries was paralleled by that of Governor, Residents and Africans. The world of the Vicar-Apostolic was made up of incessant communication with

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1. This was true, of course, of other mission bodies like the C.M.S. that recruited from the middle class. Key positions on the Executive Committees tended to go to a small group of men with Public School and university training. F.K. Lugard, for example, would tolerate a solid 'Varsity' man like Walter Miller in Northern Nigeria but balked at the lower orders of the C.M.S. See G3 a3/01 - 04 C.M.S. Archives, London.



his lower orders in the Society, but also frequent 'horizontal' communication with colonial authorities.<sup>1</sup> He remained a missionary yet became an honorary member of the colonial ruling class. Similarly, the missionary who spent much of his day working with Africans, came to identify with their interests, and sometimes to see the world through their eyes; but he was also the local representative of the Vicar-Apostolic concerned with the maintenance of the visible structures of the Roman Catholic Church.

'Das Bewusstsein ist ein gesellschaftliches Produkt',<sup>1</sup> wrote Marx and Engels, and the mission hierarchy often proved the point at times of crisis. Though few missionaries could see through the theological fog to an understanding of the whys and wherefores of the divisions in the Church, many were dimly aware of an ill-defined sense of injustice, which stemmed from their position in colonial society and was expressed in abrasive behaviour towards District Officers. In the vicariates where conflict could arise between Vicar-Apostolic and Superior- Provincials, the power structure was most complex; it could and did occur that a local Bishop, representing the Universal Church, Rome, clashed with the White Fathers qua semi-independent mission body.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Marx & Engels: Die Deutsche Ideologie 27

2. This has become more frequent recently when modern-minded young Superior- Provincials find themselves in dioceses of conservative African Bishops.

Missionaries with ten and fifteen years in the field, from diverse social backgrounds, had developed by the 1890s a personal authority based on experience that did not harmonise easily with their Society's, and Church's, hierarchical structure. They had their own ideas on missiology and were loath to take orders which they felt overlooked the concrete demands of the situation. As a result, there was a gap between the theological niceties of Papal directives and encyclicals promulgated in Rome and mission practice in the bush. And the gap was to be located not in the geographical distance from Europe to Africa, but in the hiatus between Vicar-Apostolic and common missionary, created in large measure by their structural position in relation to colonial society.

The technique of concentrating on the African court and tolerating negligible commitment by chiefs to Catholic ethical codes before baptism was the norm before the twentieth century. But then the missionaries had little choice. The setbacks in Uganda failed to destroy the White Fathers' predilection for centralised African States and for the conversion of sub-imperialist groups, like the Ganda. Cardinal Lavignerie had taught them not to expect instant success. Events did, however, suggest to several priests that, if necessary, African 'potentates' were as well eliminated as wooed. The possibility of calling on support from friendly colonial officials when strong-arm tactics ended disastrously favoured the advocates of the



## Gospel and the Gun.

The interlacustrine kingdoms remained the chosen targets for the White Fathers, but their hopes of creating Christian States in the centre of Africa were jeopardised by the persistent expansion of Protestant Missions.<sup>1</sup> The Catholics were obliged to pour in personnel at the turn of the century not so much to evangelise one region in depth but to open up new areas to stake their claim. Territory meant souls, and the carefully drawn maps at Maison-Carrée charted a religious scramble no less intense than the diplomatic one of which it was sometimes an adjunct.

The humiliation of the Church's loss of the Papal States and the severe curtailment of her temporal powers in the nineteenth century had been answered only by doctrinal entrenchment; a weakened papacy was shorn up by the dogmatic assertion of papal infallibility. A Catholic laity who had become the émigrés de l'intérieur<sup>1</sup> of Europe were asked to support the aggressive advance of the Church in Africa, and were consoled by the firm belief that outside the Church there was no salvation. Rome paid up and got on the map again. For the missionary clergies there was little difference, as far as the eternal salvation

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1. The name was given to French Catholics in the nineteenth century as a result of their defensive 'garrison' mentality and relationship to secular society. For an excellent evocation of French Catholic attitudes at this time, see Görres: I. The Hidden Face New York 1959

of Africans was concerned, between Islam and Protestantism.<sup>1</sup>

If the evangelisation of Africa was a flight from secular Europe, the religious scramble was motivated by the sincere conviction that the unbaptised and heretics were damned. This was the official teaching of Rome since the Council of Trent, sometimes softened by charitable casuistry; although individual missionaries might concede that many Protestants were 'in good faith', they saw the expansion of Protestantism as the spread of the malignant disease of heresy. Much of the human aggression submerged or sublimated in an intense spiritual training was given vent in an almost military combat with opposing denominations.

Nonetheless, the Society's approaches to the borders of Rwanda were far from those of a victorious army. A party of White Fathers was massacred by a Burundi chief in 1881 while Monsignor Hirth reached Bukoba in 1892 the survivor of shipwrecked ambitions in Uganda. The Fathers were uninvited guests of the Germans moved from pillar to post as Haya chiefs resisted their settlement.<sup>2</sup> After the

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1. An excellent example of the Catholic habit of seeing Islam and Protestantism as co-equal threats is provided by correspondence between the Montfort Fathers and the Portuguese in Mozambique, see Bishop Auneau to Gebhard 29 September 1922 Montfort Archives, Rome.
  2. Austen R.A. Northwest Tanzania under German and British Rule Yale, New Haven 1968, 39-41



founding of a German military station at Bujumbura in 1896, two priests crossed from Uha in an attempt to start a Burundi mission; within months of settling they were forced to flee.<sup>1</sup> In a second attempt the same year, a station was founded close to Bujumbura and the Fathers bought a number of Rwandan slaves from passing Congolese rebel troops.<sup>2</sup> It was only in February and May 1898 that the missionaries consolidated their hold on the area with two permanent stations at Mugeru and Muyaga, within striking distance of the Rwandan frontier, the Akanyaru river.<sup>3</sup> With the major White Father centre of Bukumbi as supply base and link with the coast, it was now feasible to launch missionaries into Rwanda from the south-west.

The main impetus to Catholic missionary penetration of the Rwandan kingdom characteristically came from fears of being beaten by advancing Protestants. The British C.M.S. had already reached south-west Uganda and German Protestants were threatening in western Tanganyika. Monsignor Hirth, whose spiritual jurisdiction now almost co-incided with the Kaiser's Imperial territories in the east, made his first move in November 1897, the foundation of Katoke mission in

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1. Chroniques Trimestrielles des missionnaires de Notre-Dame d'Afrique No. 73 January 1897, 129. Hereafter abbreviated to Chroniques Trimestrielles.

2. *ibid.*

3. Monsignor Gorju) En Zigzags à travers l'Urundi Namur: 1926, 13-20. (These were mutineers from the Dhanis column.)

Rusubi, near the German fort of Biharamulo and barely fifty miles from the south-east tip of Rwanda.<sup>1</sup>

The Fathers at Katoke were able to buy some Rwandan boys, at twenty copper bracelets each, and gleaned information about the country from Jinja traders who acted as middlemen in the slave trade.<sup>2</sup> The redeemed slaves brought up to date the Bishop's knowledge of Rwanda drawn from Von Götzen's Durch Afrika von Ost nach West.<sup>3</sup> Within three weeks of founding Katoke mission, Monsignor Hirth was writing excitedly to his old friend Monsignor Leon Livinhac, now Superior-General of the White Fathers:

Il faudrait occuper sans retard le Rwanda. Tout le monde en dit merveille, ce n'est pas là ce qui me séduit mais il y a surtout que les protestants ont des raisons toutes particulières pour nous y devancer, comme ils ont essayé de faire pour l'Uswui.<sup>4</sup>

Both Germans and Belgians had set up military camps near Shangi on Lake Kivu in the course of 1897-1898,<sup>5</sup> so the

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1. De Lacger Ruanda 381; Austen Northwest Tanzania 45

2. Van de Meire Rev. Père 'La Grâce au Ruanda' undated MS, notes on mission settlement in Rwanda by a White Father, in Derscheid Papers.

3. Nothomb D. A printed but unpublished Church History of Rwanda, p.9. This history formed the basis of the appendix to de Lacger's Le Ruanda. I am grateful to Father Nothomb for lending me his original annotated copy which was held back from publication.

4. Hirth to Livinhac 30 November 1897, 095035 Dossier 95.



Bishop's alarm was doubtless motivated by fear that the Germans would send in Protestant nationals to support their territorial claims.<sup>1</sup>

Monsignor Jean-Joseph Hirth spoke excellent German with a pronounced Alsatian accent and, with his spectacles and white beard passed easily for a German savant. Born in Alsace in 1854 but trained entirely in French seminaries he was ideally suited for the task of liaison officer between the White Fathers and German administrators. After a seminary education at Nancy, and then Maison Carrée in Algiers, he was ordained priest in 1878 in time to leave on the first caravan to Central Africa with Father Leon Livinhac. Thus he was a pioneer of Catholic Missions and had lived through the martyrdom of the Uganda Christians. Monsignor Livinhac consecrated him Vicar-Apostolic of a vast region called 'Nyanza meridional', which stretched from Kilimanjaro to the volcanoes of Rwanda, on May 25th 1890.

From the beginning of 1898 the Katoke Fathers began sending gifts to Musinga and Kanjogera. In February 1899 a delegation of twenty Rwandans arrived at the mission to investigate; after a month's stay they appear to have convinced the missionaries of the imprudence of entering Rwanda from the east, the shortest route; court tradition,

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<sup>1</sup> Louis Roger W.M. Ruanda-Urundi 1884-1919 Oxford 1963,

it was alleged, held that all who came from the east were invaders.<sup>1</sup> A group of Ganda catechists under the direction of Abdon Sabakati set off via Burundi in March with a Jinja guide to attempt to make direct contact with Musinga; they got no further than Muyaga mission where an uncomprehending Father-Superior sent them packing.<sup>2</sup>

Although the days of Captain Joubert and his zouaves were past, a caravan of Ganda catechists was not immediately identifiable as a team of peace-loving evangelists. After the 'Bafransa's' defeat at Lugard's hands and flight from Uganda, Catholic parties moved in heavily armed groups. Abdon Sabakati, the best loved of the Ganda in Rwanda, was sixteen when the 'religious wars' broke out; he fled in 1892 with Hirth and Father Alphonse Brard to found a Ganda colony by the mission of Marienberg near Bukoba, and then joined the Catholic settlement on Ukerewe Island in Lake Victoria. After an attack in which some Catholics were killed, he moved on to the safety of Bukumbi from where he set out for Katoke with Fathers Brard, Buisson and Brother Xavier.<sup>3</sup> Neither priests nor catechists

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1. Vanneste Rev. Père 'Le Vicariat Apostolique du Ruanda' undated MS, notes on the Rwanda vicariate by a White Father, Derscheid Papers.

2. Testimonies collected by Abbé Joseph Sibomana in Grands Lacs 1950, 27

3. Ukerewe was attacked in 1895 by Chief Rukonge, see Austen Northwest Tanzania 42-44.



found anything incongruous in the military allure of their caravans, it may be imagined, after such a history.

On December 11th. 1899, Bishop Hirth led out a caravan of one hundred and fifty porters protected by twelve Ganda auxiliaries and a group of Sukuma guards from Katoke, destined to found the first Christian mission in Rwanda. Such was the fear of the Banyarwanda that all but thirty of the guards and porters fled on Christmas Day. The party reached Muyaga mission four days later where more porters were recruited to carry the extraordinary mixture of mission luggage, liturgical articles, agricultural implements, books and seeds. They reached Bujumbura in six days but missed the military commander, Captain Von Bethe, who was at Shangi. They pressed on to Lake Kivu in the new year.<sup>1</sup>

The composition of the missionary personnel was three Fathers and one Brother according to the Society's regulations. Father Paul Barthélemy was from Alsace and knew German. Brard knew Swahili, Sukuma, Ganda and Jinja but little German. Only one of the Ganda knew any Kinyarwanda. The missionaries were therefore at a disadvantage on arriving at the Rwandan capital of Nyanza on February 2nd. 1900, and were obliged to rely on a court interpreter who was only fluent in Swahili. The

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<sup>1</sup> Save Mission Diary prologue W.F.A.R.; Bulletin des Missions d'Afrique 1900, 289-292. This was the mission magazine for the White Fathers' Belgian province - hereafter abbreviated to Bulletin.

Ega leader, Ruhinankiko, was forewarned by runners of their arrival at Shangi and the court given time to debate tactics.<sup>1</sup>

The opinion of the bakongori after divination was that the Whites should be given land at Kivumu slave market. There appear to have been two considerations motivating this decision; firstly a desire to keep all foreigners localised so that their impurity could not adversely effect the realm, and secondly, since the missionaries were known to be interested in slaves, the hope that the traders and Europeans might eliminate each other. On the other hand, Kabare suggested either Bugoyi or Gisaka to the missionaries, both regions where the court's authority was very weak. Dr. Kandt, the able German administrator who was doing research in the area at the time, wanted them, equally for political reasons, on Lake Kivu, and pressed a cheque for one hundred roupies on the Vicar-Apostolic.<sup>2</sup>

Monsignor Hirth was adamant; nothing short of a mission site in the heavily populated south where it would be near the Burundi supply stations was acceptable. In the perspective of the German administrative bezirk, a circle which had Bujumbura as its centre, south-west Rwanda was

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1. Testimonies collected by Abbé Alexis Kagame in Grands Lacs 1950, 20-21

2. Hirth J.J. 'Diaire du Ruanda', an undated letter to his brother, 095307 Dossier 95 W.F.A.R.



best protected.<sup>1</sup> The false mwami was forced by Hirth's persistence to give permission for the White Fathers to settle on Mara Hill in the southern province of Bwanamukali, but sent orders that no food or water should be given them. Since the hill was a fief of a court rainmaker, it was perhaps even hoped that rain might be denied them.

They were not camped long at Mara before the Bishop decided to move on to the more densely populated Save Hill on which five to six thousand people lived; on the rolling hills around, the Fathers calculated that there were over sixty thousand people within a five kilometre radius. Their two escorts, Kampanya, a mwiru whom Kanjogera wished to kill, and Cyitatre, a brother of Musinga on the Ega assassination list and head of Bwanamukali province, gave their consent to the change. Ega tactics were to associate prominent figures at court with the priests and then, once compromised, eliminate them by disgrace or death. The price for Save Hill, a region that had rebelled against the mwami in the past, was 450 roupies. Shortly afterwards Kampanya was executed.<sup>2</sup>

The Rwandans were cautious but appeared friendly to the missionaries. The Fathers, who had come to interpret

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1. Rwanda originally fell within Bezirk No. 20 of German East Africa with headquarters at Ujiji. Ruanda-Urundi became a separate administrative unit in 1899.

2. Hurel Rev. Père 'Histoire du Sacré-Coeur d'Issavi', handwritten MS, 1909, Dossier 112 W.F.A.R.

anything more genteel than a spear-thrust as a warm welcome, were taken in by the false mwami and wrote glowing reports back to Algiers of the missionary prospects. Their military allure had been an advantage. Unlike Dr. Kandt's small caravan, which had aroused the Tutsi's ready contempt, the White Fathers' escort with two added German askari from Shangi had an official air that impressed the court. In exchange for the Fathers' gifts, Kabare parted with one hundred goats - a subtle insult as only cows were a worthy gift but expensive - and the false mwami went in person to greet Monsignor Hirth in his tent.<sup>1</sup>

Behind the apparent friendship was a determination that the priests should never get the opportunity to manipulate the lineage politics at court. According to eye-witnesses, the false mwami told Hirth:

(at Kivumu) you will easily be able to trade and teach the people as you wish. Only, you must teach just the Bahutu; the Batutsi are to be taught not a word; they are exclusively in the service of the king and may be taught by him alone.<sup>2</sup>

After being made fools of at court,<sup>3</sup> the missionaries found

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1. Save Diary 2 February 1900; de Lacger Ruanda 387

2. Grands Lacs 1950, 21

3. The false mwami was discovered soon after the visit to court by the mission's interpreter, Karonda, when Hirth returned to Nyanza. Dr. Kandt also realised that a trick had been played when he found the mwami should have been in his teens.



their life rendered as difficult as possible. On the way to found a third station in Bugoyi, Father Barthélemy was led round in circles by his guides on orders from the court diviners. But in the person of Cyitature, the Ega miscalculated. He was not easily ensnared and looked to the Fathers as potential allies. On February 8th. 1900, over one hundred Hutu were put to work building four huts on Save for the Fathers.<sup>1</sup>

The first Catholic station was within range of the military posts at Shangi and Bujumbura, and only twenty miles from the capital, Nyanza, so Bishop Hirth had reason to be pleased at having persevered. His first impression of Rwanda was to inform much of the mission practice in the first decade after settlement:

Le pays est asservi par les Batusi ou Baima; le reste de la population, les Bahutu, est absolument esclave; ceux-ci au moins viendront à nous, si les premiers manquent... Jamais, en dehors de l'Ouganda, je n'avais vu les missionnaires si bien reçus par la population; on dirait que ces pauvres soupiraient après notre venue.<sup>2</sup>

Save Mission was dedicated to the Sacred-Heart and known as Markirck by the Germans; the former name was a

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1. Save Diary 8 February 1900

2. Hirth to Livinhac 20 February 1900, 095048 Dossier 95  
WFAR; also printed in Bulletin 1900, 291

respectful reference to Pope Leo XIII's dedication of the universe to the Sacred-Heart of Jesus in 1898, while the latter, somewhat more parochial, was the name of a celebrated Marian pilgrimage in Alsace.<sup>1</sup> The station, of course, was more of a militarpost than a Marian pilgrimage. The Ganda, each man with his rifle, occupied a perimeter of huts where they nightly acted as sentries changing guard at fixed hours and firing into the air to frighten off intruders.<sup>2</sup> 'They were perfectly organised and on the slightest alarm each knew his place in the defence of the mission', it is recalled.<sup>3</sup>

The Fathers were considered by the Banyarwanda to have the expertise of diviners, abapfumu,<sup>4</sup> and when they cured one visitor of sores, their encampment was inundated with the sick seeking medicine.<sup>5</sup> During their sorties they talked to the Hutu on the hills as best they could about God. It was almost a biblical scene as Father Brard mounted on his ass with Tobi Kibati, the Ganda catechist who had worked with him for over ten years, at his side, jogged

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1. Nothomb Church History 11

2. Lecoindre Rev. Père to his family 7 October 1903  
Dossier 112 WPAR

3. Testimonies collected by Abbé Joseph Sibomana in  
Grands Lacs 1950, 29

4. Testimonies collected by Abbé Alexandre Ruterandongozi in  
Grands Lacs 1950, 31

5. Hurel 'Histoire du Sacré-Coeur d'Issavi'



along the narrow paths around Save. All of Kibati's family had been wiped out in 1895 when the Ganda settlement on Ukerewe Island was attacked and he had dedicated his life to serving the White Fathers. Refusing to remarry, his celibacy was noted by the people; to remain a virgin became known as kutobia.<sup>1</sup> Brard would stop his ass and address the crowd of peasants which gathered in a mixture of Swahili and Jinja that few could have understood. Tobi explained the catechism in the Kinyarwanda that he had picked up from bought slaves at Katoke. Kinyarwanda was a complex and rich language which took the Fathers two years to learn for preaching and conversation, but ten to fifteen years to speak elegantly in the style of the court. Tobi's rough attempts were described deprecatingly by the Hutu as umunyu, salty.<sup>1</sup>

To entice people into the inner enclosure of the mission, Father Brard used to throw handfuls of beads onto the ground. Soon the station was thronged with crowds of children; fifty were taken in for training in April 1900. Building was cheap, two spoonful of salt were given to children who brought wood or to workers requisitioned by Cyitature.<sup>2</sup> Father Jovite Matabaro remembered being lured in by the beads scattered by Terebura, as Brard was called, and Kibati enticing him to

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1. Testimonies collected by Abbé Joseph Sibomana in Grands Lacs 1950, 28

2. Testimonies collected by Abbé Jovite Matabaro in Grands Lacs 1950, 43

work there for cloth. Fear of contracting some impurity from the foreigners drove him home. Abdon Sabakati pursued him, and, in a tearful scene, he was chased from a corner of his father's hut back to the mission where he entered the internat for catechists.<sup>1</sup> Many were called but few could be said to have chosen.

With some two hundred voluntary patients visiting daily and scores of children flushed out of their banana groves by the Ganda, Save mission must have given the court an impression of unwonted success. Cyitature, frightened that his association with the Fathers would cost him his head, kept away from Nyanza. Rumours were soon rife that he was about to lead a revolt against the Ega. May 1900 was a tense month; two abatware were sent from court, on the missionaries' request, to ascertain for themselves that no sedition was afoot.

The arrival of court agents at Save was greeted by undisguised hostility by the local Hutu. Despite gifts borne by the abatware for the Fathers, the peasants were not deceived. 'The Hutu are not a bit pleased with this arrangement', wrote the diarist; 'every day they come to tell us that these chiefs are here to make war on us'.<sup>2</sup> The court insisted that it was, on the contrary, rebellious Tutsi who were threatening both the mission and the authority of the mwami; with great aplomb Musinga requested

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1. Father Jovite Matabaro Grands Lacs 1950, 44

2. The chiefs were Kaizuka and Kaningwa, see Save Diary (May 1900)



the missionaries to send the culprits straight to Nyanza. The charade was finally played out when the priests cannily asked the abatware to return to court and certify that the mission supported the mwami's authority.<sup>1</sup>

The mwami and his advisers were genuinely frightened of revolts since the risings in the north. They were particularly vulnerable to movements legitimised by pretenders to the throne, whether or not their claims had any substance, because of the Ega coup d'état. In June, Kabare was sent to co-ordinate the defence of the southern marches against Burundi raiders again said to have a 'Bilegeya', so thoughts of attacking Save mission were shelved.<sup>2</sup> Spears, an American trader who was attempting to ingratiate himself at court, had warned Musinga of a second revolt simmering in Gisaka, and the missionaries were taking on a potential strategic importance.<sup>3</sup>

The Fathers' success in handling the devious manoeuvres of the court had the negative result of convincing the local Hutu that they were merely agents of the mwami after all. Rumours spread rapidly that children taken in for instruction were ultimately destined for the mwami who would hand them over to Nyina'rupfu, Mother-Death. A tradition existed that Nyina'rupfu had

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1. Hurel 'Histoire du Sacré-Coeur d'Issavi'

2. Save Diary June 1900

3. *ibid.*

trapped Rwabugiri in a cave during the Nkore campaign and he had only been released on the promise of sending many Rwandans to their death as ransom. Probably only an allegory of the heavy Rwandan losses during the wars, the children took it seriously and dreaded that those in the internat were the first contingent. Yet, since they saw that fate as that of saviour heroes dying to save the realm, they waited patiently and fearfully for the day when Terebura would dispatch them to Nyanza. Meanwhile children from poor and uninfluential families were handed over by the chiefs to the catechists. By November 1900 the braying of Terebura's ass was the signal for parents to hide their children.<sup>1</sup> In reality, though, the young catechumens lived in comparative luxury, eating meat and benefiting from the temporary protection of the station.<sup>2</sup>

To keep up the level of recruitment the Ganda catechists were unleashed to beat the hills on their own, each allotted his own area. It was a catastrophe. Their technique was to 'select' peasant children who were given the lofty but cynical title intore, the 'chosen ones'.<sup>3</sup> Protest was useless. The missionaries were soon gleefully recording 'a big movement of conversions'.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Save Diary, November 1900

2. Testimonies collected by Abbé Joseph Sibomana and Jovite Matabaro Grands Lacs 1950, 28-30, 48-50

3. From the verb gutora to choose

4. Save Diary, December 1900



The Ganda requisitions removed young boys from the hills who would have been looking after cattle, and enraged the Tutsi who saw their ubuletwa labour being cornered by interlopers. The Ganda had scant regard for the sub-chiefs and, even had they wished to, did not know enough Kinyarwanda to explain the forceable removal of the youth.

Not all the Ganda were equally renowned for strong-arm tactics; Abdon was remembered as a kind and friendly catechist who attracted crowds. Tobi went to court in January 1901 and sufficiently gained the mwami's confidence for him to enquire about the Christian religion.<sup>1</sup> A few months later he was killed by the Hutu leader, Ngoma Yombi, while on the way to found Nyundo mission; traditions do not agree but the chief may have assumed from the presence of the king's agents in the party that the Ganda formed the vanguard of Tutsi settlers.<sup>2</sup>

From their base at Save the White Fathers founded two new stations. Musinga, using the missionaries for his political ends had allowed Father Barthélemy to set up Zaza mission in Gisaka at the end of 1900. The Gisaka kings had remained a focus of local resistance

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1. Save Diary January 1901

2. Abbé Joseph Sibomana's version in Grands Lacs 1950, 25, is that the king's guides deliberately led the Catholic party into a trap. Rapports annuels 1910-1911, 393, also suggests that Tobi's death may not have been accidental. Ngoma Yombi was found at Nyanza in 1911 by Father Pagès and subsequently executed by the Germans.

since Rwabugiri's reconquest of the region.<sup>1</sup> On April 4th. 1901, despite Tobi's murder and the deliberate obstruction of his guides, Father Barthélemy founded Nyundo mission in the equally troubled and unsettled Bugoyi.<sup>2</sup> The court's reasoning may have been that if the priests survived they could be useful agents in the future.<sup>3</sup>

Trouble was not long coming; in March 1901 a certain Rukara, who claimed to be in the Gisaka royal line, led a rising with the support of the people of Mirenge province.<sup>2</sup> His entourage included a group of eighty Ganda, traders cum bandits. The Fathers were seriously compromised by the many Ganda who drifted into eastern Rwanda in their wake, some posing as German or mission agents, some genuinely so and none the less villainous.<sup>3</sup> Gabriel Mujasi who led this band had 'acquired' one hundred rifles in Bukoba, and, with Spears' assistance, was helping Rukara to open up Gisaka for Christianity and Commerce.<sup>3</sup>

The priests were not unaware that the dubious company they kept might damage them. Rukara even pulled out an old letter from Von Bethe, the German officer, to prove the authenticity of his claim; but the Zaza missionaries were unimpressed, wary of the Ganda band and sent him packing.<sup>3</sup> It was a wise decision since an ngabo was already on the

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1. D'Arianoff A. Histoire des Bagesera I.R.C.B. 1952, 88-112

2. Hirth to Livinhac 31 December 1901, 09065; Dossier 95; W.F.A.R.; Des Forges; Rwanda under Musiinga 49-51

3. Save Diary March 1901; Hirth to Livinhac 31 December 1901



march from Nyanza.<sup>1</sup>

Gisaka was in a pitiful state. Three years of poor rains and famine had decimated the region and the Tutsi, scattered thinly, three or four to a hill, presided over abandoned banana plantations and starving Hutu.<sup>2</sup> It took little to rally the peasants to the cause of a restored Gisaka monarchy. That Nyanza kept hold of Gisaka during the rebellion was largely thanks to German punitive raids; throughout May and June 1901, Von Grawert with his Sudanese Muslim troops 'subdued' the Banyagisaka and attacked other raiding parties from Burundi. The extent and brutality of the German pacification cannot easily be judged but hundreds of head of cattle were stolen or 'confiscated';<sup>3</sup> Save mission bought up a number at fifteen roupies a head.<sup>4</sup> German raids in northern Burundi so glutted the Bujumbura cattle market that cows were selling at five roupies each. The many Ganda who were buying cattle and skins for cloth and trade goods were caught with depreciated stock and obliged to seek better prices on the Tanganyika markets,<sup>5</sup> or simply to turn

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1. Save Diary March 1901

2. Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 90 March 1901, 86-87

3. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 117 c.f. Kissabo raid

4. Save Diary June 1901

5. ibid. 20 April 1903

to banditry.

The Gisaka revolt was an important stage in the missionaries' initiation into the mysteries of Rwandan politics, and they had fared well. The mwami thanked them for their refusal to treat with Rukara; mission support for Nyanza had been an important element in the rebels' withdrawal.<sup>1</sup> The White Fathers' first description of Rwanda had been 'a perfect hierarchy, in which one chief is subordinate to another, under the all-powerful and supreme authority of the king'.<sup>2</sup> Father Brard initially admired the Tutsi whom he depicted as 'well-made, tall for the majority, with an intelligent air, alert, curious yet discreet, and well mannered in their deportment'. He had been most surprised to find 'almost distinguished manners in a country that had little relations with the outside world'.<sup>3</sup> The Hutu he had seen as lowly, ignorant serfs.

When the priests ceased to be curious travellers and began to have more frequent and frustrating dealings with the Tutsi, the Bourbon nose, as it were, began to rub off their fantasy picture. It was not long before Father Barthélemy was calling the Tutsi 'real Jews; they are rapacious flatterers and above all hypocrites'; he was considered to be pro-Tutsi by his colleagues.<sup>4</sup> The

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1. Save Diary March 1901

2. Brard A.Rev. Père letter of 15 February 1900 in Bulletin 1900, 294.

3. ibid. 295

4. Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 90 March 1901, 87



Fathers were not accustomed to being treated as an inferior race of wild animals, and found it difficult to remain calm when the Tutsi treated them to the arrogance and contempt that informed ruling class behaviour, what Arnoux called: 'un dédain superbe, un mépris conscient'.<sup>1</sup>

Yet no White Father could pretend that Cardinal Lavigerie had not been explicit about the correct treatment of chiefs:

You will not neglect to make them realise that Christian doctrine is completely favourable to their authority since it teaches that they are the true representatives of God in the temporal realm.<sup>2</sup>

This was the cornerstone of Catholic political thought applied to Africa.<sup>3</sup> But after long years veterans like Brard and Barthélemy had grown impatient; instead of God's representatives they saw brutal and ignorant despots barring the door of Heaven to their subject populations. The Tutsi who, had they been literate, might have given correspondence courses to Machiaevelli, mixed ruthlessness with an infuriating sophistication.

The spiritual dynamism that drove men out of the cosy parochial backwaters of rural France into the African bush:

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1. Arnoux A. Rev. Père Les Pères Blancs aux Sources du Nil Namur 1953, 19

2. Un Père Blanc: 'Les Idées Principales du Cardinal Lavigerie sur l'Évangélisation de l'Afrique' Revue d'Histoire des Missions II No. 3. September 1925, 386

3. Ultimately from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Chapter 13 verses 1-8

was easily deformed by isolation and frustration into physical violence. The step from Sufism to Jihad could be short in Islam and, in Christianity, zeal for souls could be transformed into theocratic tyranny; such development was not readily checked by either religious superiors or colonial officers. At both Zaza and Save, the missionaries lost sight of the much preached distinction between temporal and spiritual realms thereby accepting a definition of religious leadership that was profoundly African. Their presence soon became a threat to Tutsi rule not unlike the Nyabingi prophetesses' with their court and clients. As early as from July to August 1901, chiefs around Save began preventing peasants from attending the mission; 'they fear that our authority is increasing at the expense of theirs', the Father-Superior explained.<sup>1</sup>

There was nothing irrational in such Tutsi fears. Father Brard had left a trail of hurt feelings all over East Africa. In Bukumbi, he had insulted two German officers and installed three chiefs without the king's permission; they had been removed the moment he left. In Uswui, he had insisted on the payment of forty cows compensation for a pillaged mail caravan and refused to visit the local chief when he refused for a whole year.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Save Diary July/August 1901

2. Hirth to Livinhac 31 December 1901



His activities at Save went on under the watchful eye of Dr. Kandt; in one grave incident Kandt discovered that the mission Ganda had beaten a thief so severely that he had died later.<sup>1</sup> As Monsignor Hirth remarked ruthfully, Father Brard always worked with 'a good number of baganda; they are really more askari than catechist'.<sup>2</sup>

Brard developed a personal loathing of the Tutsi and seemed to delight in humiliating them. Sub-chiefs were forced to carry bricks and put under house-arrest until they agreed to supply the mission with logs for building purposes.<sup>3</sup> He blithely announced in October 1901 that, since the mwami had given him Save Hill, all the Hutu residing on mission property belonged to him. Henceforth he would appoint the chiefs... of course all under the heading of championing the poor.

*Ce n'était pas une petite joie pour les Bahutu de voir leurs chefs, toujours si fiers ennemis de la peine et de la contrainte porter des briques du matin au soir... Et puis cette protection que nous exerçons lorsqu'ils sont manifestement tourmentés est bien de nature à leur inspirer la confiance à notre égard.*<sup>4</sup>

It was one approach to Rwanda's stratified society but certainly not the one advocated by the White Fathers' Society.

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1. Hirth to Livinhac 31 December 1901. The man had stolen a cow from the mission and, it should be noted, that traditional punishment was to be impaled on a stake.

2. *ibid.*

3. Save Diary July/August 1901

4. *ibid.*

Father Paul Barthélemy was, as the Germans told Monsignor Hirth, 'out of the Father Brard school', and also a liability to the mission; he had personally punished Tobi's murder without German permission or foreknowledge and Von Grawert wanted his deportation.<sup>1</sup> The Vicar-Apostolic was worried that newly arrived missionaries would fall under the influence of these veterans, and Father Loupias was already showing signs of following in their footsteps. Equally dangerous was the effect on the German administration, for the largely French White Fathers carried with them the shadow of the Uganda Bafransa party. To Livinhac the Bishop wrote: 'nos missionnaires au Ruanda sont regardés comme voulant accaparer pour eux l'autorité dont le gouvernement est si jaloux'.<sup>2</sup> To Bujumbura he loyally defended Brard's and Barthélemy's inexcusable behaviour, and made the resolution to get rid of them unless they mended their ways.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the Bishop's concern, daily life at Save remained marked by military discipline. Prayers were held at the church at dawn for the Ganda and each man allotted his task. To stop the catechists building up a personal following they were changed from hill to hill. Punishment for fighting was a whole day's work on the mission gardens, penitents could be seen hoeing by firelight. Catechumen-catechists were under the same strict regime but

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1. Hirth to Livinhac 31 December 1901

2. *ibid.*

3. *ibid.*



many enjoyed remarkable freedom. Alani Njangwe, a Hutu catechist, disappeared from the mission for a long time and was assumed murdered by the priests at the hands of Musinga's agents. He returned bold as brass from a 'religious expedition' trailing goats, sheep and cattle. Having made an issue of the Hutu's disappearance at Nyanza, the Fathers were seriously embarrassed, and the man was publicly admonished from the pulpit.<sup>1</sup>

Attendances at Save school in October 1901 ranged from eighty to one hundred. Father Smoor taught reading and writing; Terebura drummed in the catechism. If any pupil was unable to recite the set passage off by heart, the whole class was sent out hoeing. Timor Tereburae drove pupils to study in the evenings. Despite the lack of materials and crude conditions the boys in the internat made progress.<sup>2</sup>

It was fortunate that rote learning was the norm since the catechism was a strange hotch-potch of Rundi, Swahili and bastard Kinyarwanda. The title for example was Ekitabu kyo kufutula bigambo bye dini; it should have read 'Igitabu cyo gusobanura amagambo y'idini', (The Book which explains the teachings of Religion).<sup>3</sup>

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1. Grands Lacs 1950, 29-31. Des Forges makes a great deal of the incident, see Rwanda under Musinga 43-46.

2. Save Diary October 1901; Grands Lacs 1950, 30

3. Published in 1902 by Benziger and Co. S.A. Einsiedeln, Switzerland. A copy may be found in the library of Archbishop's House, Kigali, Rwanda.

In the French form of an Histoire Sainte, the printed catechism started with 65 pages of the Old Testament followed by 38 pages of a Life of Christ to end with 27 pages on The Church. Many key words were foreign; the words of the Magnificat, for example, read: 'Mwoyo wange utinye Mungu'<sup>1</sup>; the correct Kinyarwanda for spirit was Roho and Imana was the only concept that gave the idea of a High God. However, the Swahili term, Mungu, remained the name for the Christian God throughout the colonial period.

The catechism was presented to pupils as the developing dialogue between God and man, a surprisingly modern catechetical method. Even through Brard's Swahili esperanto, the ideas so reminiscent of the claims of the Nyabingi prophetesses must have been consolingly familiar. 'This format intrigued us', wrote Father Jovite Matabaro,<sup>2</sup> and we followed with curiosity the procession of Prophets, these men who had spoken with God.<sup>2</sup> By page 105, though, they were to discover that this prophetic element disappeared most disappointingly from Catholic Christianity; it would only be in the 1930s with the Church Missionary Society that the promise of the Old Testament prophets would be realised.<sup>3</sup>

The Fathers were fortunate to be teaching a doctrine of salvation against a sophisticated religious background of

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1. Ekitabu 1902, 70

2. Grands Lacs 1950, 44-45

3. See the end of VIII'th Chapter for details, in forthcoming Church and Revolution in Rwanda



the Iyangombe cult that was, at least, on the verge of developing its own eschatology. Ideas of Heaven and Hell were not entirely alien and the belief in the divergent destinies of different spirits commonly held; only in the Iyangombe cult salvation was solely linked to ritual initiation without causal connection with moral conduct. The White Fathers' long preparation for baptism and ban on catechumens attending mass certainly emphasised the ritual and numinous quality of the Christian transition rite, but the Ten Commandments and Christian behaviour were equally stressed as essential.

The period of postulancy for the first Christians was speeded up, and they became catechumens as soon as they were able to read.<sup>1</sup> New catechumens were given a medal of the Blessed Virgin, Kisusanyu cya Bibira Maria, to signify their changed status, and a piece of cloth as a prize. Many peasants allegedly believed that the medal was a kind of Swahili amulet, burozi, with magical powers. Parents beat their children when they found them wearing it and, when priests baptised dying babies, their fathers accused them of sorcery.<sup>2</sup> The picture of the Sacred-Heart of Jesus at Save soon gave rise to the idea that the missionaries ate the hearts of their catechumens and marked them out for

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1. The period before baptism was divided up into the postulancy, usually lasting sixteen months, and the catechumenate proper lasting thirty-two months.

2. Save Diary 5 September 1902.

destruction with the medal.<sup>1</sup>

The religious expertise of the missionaries was not doubted but its nature was unknown. After having killed five court rainmakers in October, 1902, the mwami tentatively requested Save mission to make rain.<sup>2</sup> The disturbed political situation seems to have been conducive to the rapid spread of fantastic stories involving the Fathers. The missionaries reported that they were said to have heralded Bwirakabiri, a solar eclipse. Anyone who left their home during this period would change into a ravenous wild animal then return to their hut and eat the occupants.<sup>3</sup> It was thought by some, according to the Save missionaries, that the priests had a tunnel under their compound through which catechumens would be taken to Europe.<sup>4</sup>

It is difficult to gauge accurately from European records how common such beliefs were or, indeed, whether the Fathers were not misinterpreting their informants' statements. Misunderstandings were common owing to language difficulties and the premise that the African peasant was a superstitious child unquestioned and liable to lead to hasty conclusions. But it does seem certain that the world which grew up around each station provided a focus for myth-making and story-telling.

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1. Save Diary March 1902

2. *ibid.* 23, 27 October 1902

3. *ibid.* 8 June 1902

4. *ibid.* 15 May 1903



Father Brard's ass was said to indicate the presence of poisoners and sorcerers by braying; others believed that it could determine a favourable site for a mission.<sup>1</sup> Father Dufays' bicycle produced a crop of stories when he visited court.<sup>2</sup>

Although a Nyabingi prophet prophegied the imminent arrival of the Whites in Rwanda in the 1890s, and the Germans had been travelling through the country for over six years, the ordinary peasant on the hills seems to have found the White Fathers prodigious and alarming at first. Outside the network of spies and court agents, communications were limited by the rugged mountainous terrain. Apart from the visit to a major market, or a trek to find food in times of famine, the peasant had little access to information beyond his own group of hills. The stories that he heard probably filtered down from Tutsi households, through the ear-wagging garagu, deliberately distorted sometimes at source, and hopelessly muddled by the time they reached the simple cultivator. When Tutsi like Ruhinankiko, with privileged access to information, thought that Jesus was head of the White Fathers and the mass a ritual appeasement of the major White spirit, it may be imagined what frightened Hutu made of the mission stations.<sup>2</sup>

The rumours and strange beliefs that circulated had common themes and expressed both the Rwandan fears about

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1. Grands Lacs 1950, 28, 32.

2. ibid. 31

the Whites, and the tensions and anxieties within their own society. The missionaries mistakenly imagined that they emanated from the court, but they seem rather to have grown up spontaneously out of the confrontation between mission station and hill communities. This, though, was only one aspect of the situation. Rwanda's stratified society was one of ceaseless internal conflict as lineages jockeyed for position around nuclear feudal groups of Tutsi and their retainers. Hunger was never far from the door, followed inexorably by the king's annual ikoro collectors. The ravenous wild animals, transformations, sorcerers and poisoners, to which the Fathers were thought to be related as saviours, prophets or abapfumu and witches, were the psychic detritus of a highly competitive society in which the reward for success was great wealth, and for failure, sudden death. And in this sense, the mission was nothing more than a passive receptacle.

In 1902 the Zaza missionaries began to blunder politically; they replaced, much to the mwami's fury, a sub-chief who had killed a catechumen.<sup>1</sup> Mhumbika, chief of Zaza Hill and a mission protégé, was a descendant of the Gisaka kings so looked on with suspicion by the court because of his suspected involvement in former risings. On March 22nd. 1902, the Zaza Fathers learnt that he had

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<sup>1</sup> Save Diary April 1902. This was the work of Father Van Thiel.





Above: Father Dufays and Basebya 1903  
Right: Musinga in 1905  
Below: Father Brard at court 1905





been summoned to Nyanza and that the court had made overtures about the conduct at Zaza to the Save Fathers.<sup>1</sup> The Egas were in fact handling the two Fathers-Superior as they would powerful Tutsi chiefs, trying to manipulate overlapping authorities as mutual checks. Mhumbika was ousted.

Father Pouget, the head of Zaza mission, was in a dilemma. On taking over the station, he had been flooded with complaints from the Banyagisaka about the oppression of the Rwandan court, and seems to have been momentarily swayed.<sup>2</sup> After Mhumbika's fall and replacement by the Mirenge province chief, Nyamutesi, Pouget saw the folly of his ways and went to reassure the mwami of his complete neutrality on the Gisaka issue.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, Brard at Save had taken up Mhumbika's case and forced the king to re-instate him, with an overseer sent as in the case of Cytatire.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps thinking Mhumbika had lost his ibikingi for good, the Zaza Fathers cleared his cows off the mission hill. They had not counted on his being a garagu of the king himself nor had they realised that the

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1. Kaizuka, who had been killing Tutsi thought to be disloyal to Nyanza around Save, was again used as the mwami's agent. Despite complaints from the Rwandan umutware, Rugambarara, the court had been reluctant to move against Mhumbika because of his mission patronage, see Zaza Diary 9 May 1902

2. Zaza Diary 2 June 1902: 'Interminable complaints from the Banyagisaka who want not a single one of the Rwandan abatware'.

3. Zaza Diary 9 May 1902

4. *ibid.* 12 June 1902



cattle were Musinga's given in ubuhake; an urgent message was sent via the Save Fathers that the cows should be returned to their pastures. To add to the missionaries' bafflement, the king informed them that the Banyagisaka were not to be trusted and only wanted 'to cause trouble between himself and the Whites'.<sup>1</sup>

But while the king could tie up the Fathers on small points, he had been thwarted on the major issue of Mhumbika. He therefore turned to the Germans and Von Beringe.<sup>2</sup> On October 8th. 1902, three German askari arrived and forced Mhumbika and his followers to accompany them to court. The next day, Mikaeli, a mission catechist, ran from the capital to Save with the news that all save Mhumbika and a boy who looked after the Zaza cattle had been butchered in front of the askari.<sup>3</sup> The Catholics had failed to provide any defence against the court's brand of justice; the Banyagisaka stopped frequenting Zaza mission.<sup>4</sup> 'These poor people think that all the Whites form a solid block', wrote Pouget, 'and that the order given by the military commandant was if not inspired by us at least approved of'.<sup>5</sup> The real answer was that

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1. Save Diary 25 June 1902

2. Louis. Ruanda-Urundi 117. Von Beringe was in charge of Bujumbura.

3. Save Diary 9 October 1902

4. Zaza Diary August 1902

5. Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 97 April 1903, 71

Father Pouget had shown himself a weak patron.

To make the point, the officious Von Beringe unleashed his Schutztruppen on Gisaka; the Save Fathers described 'a great army' moving east.<sup>1</sup> Over thirty people died around Zaza mission alone.<sup>2</sup> An ill-timed request from Father Smoor to found new stations was flatly refused by the Captain. The Catholics were paying the price for political blunders and ill-chosen company but, above all, for what Monsignor Hirth called 'this immoderate passion for dominating everything around them',<sup>3</sup> a passion in which men like Von Beringe were unwilling to suffer competition. It was only in December 1902 that the Germans relented and made the mwami pay compensation for the twenty men murdered at court.<sup>4</sup>

Against this background of simmering civil war, the crushing of Gisaka, daily violence, and acrimonious relations with the German military government, the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church were impressed on the excellent memories of Rwandan catechumens. Terebura's insistence on the correct repetition of the doctrine of the Trinity made progress slow at times, but when Father Smoor took over, the pupils rapidly absorbed the principal

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1. Save Diary 16 October 1902

2. Hirth to Livinhac 31 December 1902, 09077/ Dossier 95  
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3. Hirth to Livinhac 31 December 1901

4. A mere forty cows were paid, see Save Diary 30 December 1902



Christian dogmas.<sup>1</sup> However little their conversion corresponded to the Jesuit ideal of an intellectual assent to the truths of the Faith, not all cases could be dismissed as results of pressure and fear, or as epiphenomena of patronage. One of the first neophytes was Wenceslas Nyirambinda whose son became Abbé Laurent Sikubwabo and whose daughter, Mama Mechtilda, rose to be head of Byimana Girls' School. The first converts, known as 'those who have eaten off baskets' after the makeshift tables in the Ganda camp, had close contact with the Fathers who concentrated on their training. Abbé Jovite Matabaro, one of Rwanda's first priests, was in this early group, and it cannot be doubted that several lives were radically altered by this early contact with the mission.<sup>2</sup> But many of the first Christians slipped away to become 'boys' for the German askari.<sup>3</sup>

The missionaries' effort was soon spread thinly over a large catechumenate; the numbers of those given the Medal rose from 782 in 1900 at Save to 1,836 in 1901 and 4,656 by the end of 1902. The reality was less impressive than the figures; despite their title of 'intore' the catechumens were generally the poorest of the poor, the pressganged pariahs of the hills. On Holy Saturday

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1. Grands Lacs 1950, 44.

2. Abbé Jovite Matabaro was ordained with Abbé Isodore Semigabo in 1919.

3. Hirth to Livinhac 20 July 1903, 095082. Dossier 95

April 12th. 1903, after three years in the internat, seventeen Hutu and nine Tutsi, mainly orphans and all but four boys, were solemnly baptised at Save mission. At this time, eight hundred people were receiving instruction at Zaza with a nucleus of fifty in the internat; thirty of these were due for baptism that Christmas. Nyundo was underway with the usual requisition system filling the catechism class. At Nyanza, a Catholic catechist, Prestanci, was allowed to teach Swahili to the mwami and six other Tutsi. On the surface it seemed like a hopeful young mission. Beneath the annual returns and encouraging reports sent back to Algiers was a disorganised vicariate in which individual priests were creating havoc.<sup>1</sup>

Father Brard, like an old wine, lost what little sugar he had left. Local chiefs were forbidden to take presents to court, and the Germans refused to call at the mission; violent incidents were common. In an unusual show of wrath Monsignor Hirth wrote to Livinhac about the situation:

When we came to this country in 1900 it was agreed with the king that none of these villages should be taken over by the missionaries, but despite everything, they have got their hands on 3,000 hectares of land in which about 8,000 people are living; they exercise the authority of a king over this property, not only judging

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<sup>1</sup> Save Diary 12 April, 15 May, 5 August 1903



many cases: but conscripting labour, ordering fatigues for construction materials, chasing out polygamists, removing amulets, demolishing the little huts for sacrifices, replacing even a chief expelled by them, and imposing on the chiefs as catechists: Christians from the armée roulante.<sup>1</sup>

The armée roulante was, of course, the Ganda. In June 1902, a 'veritable avalanche' had descended on Zaza.<sup>2</sup>

When Monsignor Hirth visited the Rwanda stations in June 1903, he was able to observe daily mission practice first-hand. On a Saturday the Ganda called in their groups of catechumens, each with their own kapitao. While the Christians were all in church on Sunday morning the catechumens would be assembled in a large open shed surrounded by their Ganda directors.

It was always a tumultuous scene especially when the women were there. They never learnt the difference between the Christian religion and the cult to the ancestral spirits. When they were told to kneel they did so as you would for the Iyangombe ceremonies.<sup>3</sup>

Clouting the women to keep them quiet, the Ganda taught the crowd their letters and the sign of the Cross. After the

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1. Hirth to Livinhac: 20 July 1903

2. Zaza Diary 9 June 1902

3. Grands Lacs: 1950, 29

lesson when the Christians came out from mass, Terebura would sweep in bearing the Good News. Silence reigned during the short instruction. In the afternoon there was Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, games and dancing. On weekdays, there were reading lessons followed by further religious instruction from Father Brard. Those living a short distance from the mission went home in the afternoons while the rest stayed the night in the Ganda camp.<sup>1</sup>

The Vicar-Apostolic saw enough to be profoundly shocked, and on July 7th. 1903 sent all the missionaries a list of instructions for reform of the system. All the Ganda catechists were to be withdrawn from the hills and no Sunday mass-meetings were permitted. Henceforth the Banyarwanda were to proselytise amongst their neighbours on their own, each catechumen bringing with him two postulants.<sup>2</sup> For Brard it amounted to 'the least possible noise so as not to arouse the sensibilities of the King or Tutsi'.<sup>3</sup> Permission was given for the Ganda at Zaza to continue working in regions distant from the station; close-by the system of personal contact was to be used. At Nyundo, there were only two or three Ganda and few Tutsi so the problem was less acute.

The concessions at Zaza were attributable to the presence of the 'dove-like' Father Pouget who had redeemed his earlier faltering by a continued policy of neutrality.

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1. Grands Lacs 1950, 30

2. Save Diary 7 July 1903

3. *ibid.*



Yet, however much Hirth had succeeded in obtaining outward compliance, Pouget's heart was still with the Hutu.

Ah, if only we were able to tell them that their conquerors (the Tutsi) were to be shown the door, or, at least, stopped from harming them, they would be more zealous (for Christianity).<sup>1</sup> Several come because of a secret desire for our protection and listen to us with interest. Alas, it takes a long time for them to understand that regnum meum non est ex hoc mundo.<sup>1</sup>

In the light of the flourishing theocracies around the Catholic stations, such incomprehension was scarcely culpable ignorance.

Monsignor Hirth rounded off his episcopal visit by requesting permission from Musinga for another station in the south-west at Mibirisi. The court seems to have been badly divided; Kabare favoured a hard-line limiting and harassing the missionaries, but was struggling for power with Ruhinankiko; the mwami supported, and looked for support from, the latter, and had not discounted the Fathers as possible allies. Fluctuations in court attitude appear to have depended in large measure on the amount of effective power wielded by Kabare and his sister, the Queen Mother Kanjogera.<sup>2</sup> The mwami granted Mibirisi

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1. Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 101 June 1903, 186

2. Des Forges Rwanda under Musinga 59-62, has an excellent description of court politics of the day

and indicated that he would not mind the White Fathers occupying Mulera where Hirth was contemplating a fourth station.

No sooner had Hirth left than court attitudes began to harden. Two important abatware were sent to Save to complain that the Zaza Fathers had sent a catechist into Buganza without permission. Two men from Save with an envoy from the king left Save to investigate and the mwami, apparently mollified, allowed the catechist to stay on provided no building took place. Then in December 1903, Musinga let it be known that he was firmly opposed to any foundation in Mulera and, at the same time, the unfortunate Mhumbika was evicted from his remaining land. Next month the catechist was expelled from Buganza and his hut burnt down; feeling was swinging decisively against the Catholics at Nyanza.<sup>1</sup>

It was too late to go back on the foundation of Mulera; Father Leon Classe and Father Dufays with Brother Hermengilde had begun building at Rwaza in November 1903 having left Nyundo with a contingent of fifty well-armed Sukuma guards and two Bugoyi catechists, Josephu and Yohani. The Sukuma protected the new station and escorted parties seeking wood. They also robbed the local population of cattle and crops though Father Classe kept them under

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1. Save Diary 15, 30 September 1903, 8 January 1904; Zaza Diary January 1904.

2. Interview with Joseph Rugirankana, Rukubankanda Hill, and Leon Rukeratabaro, Rubona Hill, at Rwaza, June 1973.



better control than the Ganda in the south, while the belligerent Hutu lineages were no easy prey.<sup>1</sup> Likewise at Mibirisi, the Fathers were able to employ Banyagisaka catechists and enlisted the Shangi Resident, Von Nordeck's, help in building.<sup>2</sup> Thus the people around the second set of stations were spared the worst excesses of the Ganda askari-catechist.

With Mibirisi and Rwaza there were now an arc of five stations around the main Tutsi heart of Rwanda. Missionary reinforcements continued to arrive on the strength of this expansion and the success of Hutu conversions. Fathers Loupias and Verkele were sent to the north, Verfurth and Zuembiehl to Mibirisi. As the first priest seen in the region Father Zuembiehl, Zumbiri as the name became, had the distinction of entering the local language as umuzumbiri, meaning a European missionary.<sup>3</sup> The Vicar-Apostolic earned the suitably lofty title, Imputabigwi, he whose exploits follow each other rapidly. The exploits were rapid enough for a very tired and plaintive Jean-Joseph Hirth to ask Livinhac for an auxiliary; the strain of a quarter of a century in Central Africa was beginning to show and was added to daily by the anxieties of Rwanda.<sup>4</sup>

While the Ega leaders had reason to defend the religious apparatus that surrounded the mwami and indirectly legitimated,

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1. Rugirankana and Rukerabataro

2. Mibirisi Diary 22 December 1903

3. Nothomb Church History 16

4. Hirth to Livinhac 31 December 1903, 09588 Dossier 95  
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their own power, it was the straightforward political dangers of the Catholic's five stations that appear to have pre-occupied them most. Despite the daily round of high court liturgy, religious officials were treated in cavalier fashion; troublesome abiru were murdered and a whole succession of court rainmakers went to their death in the drought of 1903-1904. Some time before the Fathers' arrival the mwami w'imandwa was deposed for having connections with Rutalindwa.<sup>1</sup> Kabare was famous for his remark that even if the Ega leaders did not have Kalinga, the dynastic drum, they had the mwami...and a drum could be made.<sup>2</sup> This instrumental attitude to religion was far from any slavish adherence to archaic magical practices. Kabare was very much a political subject rather than an anthropological object. It was Musinga and the Queen Mother who needed the full ritual scaffolding to their office to offset memories of their usurping the throne.

Not that the religious pretensions of the Fathers were immediately threatening. In reply to the mwami's request for rain, Brard 'gave a little catechism lesson to the messenger on Lulemo, Master of all he has created and therefore of the rain'.<sup>3</sup> According to Hirth, the

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1. Arnoux: Le Culte 291; Pagès: Un Royaume 359

2. Pagès Un Royaume 207-208: 'Hagum'umwami, ingom'irabazwa'.

Tout Kabare est dans cette parole (Monsignor Classe)'

3. Save Diary 23 October 1902



belief that the Fathers could make rain grew up during their first visit to Nyanza when a freak thunderstorm broke over the capital.<sup>1</sup> The advantage of the name Mungu for the Christian High God was that it left the mwami, the embodiment of Imana, secure in his religious power; Mungu was the foreigners' God, and Imana, the national deity of Rwanda, so no conflict arose. Court messengers asking for rain explained that the mwami would 'ask Imana and we should ask Mungu'.<sup>2</sup>

The clash with the Iyangombe cult was more immediate but, again, not serious. By the twentieth century the cult had tended to merge with household veneration and appeasement of lineage spirits. An inzu would have its favourite mandwa who was called upon in times of grave distress; a man might ask his son to perform as Serwakira in order to gain good fortune for his herds.<sup>3</sup> The Tutsi consecrated young Hutu girls to Iyangombe, like any other gift of chattels, in order to gain the mandwa's favour in cases of serious illness. The girl would then be unable to marry and wander from kraal to kraal living as a Tutsi concubine.<sup>4</sup> This trivialisation of the cult to the level of intercessory lineage religion may have been the result of Tutsi influence on its development. In

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1. Hirth to his brother undated, 095307 Dossier 95 WFA

2. Save Diary 21 June 1904

3. De Lacger Ruanda 308

4. Save Diary 6 January 1903. This performance of marriage to a spirit was known as kuterekereza.

September 1902 something akin to a national festival of sacrifices took place amongst the Hutu in thanks for the sorghum harvest; the Fathers were amazed to see their catechumens trooping off to join the offerings to the mandwa mediums.<sup>1</sup> The context of the cult and its social functions must have been seriously affected by the decline of the ngabo in the colonial period.

Coming from Uganda and having spent a decade in Karagwe, the Fathers were accustomed to the Bacwezi cults from which the Iyangombe and Kiranga cults had developed.<sup>2</sup> They transposed their own dualism onto the religious system they found, assuming that since Imana as High God must be a 'good' principle, Iyangombe and Kiranga were clearly 'bad'.<sup>3</sup> They called the ceremonies in Burundi 'the Devil's Sabbath',<sup>4</sup> and the Rwanda Fathers described the mandwa spirits as 'a whole host of demons that have kept them (Banyarwanda) enslaved for centuries'.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Save Diary 19 September 1902

2. For general attitudes to African culture based on doctrinal considerations, see Kieran J.A. 'Some Roman Catholic Missionary Attitudes to Africans in the nineteenth century' Race X No. 3 1969, 341-359

3. Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 76 October 1897, 496: 'All around, a mass of women and girls perform their religious dances accompanied by songs of supplication. This is because the woman has henceforth become Kiranga, that is to say the favourite priestess of Yangombe, the evil spirit, the Ahriman of the Rundi compared with the Ormuzd, Imana, the principle of Good'.

4. *ibid.* No. 73 January 1897, 130

5. *ibid.* No. 97 April 1903, 224; Save Diary 30 December 1903



If household lineage religion was branded as idolatrous superstition, the Iyangombe cult was worse, demonic possession. Catechists who attended the ceremonies risked a beating at Father Brard's hands and neophytes who strayed too close to the sacrifices were chased away by the Binego medium and sometimes severely assaulted.<sup>1</sup> The missionaries' early incomprehension allowed Christians to seek mandwa protection with good heart. The Fathers' fulminations about Shitani and 'suppôts du Satan'<sup>2</sup> fell on deaf ears, for the peasants knew quite well that Iyangombe was the benign saviour of Rwanda.<sup>3</sup>

The change of mood at court towards the Catholics was explained on April 7th. 1904 when the missionaries got news that Musinga's last two natural allies, important Nyiginya nobles, had been killed in a clash with Kabare's troops.<sup>4</sup> All power now lay in the hands of Kanjogera and Kabare; mission protégés feared for their life and rumours abounded in July that an attack on the missions was imminent.<sup>5</sup> Ruhinankiko was said to be in grave danger of execution.<sup>5</sup> The missionaries were entering a period of crisis when they would be thankful again for the presence of the Kaiser's Schutztruppen.

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1.<sup>4</sup> See Mibirisi Diary 12 May 1904, Save Diary 30 December 1903, for incidences of violence connected with the cult.  
2. 'Hell-hounds', see Save Diary 30 December 1903  
3.<sup>4</sup> Arnoux Le Culte 287-289  
4.<sup>4</sup> Save Diary 7 April 1904: 'Kyaka and Sebuharara'  
5.<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* June 1904

CHAPTER TWO

From Crisis to Consolidation

1904 - 1907



The military might of the Kaiser in Rwanda amounted to two German officers and twenty-five askari in 1902. The main camp was at Shangi linked by Lake Kivu to a small base at Kisenyi. At the port of Bujumbura to the south were two sections of the IXth. Company, fifty men commanded by three officers.<sup>1</sup> The telegraph from Dar-es-Salaam stretched only as far as Tabora, ten days march from Bujumbura.<sup>2</sup> This token occupation force was to deny Rwanda to the Belgians. The string of camps along the lake pointed as much westwards into King Leopold's Congo as eastwards into the Tutsi-ruled highlands of Burundi and Rwanda.

German hopes for 'Ruanda-Urundi' were summed up in the imperialist cliché of civilising mission and expansion of trade, a vague creed for the backwoods of German East Africa.<sup>3</sup> Von Götzen, the Governor in Dar-es-Salaam, had the quaintest of political aims, 'sustaining the authority of the chiefs in such a fashion that they become convinced that their salvation and that of their allies depends on their attachment to the German cause'.<sup>3</sup> The Rwandan court did not want an expansion of trade, for

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1. Unteroffizier Erhardt and four men were at Kisenyi and Lieutenant Von Parish commanded the Shangi garrison, see Louis Ruanda-Urundi 110, 121

2. ibid. Bujumbura was, of course, called Usumbura at the time in European documents.

3. Von Götzen to Von Beringe 9 October 1902, quoted in Ryckmans P. Une Page d'Histoire Coloniale I.R.C.B.

they were now unable to control it, nor did they want their country opened up to civilisation, for this meant the arrival of more meddlesome clerics. They were attached to the 'German cause' to the extent that it co-incided with their own.

Although the Germans recognised the need for a separate policy for the Haya, Rundi and Banyarwanda, they had yet to formulate a precise approach to the particular problem of conflict between abami and nobles in the two major kingdoms. Thus the German officers, sometimes separated by over three weeks from the Governor, had to make independent decisions and were tempted to take the law into their own hands. In early June 1903, von Beringe, the Captain from Bujumbura, deliberately disobeyed his standing orders and attacked the Rundi mwami, Mwezi Kissabo, with the help of his two main rivals amongst the nobles; the mwami suffered a crushing defeat with many warriors killed and over four hundred cattle confiscated.<sup>1</sup> The pretext for the raid, as in a punitive expedition of 1899,<sup>2</sup> was the protection of the isolated mission station of Mugeru. The Governor was furious and von Beringe replaced by von Grawert in April 1904. From that time onwards no German officer harboured any doubts that his

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1. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 115-117; Ryckmans Une Page 8

2. Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 85 January 1900, 83



first duty lay in supporting at all costs the authority of the two kings. Though the Germans had never considered attacking Musinga, von Beringe's vainglorious exploits undoubtedly re-inforced the commitment in Dar-es-Salaam to the policy of Indirect Rule.

The equivalent to the Rundi ganwa, nobles, who had fought with von Beringe against Mwezi Kissabo were in Rwanda the powerful Ega like Kabare. So Musinga's opponents had to count on German opposition to any attempt to act independently of the mwami. Since king and councillors took respectively a soft and hard line on the missionaries, this was not to the Catholics' disadvantage. Von Beringe's razzia not only brought a handful of German troops behind the young mwami, the least fanatical of the Fathers' enemies, but alerted the court again to the danger of crossing the Whites and threatening their religious officials.

Had they been asked, the majority of Fathers would have said that the Governor's policy 'corresponded to right reason'. The more obedient had heeded Monsignor Hirth's call for reform and his repeated demands to take the chiefs seriously. But the problem was which chiefs to take seriously? At the heart of the vexed Gisaka issue was an inter-kingdom dispute dating back a century.

The king is represented in Gisaka by chiefs to whom he has given full power to pressurise and pillage the local Batuale. Consequently everyday there are complaints from the latter against their

oppressors, and the fear continues that they will lose their hills, their herds and their authority.<sup>1</sup>

The Tutsi-Hutu dimension of such conflicts was unimportant. Peasants might take advantage of disorders to escape from exactions, but, more often, regional political identity strengthened feudal bonds as garagu rallied round their overlords to oppose the foreigners.<sup>4</sup>

Whereas at Zaza the Vicar-Apostolic's admonition to support the mwami and chiefs put the Fathers in an awkward position, at Rwaza it almost sent them to their deaths. The mission's most prayerful and obedient priests found themselves at a station where to follow Monsignor Hirth's directives was catastrophic. The Tutsi were foreigners in Mulera,<sup>2</sup> 'little loved, often given a rough handling, and little at ease in the midst of their subjects', as Father Classe put it.<sup>3</sup> The missionaries did their best, he explained, 'to restore order and respect for authority; but here again the missionary task is delicate; our taking the chiefs' side worries the mouhoutou and they take offence'.<sup>4</sup>

The province of Bugarura, in which Rwaza was sited, was nominally divided between three chiefs. The umutare

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1. Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 101 June 1903, 186

2. Mulera was the pejorative name given by southerners and Banyanduga to Bugarura and northern provinces in this region.

3. Classe L. 'Dix-huit mois au Moulera' Bulletin 106, 368

4. ibid.



w'umuheto, chief of the bow in charge of levying ngabo from the hills, was the prominent Ega notable, Kayondo. The Mulera Hutu were recruited in large numbers for Rwabugiri's Nkole campaigns; the battle and booty were remembered, and Kayondo was the best liked of the 'local' Tutsi.<sup>1</sup> The landowners, abanyabutaka, were two Nyiginya, Rwangeyo and the very influential Nshozamihigo, neither of whom dared reside north of the Changabe river that flowed near Rwaza mission. When their interests were at stake, the nobles dealt with Hutu spokesmen in a colonial type of relationship; the head of the Singa clan, for example, was spoken of as the garagu of Rwangeyo.<sup>2</sup> In theory, the mwami had the right to claim an annual ikoro ry'ubutaka, land tribute, from each head of umuryango; this consisted of one calabash of honey, one hoe and a platter of beans, ibibimbo.<sup>3</sup> In practice, the king's garagu visited Bugarura once every three to four years and counted himself lucky to get back to Nyanza alive.<sup>4</sup> After Rwabugiri's death the Tutsi seem to have steered clear of Rwaza, living as isolated settlers with their cattle in the plain and dealing on equal terms with their Hutu neighbours.

In the neighbouring provinces of Kibali and Buberuka there were still abahinza while, further north, lineage

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1. Rugirankana & Rukeratabaro

2. This was Munyusangabo, see Rwaza Diary 26 August 1905

3. Rukeratabaro

4. Mulera Report 1929, Derscheid Papers

and clan heads dealt with foreigners. Famine, smallpox and internecine feuds reduced the population to warring factions. Though the missionaries perhaps exaggerated the degree of anarchy to impress their readers in Europe, much of the north was controlled by Twa and Hutu bandits who preyed on the cultivators. To escape the turmoil and hardship, many of the Sigi clan migrated north to Kigezi; since the 1840s forests had been growing back over once cultivated land.<sup>1</sup> Following the pattern of the tragic Nyundo expedition, the Fathers were directed by the Tutsi onto a hill occupied by the fierce Chakohogo lineage, bandits who attacked travellers along the Changabe river from their mountain fastness.<sup>2</sup>

The priests were spared a fatal ambush at Rwaza but they quickly saw that the political situation was more akin to that of Bugoyi than to that of Save or Zaza. Within weeks of pitching their tents at Karushingi, half way up Rwaza hill, the missionaries realised that they were in for difficulties.

As of today we can see that it is not going to be the Tutsi who come to our assistance. Nobody listens to them and they have no authority.<sup>3</sup>

Their instructions about the Tutsi from Monsignor Hirth had been 'to speak highly of their authority and of the

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1. Mulera Report 1929; Denoon A History of Kigezi 15

2. Classe Dix-huit mois 369-370; Rukeratabaro

3. Rwaza Diary 26 November 1903.



power of the king'.<sup>1</sup> The first time the king's garagu, Kakwandi, appeared to collect ikoro, the Singa chased him away.<sup>2</sup> The lack of permanent Tutsi colonisation in the Bugarura hills left the Hutu free to oppose all new invaders and made nonsense of Hirth's directives.

The Tutsi did not give the Fathers long to contemplate the dilemma before taking advantage of the new possibilities. Nshozamihigo's garagu, Ruhanga, turned up at the mission in January 1904; Kakwandi arrived shortly afterwards looking for mission support in collecting ikoro, only to be jeered at by workers at the station. When, following the Ega policy of making life difficult for the missionaries, Kakwandi banned the Hutu from bringing wood to the station for construction, eight large trees immediately appeared in the mission compound.<sup>3</sup> In the Father-Superior's words, 'all you need is the chiefs to say one thing for the people to do the exact opposite'.<sup>4</sup>

The missionaries dutifully tried to comply with the Vicar-Apostolic's instructions and summoned Ruhanga to the mission where they weakly told him to exert his authority.<sup>5</sup> A month later the peasants expressed their feelings about Tutsi-mission alliance by almost killing a mission cowherd and a local Tutsi; mission mails were

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1. Rwaza Diary 22 February 1904 2. *ibid.* 12 January 1904

3. *ibid.* 11 January 1904

4. *ibid.* 6 February 1904

5. *ibid.* 22 February 1904

pillaged. As the despairing diarist pointed out, it was only to be expected as long as they went on supporting the chiefs.<sup>1</sup>

The only escape from the conflict between common sense and episcopal directives was to turn the Tutsi into what they were supposed to be, powerful chiefs. In March 1904, Kakwandi, the king's man, was chased away from a watering spot on the river.<sup>2</sup> To show the flag Father Dufays led the mission Sukuma into a major battle from which Kakwandi emerged victorious.<sup>3</sup> Within a week all the mission workers had drifted away in disgust.<sup>4</sup>

We were friends of the Tutsi and wanted to bring them back to the country. Where had those dreams of the early days gone; all the chiefs chased out by the Europeans, only the Bahoutou masters and lords of the mountains and cattle ? ... Disappointment ! These Europeans spoke of obeying the chiefs and paying their taxes. Their mistrust increased.<sup>5</sup>

The Fathers' fundamental mistake was to imagine that Rwanda had once been a homogeneous State from which the Mulera peoples had seceded. It was then necessary to

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1. Rwaza Diary 20, 27 March 1904 2. *ibid.*

3. Dufays Rev. Père Pages d'Épopée Africaine: Jours troubles  
Librairie Coloniale, Ixelles 1928, 21

4. Rwaza Diary 4 April 1904

5. Classe Dix-huit mois 372



explain why this tidy scheme did not fit the facts. When Father Classe hit on the arbitrary nature of Tutsi 'taxes' as the reason for Hutu desires for independence, he felt obliged to cover himself against accusations of being against the established order. 'Without being a revolutionary', he wrote - and certainly no-one could ever accuse him of being that - 'it must be recognised that there have been faults on both sides'.<sup>1</sup> But this was beside the point; the 'taxes' were little more than licensed pillaging and no 'established order' existed; the anarchic, or what Denoon euphemistically calls 'extravagantly decentralised',<sup>2</sup> conditions were probably age old. Classe genuinely favoured Tutsi rule and would not have been impressed by arguments from the antiquity of local anarchy. European support alone would allow the Tutsi to impose their will on the north, and the missionaries could not avoid their role in this process.

While the people of Mulera struggled to define and restrict the influence of the Rwandan court, Belgians and Germans plodded round Kivu attempting to chart their colonial frontiers.<sup>3</sup> In 1902, a German expedition trying to map the north-eastern shores of Lake Kivu was attacked on several occasions,<sup>4</sup> failed to meet up with its

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1. Classe Dix-huit mois 368

2. Denoon A History of Kigezi 213

3. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 47

4. *ibid.* This was led by Captain Hermann.

corresponding Belgian party and retired.<sup>1</sup> In conditions of famine and disorder reminiscent of the rise of the Kololo in Malawi, the Germans' porters became an important political force in the north; known around Rwaza as ibirongozi, they terrorised the population and settled to form stable relationships in which lineage heads paid them crops and cattle for 'protection'.<sup>2</sup> Like the Ganda elsewhere, such local warlords occupied the Tutsi niche in society and were sometimes assumed to be their garagu.

Kakwandi gave up in May 1904 and returned empty-handed to Nyanza.<sup>3</sup> Kabare, now in a commanding position at court, took the opportunity of increasing pressure on the missionaries who appeared worse than useless. Aware that the Germans would protect missions, his tactics were to avoid a direct confrontation while gnawing away at the Fathers' supports, firstly by disrupting the missions' communications and attacking the Ganda, whom he saw as their allies, and secondly by discrediting the priests in the Germans' eyes, and involving them with the Belgians.

Save soon abounded with rumours that the station was about to be attacked,<sup>4</sup> while at Mibirisi people were complaining that it was impossible to obey both Mungu and the Tutsi.<sup>5</sup> Kabare's representative in Mfumbiro appeared

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1. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 47

2. Interview with Ignace Renzayo, Gashunga hill, Rwaza mission June 1973; Dufays Pages 18. They were led by Nyakasaza.

3. Rwaza Diary 8 May 1904.

4. Save Diary June 1904

5. Mibirisi Diary 26 May 1904



at Rwaza mission on May 23rd<sup>1</sup> to ask the Fathers to speak with the Belgians on his behalf; he alleged that the Belgians, camped on Lake Chahafi, had confiscated his cows and requisitioned enormous quantities of provisions.<sup>1</sup> Two months later, the Father-Superior at Mibirisi received a visit from another of Kabare's agents requesting him to intercede on his behalf with the Belgians camped on Lake Kivu.<sup>2</sup> At the time the Belgians were disputing possession of Idjwi Island with the Germans, and German-mission relations were already cool.

Since many of the old catechists had been dismissed, the friction between the White Fathers and the Germans could no longer be blamed on the Ganda. By the middle of 1904 there were 226 baptised Christians at Save working on the hills as 'instructors', teaching prayers and catechism to their neighbours; these were now the main source of trouble. In their turn the catechumens brought with them two new adepts and there were 1,500 postulants registered at Save.<sup>3</sup> As the numbers within the Catholic net increased, so did the number of instances in which mission protégés got into disputes with pagans. And as the mission's catchment area extended over the hills so the

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1. This was the locally celebrated Muvunandinda, see Rwaza Diary 23 May 1904

2. Mibirisi Diary 19 July 1904: 'a Munyamongo sent by his chief Kabale'.

3. Hirth to Livinhac 31 December 1906, 095127 Dossier 95. W.F.A.R.; Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 114 March 1905, 140

Father-Superior was drawn increasingly to intervene, either directly or indirectly, in complex litigation. Mission recruits were virtually all Hutu, with a handful of impoverished Tutsi, so in the southern and central regions, the basic friction was between a young Hutu Church and the Tutsi-dominated society.

German military rule sustained the illusion of a genuine 'administration' with a smoke-screen of forms and official letters, but amounted to nothing more than four or five officers in Rwanda at any one time, engaged mainly in policing operations. Any move by the White Fathers which smacked of trespass into the secular city brought forth a swift ripost; there were five times as many missionaries as Germans. To find Rwandans going in preference to the Fathers rather than to the few German camps to settle cases annoyed the administration. Even when the missionaries were on their best behaviour their actions easily gave offence.

Es ist bereits einige male vorgekommen, dass Eingeborene, welche weder Angerhörige<sup>"</sup> noch Arbeiter der Mission waren, behufs Erledigung von Shauris sich zuerst an die Mission gewandt haben, und von dieser dann sehr richtiger Weise stets an der Posten Ischangi verwiesen wurden. Diese Leute haben zum Teil von der Mission Schrieben mitbekommen, welche sich auf ihre Shauris besogen. Infolge dessen ist bei einen Teil der Eingeborenen die falsche Auffassung aufgekommen, als ob die Mission



die Shauris zuerledigen hätte, und der  
Posten Ischangi nur das die Urteile der  
Mission ausführende Organ sei.<sup>1</sup>

Privately the Germans' feelings were expressed more bluntly; von Grawert wrote to the Governor that, were Monsignor Hirth given a free hand, 'the Government would go to hell and he would establish an African church-state'.<sup>2</sup>

Bickering continued between Mibirisi and Shanghi with peace-offerings of wine from Father Zuembiehl huffily returned. Kabare pursued his strategy issuing orders for all foreign traders in Rwanda to be killed. Von Grawert himself, oblivious of the fate in store for the Ganda and Indians, had two skin traders chained up and deported to show willing in his relations with the court.<sup>3</sup> If Rwabugiri's campaigns in Gisaka are seen in their relation to trade routes, Kabare's action had some precedent to justify it and von Grawert seems to have initially seen the trader issue as a legitimate grievance.<sup>4</sup>

The dry season of 1904 proved a cruel judgement on the missionaries' accumulated errors. Nyamparas sent out on July 13th from Rwaza to collect wood were attacked and from every quarter the Fathers got wind of an impending revolt. Father Dufays was attacked the same week and one of his catechists killed; he replied with a raiding party

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1. Von Nordeck to Father-Superior Mibirisi 23 June 1904  
letter contained in Mibirisi Diary W.F.A.R.

2. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 176

3. Save Diary July 1904

4. See introduction 43.

of mission Sukuma. Employing a technique used successfully against a 1901 German frontier expedition, the Hutu allowed the Catholic forces to expend their cartridges in loose firing then sent them fleeing before a hail of arrows.<sup>1</sup>

This spontaneous rising around Rwaza took place at the same time as a more orchestrated movement of resistance in Central Rwanda directed by the court. Scores of traders died in the attacks. Von Grawert's apparent acquiescence in the repression was widely read as a triumph for Kabare. The Save Fathers learnt from their spies at Nyanza that people openly proclaimed Kabare master of the land.<sup>2</sup> The court diviners began sacrificing cows to find out if, at last, times were propitious for an attack on Save. The spirits, it was said, indicated that they wanted the White Fathers driven out of the country.<sup>3</sup> The spirits, as all the missionaries knew, spoke the mind of the court.

Popular feeling about events was diffracted and spread by rumours, some emanating from Nyanza, many arising from the peasants' own beliefs with their content of court tradition. The stories articulated a widespread sense of the fragility of the European order and contained the same message: the real, and therefore spiritual, power of the Europeans could be reduced to nothing, their technology and

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1. Rwaza Diary 13, 21, 22 July 1904

2. Save Diary July 1904

3. *ibid.*



powerful leaders neutralised. It was bruited over the hills that 'the Whites' guns will fire only water or goats' droppings'.<sup>1</sup> A saviour from the south-western region of Kinyaga was said to have slain von Grawert;<sup>2</sup> in another version, the conquering mwami Ruganzu Ndori had returned and smote him; to save his life the European had agreed to become a garagu of Musinga.<sup>3</sup> The rumours spread fast and could be heard from Bwanamukali to Mulera.<sup>4</sup> Disconnected events at opposite ends of the country, distorted in the telling, added to a common store of stories which shaped further events. Rumour passed on the ideology of resistance; it was the open season for xenophobia.

Rwaza mission was under seige from July 24th until the 30th. Opposing clans united against the common enemy after groups of Gesera had taken up threatening positions around the station. The night calm was interrupted by sporadic gunfire and alerts until Fathers Barthélemy and Loupias arrived with help after a forced march from Nyundo.<sup>4</sup> Pots of honey which the priests first took to be a peace offering were sent in by the Hutu attackers; they were poisoned. On August 5th 1904, the Hutu clans united in a full-scale assault on the station which was defended by sustained fire from over twenty guards with the missionaries.

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1. Save Diary July 1904

2. Rwaza Diary 22 July 1904. This was 'Muchuzi'.

3. Save Diary July 1904

4. Rwaza Diary 30 July 1904

firing their hunting rifles. The final raid seems to have been triggered by the arrival of Tutsi who had come up from the plain to help the missionaries; on seeing the huge crowds of Hutu they quickly changed sides.<sup>1</sup>

The deterioration in the situation at Nyanza was first marked by the permanent withdrawal on the mwami's orders of the Catholic catechist, Prestanci. He had temporarily left during the first fruits' ceremonies whose liturgy had not been considered open to apostates from traditional religion.<sup>2</sup> By July he was completely ignored and feared for his life at court.<sup>3</sup> The arm of a new born child was thrown onto the mission steps at Save as an evil charm, but the expected attacks never materialised.<sup>4</sup> At Zaza, catechists were unable to get catechumens to come to the stations and mails destined for the mission were repeatedly pillaged.<sup>5</sup> Careful watch was kept at night in both stations.

By September Kabare had succeeded in cutting all the main tracks across Rwanda and interdicting mission mails from Bukoba. The Save Fathers heard reports that in a single day over sixty traders were killed in Nduga.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Rwaza Diary 1-5 August 1904; Dufays: Pages 39-41

2. Save Diary 15 February 1904

3. *ibid.* July 1904

4. Save Diary 10 August 1904. It was put there by Rwakilima, a neighbouring Tutsi, as a bulozi.

5. Zaza Diary August/September 1904.

6. Save Diary 14 August, 9 September 1904.



Nshozamihigo's agent, Ruhanga, was sent from the capital to Rwaza to encourage the Hutu to press home their attacks; he was reported as telling them how few Europeans there were in the country.<sup>1</sup> The Ega may have been on the point of moving from indirect opposition to straightforward military action, but the arrival of von Grawert and his troops dictated restraint. Some of the Tutsi nobles knew how to handle rifles and boasted that they were no longer frightened of the Europeans, but von Grawert's Maxim guns, Tikitiki's muvuba, were recognised as irresistible.<sup>2</sup> Once again the German guns stood between the missionaries and massacre. The traders were less lucky. Some wounded Ganda managed to stagger to mission stations but most were slaughtered.<sup>3</sup>

The second prong of Kabare's offensive was no less successful; suspicion had been sown amongst the Europeans. Von Grawert commented peevishly on Father Zuembiehl of Mibirisi.

For him the main principle is to have two irons in the fire and never to forget that the Belgians may become masters of the presently disputed territory, and therefore to pay them frequent visits.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, the resentful Father Brard saw nothing but the

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1. Rwaza Diary 20 September 1904. It is perhaps significant that it was not Musinga's man, Kakwandi, who was stirring up the trouble.

2. Rwaza Diary 17 March 1905. 3. Save Diary July 1904.

4. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 177

frontier issue behind von Grawert's reluctance to tangle with the court over compensation for the traders' deaths. 'That would be simply to add more disorder', he wrote, 'and let the Belgians in the Congo see that there were disturbances in the country; that is what frightens him the most'.<sup>1</sup> But von Grawert had also to look anxiously over his other shoulder to Dar-es-Salaam.

Von Grawert was prepared to answer the missionaries' complaints over pillaged mails in his own fashion. The inevitable punitive raid was as indiscriminate as it was brutal. Christians around Zaza were insulted and molested by troops while, at Rwaza, the repression was so severe that the Fathers, albeit combat hardened, ended by pleading for their assailants' lives.<sup>2</sup> The punishment was accompanied by a speech on German policy; as the huts went up in flames around Rwaza, von Grawert delivered a cautionary homily: 'What was done to the Europeans was as good as done to the mwami and vice-versa', he told the crowd, a fact they had not overlooked, adding with insistence that the Tutsi were their legitimate chiefs.<sup>3</sup> The latter was, as Father Classe remarked, 'a point which they could scarcely understand'.<sup>4</sup> After repeated attacks, the Belgians had withdrawn from Lake Chahafi so were not able to witness the edifying spectacle.

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1. Save Diary 1 October 1904

2. Hirth to Livinhac 30 September 1904, 095095 Dossier 95

WFAR; Zaza Diary September 1904; Dufays Pages 42

3. Rwaza Diary 21 October 1904

4. ibid.



At Save, where Brard was the presiding spirit, practice and policy became calamitously uncoupled in the absence of a German officer. The thirty troops sent in haste to protect the station took the law into their own hands and set about humiliating the Tutsi. It was a case of when in Rome... many of the local chiefs were forced at gunpoint to eat goats and chicken, meat repugnant to Tutsi taste, and several were executed.<sup>1</sup> As the askari went on the rampage, rumours took on a different note: Kabare and the Queen Mother, it was said, had fled the capital.<sup>2</sup> In fact the savage repression affected the Hutu the most, the Tutsi to varying degrees, but the court hardly at all.

In November 1904 after the crisis was over, Kabare was still firmly in power and bold enough even to ask von Grawert to execute his leading Ega rival, Ruhinankiko.<sup>3</sup> Musinga as ever vacillated on the mission issue in the face of the Ega nobility. The Save missionaries sent Elias Mukono, their leading catechist from Bukumbi,<sup>4</sup> to press for a new station in the Tutsi stronghold of Marangara, but their presents were returned. The king sent the message that Europeans only came to pay court in

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1. Hirth to Livinhac 24 March 1905, 095098 Dossier 92  
WFAR; Hurel 'Histoire du Sacré-Coeur d'Issavi'.

2. Save Diary 23 October 1904.

3. *ibid.* 13 November 1904.

4. Bukumbi had been in existence as a White Father station since 1883.

order 'to eat up the land'.<sup>1</sup> Yet only a month later Prestanci was being recalled to help the mwami with Swahili lessons.<sup>2</sup>

After Christmas, Monsignor Hirth went to court with Brother Pancrase to gauge feeling and again request the concession of a new mission in Marangara. Dutiful Brother Pancrase cranked up and played a gramophone, to calm the savage breast it may be imagined, while the mwami's leading ministers looked sternly down on the proceedings. Musinga was flanked by Kabare and the rising lights Ntulo and Rwidegembya.<sup>3</sup> The Vicar-Apostolic spoke directly with the king in Swahili. The charged atmosphere was well evoked by the diarist:

Yet, our good sovereign, who is not after all master in his own house, dared not take upon himself the responsibility of giving an affirmative answer. He turned towards his uncle Rwidegembya to ask him what he ought to reply; the latter retorted at once with some animation, "we have given you Issavi, Nsasa, Nyundo, Rwasu, Mibirisi, yet you still ask for Nduga".<sup>4</sup>

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1. Kabgayi Diary November 1904; Zaza Diary November 1904; Save Diary 13 November 1904; de Lagere Ruanda 392

2. Save Diary 4 December 1904

3. Also present was Ruharamanzi, see Kabgayi Diary 27 December 1904

4. *ibid.* The missionaries used 'Nduga' for a large region in Central Rwanda whose Tutsi population were known in the north as 'Banyanduga'. Marangara was a province in this region.



Monsignor Hirth replied that the Fathers had come to teach, not to take the Tutsi's land. The Ega replied that an order would be given for a big building to be erected, the people would be summoned to Nyanza and instruction could go on there; they cannily pointed out that to alienate land required German permission.<sup>1</sup> Not to be outwitted, Monsignor Hirth set about getting it.

The Germans were in an awkward position. They recognised in Monsignor Hirth a man with whom they could deal and realised that he abhorred the thuggery of the Ganda and the imperious airs of his missionaries as much as they.<sup>2</sup> Yet he had blithely gone straight to court without calling in von Grawert, and seemed to share the theocratic leanings of his clergy. The Marangara mission proved something of a test case. The court was adamantly opposed to a station within one hour's march of five or six royal tombs, and out of Nyanza's direct control. Rwidegembya's reply to the Vicar-Apostolic: 'Nidukomezā kuguh'ciy'ushatse cyose, tuzasigaran'iki ?' ( If we add what you ask what will be left ?)<sup>3</sup> is still remembered, indicating the emotional impact of allowing Whites to settle in the heart of the kingdom.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 125 March 1906, 168

2. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 176-177

3. Nothomb Church History 17

4. See Maps Four and Five. The Belgians named Nduga and Marangara as two separate provinces in Central Rwanda.

Von Grawert could not afford to alienate the court, but the co-operation of the missionaries was also essential if a handful of officers were to 'rule' Rwanda. Not least consideration was that the mission stations provided excellent intelligence centres. The tight little German camps were isolate islands by comparison. Catholic catechists ranged far and wide. Only Dr. Kandt spoke a little Kinyarwanda after more than a year in the bush; all official correspondence was in German or Swahili. Most of the missionaries could preach an intelligible sermon in Kinyarwanda and had sufficient informants to cross check news that they received. Erudite reports to the coast relied to some extent on picking the Fathers' brains. Father Brard was free with his opinions telling von Grawert that the root of the 1904 troubles was the antipathy of 'all in positions of authority for the Europeans since they feared that their authority would be lost'. He saw the massacre of the skin traders in terms of their freedom to travel and their connection with the Whites. 'Formerly', he explained, 'all merchants paid hongo and addressed themselves to the capital'.<sup>1</sup> The Rwaza missionaries privately blamed the attacks on the confusion in the Hutus' mind between the missionaries and the Germans whose troops were much hated and feared. They were well aware that the mission had become equated with

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1. Brard to Barthélemy & Classe 4 October 1904, letter in Rwaza Diary



Tutsi rule.<sup>1</sup> For them, it had all been a big misunderstanding. Von Grawert, however, did not need telling that to push the court into conceding another mission site was to put one more trouble spot on the map.

If Von Grawert forced Kabgayi mission on the court, it was because he felt that the nobles could be, and should be, made to submit, and that the Fathers were marginally less trouble than they were worth. He had an important bargaining card in two detained cattle dealers, a Boer called Pretorius and Fritz Schindalaer who was half Austrian.<sup>2</sup> Pretorius was a bandit who travelled with a large retinue of armed men and pillaged cattle along the way. He was arrested after losing most of his retainers in a big battle in Ndorwa.<sup>3</sup> It was brought home to the king that any refractory behaviour and refusal to co-operate would result in the two Whites being unleashed on the north. Von Grawert was willing to release them because Schindalaer was a Londoner and had British nationality; repercussions from his detention were possible with Uganda at a time when negotiations were going on over the northern border.<sup>4</sup> While Monsieur Thevaz of the Anglo-Belgian delimitation commission had been knocking in posts to mark the frontier, the two rustlers had been stealing cattle across it with gay abandon.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Rwaza Diary 21 October 1904

2. Dufays Pages 43-45

3. Rwaza Diary 29 January 1905

4. ibid. 31 January 1905

Since at least the time of Rwabugiri, the mwami had a theoretical right to dispossess any of his nobles; like the abahinza his ritual status identified him with the land. Owing to the mystical relationship, to bend a knee, at least in public, was considered dangerous during a military campaign since this would represent a diminution in the size of the kingdom. The king's ability to claim ibikingi was, of course, a measure of his power over the nobles. Agnostics like Kabare seem to have kept court ritual and the mwami's religious claims in a compartment of their minds where it could not clash with political realities. Thus Marangara and the royal graves were to some extent disposable.

In February 1905, 'un peu gêné', Musinga gave the missionaries some land in Nduga.<sup>1</sup> They pitched their tents before the enclosure of one of Nshozamihigo's garagu and the hill, known as Kabgayi, was then proclaimed to be solely under the king's jurisdiction.<sup>2</sup> Hirth's insistence on getting a station in Marangara had been sheer stubbornness and an unequal test of wills; except in the north of the province the land was underpopulated with poor sandy soil and low rainfall. But the mwami had again been forced to bend the knee before the Bishop.

After the 1904 crisis an unwritten entente grew up

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1. Kabgayi Diary, 6 February 1905

2. *ibid.* 10, 13 February 1905. The garagu was Kanyabujinja.



between court, White Fathers and Germans. Each party recognised that any lasting alliance between the other two could render it impotent. Each was restrained by prudence, fear or formulated policy from too overt a verbal or military attack on the other. The Hutu idea that the Germans at Shangi were the mission's executive was shown to have some validity when Rwandans attacked the White Fathers. Just as the Whites formed a solid front at times of crisis; so the Tutsi and Hutu joined together at Rwaza when it seemed possible to oust the Europeans. But the court understood fully that their battle against the Christian colonisation of Rwanda had henceforth to be a rearguard action.

The Catholic teaching on the separation of Church and State should have reduced friction between missionaries, Germans and Tutsi to a minimum. Yet, by leaving nineteenth century Europe where the distinction existed in practice, imposed on a reluctant Church by secular States, the Fathers were able for a while to turn back the clock to the Middle Ages. From the gentle hills of Rwanda the past century of European history seemed a temporary aberration; the astringent memories of Kulturkampf and Garibaldi must easily have faded before the enticing spectacle of Rwanda's feudal monarchy. The spiritual goldrush in which the Fathers staked the first claims had as its dreams the Golden Age of Church History, and as its pioneers rough-hewn men like Brard. In the

dream Musinga appeared in the role of Charlemagne<sup>1</sup> and Dante's comforting Thomism depicted the Church's earthly fulfillment.

Let Caesar therefore observe that reverence to Peter which a first-born son ought to observe to a father, so that, illuminated by the light of paternal grace, he may with greater power irradiate the world over which he is set by Him who is the ruler of all things.<sup>2</sup>

But Popes no longer vied with kings. The reality was a gangling young Tutsi with protruding teeth and a mote in the eye, and the portly, moustached buttoned-down figure of von Grawert.<sup>3</sup> The Fathers had their own idiosyncratic rearguard action to fight with the civil authorities and the rules were different.

If the peasants accused the priests of beings 'kings'<sup>4</sup> and the Germans suspected them of wanting to create a Church-

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1. Schumacher P. Rev. Père 'Échos du Kivu' Missions d'Afrique 1913, 95-96 in Derscheid Papers

2. Quoted in Ullman W. A History of Political Thought: The Middle Ages Penguin 1965, 193

3. Herzog zu Mecklenburg A.F. Ins Innerste Afrika Leipzig 1910, 81, 109

4. The first reference to this use comes in the Kabgayi Diary 22 August 1907 when the Fathers report that the Germans in the Duke of Mecklenburg's suite referred to them in this way. De Lager Ruanda 397, says that the Fathers were called 'kings without crowns' and this is taken up in Des Forges' article 'Kings without Crowns: The White Fathers in Ruanda' in East African History ed. Bennett N.R. et al. Vol. III New York 1969, 176-202



State, the Fathers would have been quick to deny the charges. To become rulers wielding secular power was not at the front of their minds. Yet they were defined by the Rwandan context and as truly 'kings' as the Nyabingi prophetesses were 'queens of Mpororo'. No clear-cut 'temporal sphere' or 'purely religious' sphere existed in the society in which they worked. Experience taught them that a philosophy of Church-State relations which, faute de mieux, emphasised these distinctions was inapplicable. So they scrapped it in practice and proclaimed it insistently in theory.

Rwandans judged the Fathers by what they did; for the first two years they could barely understand what the missionaries said. The priests laid down the law with chiefs unless Rwandan resistance, or the Germans, forced on them honeyed words and compromise. And even when conflict arose and the Fathers tried to explain their peculiar view of the world, another message got across.

The Father tried to clarify things: "Mungu commands all the other bamis, so much so that if they order wicked things, you are not obliged to obey them, but to obey Mungu alone; he commands them all, even Musinga.<sup>1</sup>

For the peasants it went without saying that the officials of Mungu were also able to command abami on his behalf; a

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<sup>1</sup> Mibirisi Diary 26 May 1904

garagu spoke with the authority of his lord. The Hutu understood the missionaries even if rarely they understood themselves.

The question was not whether the Fathers would become politically involved in Rwanda but how they would become involved. Most of their early work pulled them inexorably into a network of feudal relationships that permeated Rwandan life. At all stations the first five years were ones of intensive building activity. When the residential side of the mission was completed the Fathers turned to erecting huge churches. They needed labourers, bricklayers, porters and a permanent staff for cooking, gardening and cattle-herding. To find wood, huge teams of men were required to cut and transport the logs, sometimes from distant forests; forty to fifty carriers were needed for a nine metre tree, and ten thousand men were used to fetch the beams and supports for Zaza church.<sup>1</sup> Musinga and the court were stunned by such an unprecedented mobilisation of manpower.<sup>2</sup> The exhilaration of commanding a peasant army working for the Glory of God seems to have blinded the missionaries to the impact they were making on the king.

In regions like Rwaza where ubuletwa was unknown, the

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1. Rwaza Diary 3 October 1906; Des. Forges Rwanda under Musinga 79-80

2. Kabgayi Diary 15 February, 16 March 1906



recruitment of forced labour was an important cause of the Hutu hostility, which precipitated the 1904 rising. Although labourers were usually paid in some form, the Brothers who supervised the work were not always endowed with the most delicate sensibilities and demanded the maximum effort. Nor were the Fathers; von Grawert described even the head of Nyundo, Father Barthélemy, as 'peasant-like and cloddish'.<sup>1</sup> For the peasants the heavy labour was simply another form of ubuletwa commanded by the new White chiefs. Chiefs took offence at the requisitions which depleted their own labour force, and the thoughtless plundering of sacred groves growing on the old residences of the abami infuriated the court.<sup>2</sup> The levying of labour, a right claimed by Tutsi nobles, identified the priests in the peasants' eyes as powerful men belonging to the ruling class. By the same token it made the local chiefs and court convinced opponents of their new competitors.

The impression that the Fathers came as a new White nobility was enhanced by their extensive landholdings. Save mission grounds spread over 220 hectares, Zaza, 164 hectares, Mibirisi, 130 and Kabgayi, 125 hectares.<sup>3</sup> The

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1. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 177

2. Kabgayi Diary 15 February 1906. The Fathers were not always at fault however; Rwakasina once desecrated a royal ikigabiro to get wood for himself and blamed it on the Fathers at court, see Rwaza Diary 7 June 1906

3. Classe to Kaiserliche Resident 18 January 1907;

Fathers believed that all the land in Rwanda was owned by the mwami and the initial arrangement seems to have been similar to that between the king and a lord; they held the land 'on his pleasure' and paid him tribute. They paid 450 roupies worth of cloth direct to the king for Save, though it soon found its way onto the shoulders of his courtiers.<sup>1</sup>

With greater security, they were soon pushing for a western style of title and showed little concern for their early agreements; 250 roupies were decided on for Zaza but there is record of only 200 having been paid. Apart from the ineffectual blandishments of Monsignor Hirth, the missionaries had free rein until August 1904 when von Grawert, and then Dr. Kandt, tried to regularise their property deals. The Germans demanded precise surveys of boundaries and contracts drawn up between king, government representative, the relevant nobles and the White Fathers. The documents did little to ease a situation that was rooted in the missionaries' realpolitik. At stations surrounded by a large population, with several sub-chiefs and overlapping jurisdictions, a perpetual tug-of-war went on for the Hutus' allegiance. In 1906, under German pressure

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Kaiserliche Resident to Classe 10 November 1907 P.1735  
Film No. 167, microfilms of Bujumbura German Archives,  
Archives Africaines, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères,  
Place Royale, Brussels. Henceforth abbreviated to AA.

1. Hirth to his brother undated 095307 WEFAR; Save Diary  
29 June 1904



an extra fifty roupies of trade goods were handed over for Zaza, 300 roupies were paid for Mibirisi and 200 for Kabgayi.<sup>1</sup>

After purchase the occupants of mission land were considered to be tenants on White Fathers' estates while remaining subjects of Musinga.<sup>2</sup> Father Zuembiehl told the people of Mibirisi that 'from now on they would have to submit to the authority of the Superior of the mission; it would be for him to kukazera and kutaka'.<sup>3</sup> The local hill chiefs lost not only their land but their jurisdiction over people.

The hill chief reproached us with having stolen it (the land) from him. It had to be explained what had happened - that if we left the people free to take him wood, pombe etc., it was from the kindness of our hearts. The people could not be held for corvéés (by him). He then wanted to know if we hated him. Far from that, we are ready to accord you the greatest good.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Classe to Kaiserliche Resident 18 January 1907 AA; Lecoindre to Kandt 18 January 1907 C.O.; Mibirisi Diary 24 January 1906; de Iacger Ruanda 387-388
  2. In the Duke of Mecklenburg's apologia for Indirect Rule it is explained that Musinga is Sultan 'nicht als Landes, wohl aber als Stammesherrn an', see Mecklenburg Ins Innerste Afrika 85. This paves the way for future white settlement under German Rule.
  3. Mibirisi Diary 28 January 1906 i.e. to levy the traditional land and labour dues of the chief
  4. ibid. 30 January 1906

At Rwaza the Fathers appear to have conformed to local conditions and simply grabbed a large tract of land; 250 roupies were later paid to the king and the Germans were still trying to sort out the boundaries in 1908.<sup>1</sup> It was debatable in what sense the king 'owned' the land even in Central Rwanda; in Rwaza Musinga's lack of power made such payments purely ritual. Here the missionaries became the effective new rulers and each umuryango brought them beer and bananas just as they would have done for ibirongozi.<sup>2</sup> When, as at Kabgayi, there were only four people living on the station's land, they were asked to leave and compensated. At Zaza the tenants were allowed to go on farming until such time as the missionaries needed their plots; to provide a noise-free zone around the mission-house, Hutu were expropriated at five to six roupies compensation per hut.<sup>3</sup>

The priests also shared the nobles' interest in cattle in the first few years. At Nyundo sale and purchase of cattle dominated the annual budget.<sup>4</sup> German punitive raids supplied the stations with cheap cattle from their booty of livestock and, with intelligent buying from the Tutsi, the

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1. Kandt to Father-Superior Kabgayi 17 July 1908 C.O.;

Rwaza Diary 18 June 1904 gives details of initial settlement

2. Rukeratabaro

3. Kabgayi Diary 20 February 1906; Zaza Diary 11 November 1906

4. See accounts books of Nyundo Mission for 1903-1904 now in the possession of Monsieur Bernard Lugon, Dept. of History University of Butare.



Fathers not only obtained a liberal supply of meat but were able to finance their building by cattle-trading. The mission herds were sometimes tended by Christians but, more often, put out to graze with rich Tutsi who owned pastures. These animals were often handed on to garagu and formed, like any other cows, the currency of the multitude of exchange relationships in society. Certain Fathers even had personal herds which moved with them when they changed station.<sup>1</sup> The defective concept 'mission property' was unable to deal with the multivalent bonds created by a cow in Rwanda, and caused the Fathers endless difficulties.

The habit of granting cattle to neophytes and catechumens compounded the difficulties. The Tutsi frequently withdrew cattle from garagu who went to the mission for instruction, considering that relationship with the Fathers precluded ubuhake with a Tutsi patron; it was impossible to serve two masters as the more ultramontane of the priests declared. To recompense their Christians, the Fathers gave dispossessed catechumens a cow or two from their herds for usufruct. These animals could then be withdrawn for backsliding and moral lapses of a serious kind. Soon peasants were flocking to the missions in the sole hope of being granted a cow. Zaza

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1. Classe to Confrères 5 July 1907, Correspondence

Religieuse, White Fathers' Archives, Kigali. Henceforth abbreviated to CR.

mission, that looked after over two hundred cows confiscated from Pretorius, became embroiled in such a tangle of half-understood feudal relations that the missionaries breathed a sigh of relief when von Grawert called all the cattle back.<sup>1</sup>

So it was that their need for land, labour and cattle drew the White Fathers into feudal relationships. Without a disembodied radical brand of Christianity, an impossibility for a Church which saw itself as Christ's continued incarnation in the world, no missionary could have stayed outside the feudal nexus yet lived and preached Christianity in Rwandan society. The western practice of free association of individuals was rare in the country; journeys for commerce, gutunda, or to buy food, guhaka, were the few occasions when individuals banded together in a type of voluntary co-operative for protection.<sup>2</sup> The way men were in the world with others was essentially in relationships of subordination expressed by some material exchange.

Such a view of society was not totally alien to the White Fathers. Despite the Christian assertion of the fundamental equality of all men in the eyes of God,

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1. Hirth to confrères 7 August 1906 CR; Zaza Diary 13 January, 22 September 1907; Rapports annuels 1906-1907, 162

2. Schumacher P. 'Das Sachenrecht in Ruanda' Koloniale Rundschau 1932, 292



Catholics believed that it was the Church which mediated this radical possibility. And the Church for them was a visible hierarchical institution united in the Pope. Ultimately it was the visibility of an internally differentiated community and not the faith of individuals that counted.<sup>1</sup> Sacramentality, the way God was in the world with men, could not be divorced from the essential hierarchy of the Church, the subordination of its different orders. The conscious goal of the missionaries, therefore, remained the planting of a precisely constituted social institution through which Grace could at first trickle, and then pour down on their African converts. They were, of course, profoundly influenced by Protestant individualism and pietism, but not to the point of forgetting that the Church was a sacramental, hierarchical institution.

There was little in Catholic ecclesiology, as it was understood by the Fathers, to give the missions immunity to the feudalism around them. Pioneering priests were born patrons; the Fathers were powerful men and there was only one relationship in the experience of the Hutu which was appropriate to dealings with the powerful, that of clientship. To become a catechumen for the peasants meant, amongst other things, a formal submission to the White invaders.

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1. Adam K. The Spirit of Catholicism London 1929, 31-45 provides an excellent contemporary summary of the leading theological trends of the day.

The infeudation of the Catholic mission in Rwanda surely warrants the accolade of 'missionary adaptation' or, at least, a merit-badge of 'Africanisation'. Certainly the young Church bore the impress of the society around it, and the mission logs show the Fathers with earthly cares if with heavenly thoughts. These increased with the number of Hutu catechists and the attendant proliferation of patron-client relationships. The catechists settled on hills and soon used their contact with the mission to obtain a banana grove, goats, or often cattle. Pressure could be exerted on the population in a number of ways: threats of denunciation to the Fathers for making sacrifices or participating in the Iyangombe cult, or overloading recalcitrant peasants with labour at the mission, with or without the collusion of the hill chief.<sup>1</sup> One group posing as catechists travelled round collecting hoes from all who worked on Sundays. The stratagems used to make the people accept imposters as mission agents were as various as they were startling: some shaved their heads, others muttered the odd word of Swahili or Ganda, and some merely brandished a piece of paper with writing on it.<sup>2</sup> Had they been engaged in more morally acceptable practices:

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1. Save Diary 19 September 1905; Zaza Diary 13 March 1906; Save Diary 16 April 1907

2. Rwaza Diary 16 August 1905, gives an example of a man who collected tribute simply by brandishing a converted hoe handle made to look like a gun and some fake cartridges. See also Kabgayi Diary 11 February 1906



what historian could resist proclaiming an early Hutuisation of the Church ?

Monsignor Hirth made matters worse by forbidding the missionaries to open an orphanage at a time when they were buying large numbers of slaves.<sup>1</sup> During the famine period of 1905-1906, there was a marked increase in slaving as traders came to Kivumu market to buy women and children for transport to Tanganyika.<sup>2</sup> The priests tried to the limits of their resources to rescue these unfortunates by buying them from the main Hutu dealers operating from Kivumu.<sup>3</sup> They were competing in an internal market; groups from Nduga would travel north with a few goats to Mulera where the famine was most intense, and their cries, 'all those with baja bring them', echoed over the hills.<sup>4</sup> Starving Hutu families sold off widowed women and orphaned children to buy food; a strong woman would fetch seven to eight goats while a sexually attractive girl up to fifteen.<sup>5</sup> The Banyanduga then set off with their slaves to Mutara and Buganza provinces where they sold them

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1. Hirth to confrères: July 1906 CR.

2. Dr. John Iliffe has kindly informed me that there were two slave markets in Buha in 1903 according to Sgt. Kummer to Bezirksamt Ujiji 16 January 1903 RKA 290/235 Dar-es-Salaam, Archives of Tanzania. The Rwandan slaves, he considers, were most likely destined for Ujiji at this date, rather than for the coast.

3. Only one out of about eight principal dealers was Tutsi, see Kabgayi Diary, 21 May 1906.

4. Rwaza Diary, 30 April 1906. 5. *ibid.* 28 September 1905, 27 April 1906

for cattle. So slaves could change hands several times before they reached the main Kivumu dealers.<sup>1</sup> Soft-hearted priests like Father Pouget bought scores as they passed the mission door at Zaza.<sup>2</sup> Since they were largely women and girls who could not be housed, they were given for adoption to Christian households; to the gifts of cattle were added those of garagu. The catechuminate, defined increasingly by the Hutu as allegiance to the Fathers, became a particularly rewarding form of clientship bestowing both wealth and protection.

As the Hutu Christians pushed out the base of the mission pyramid around each station, the Tutsi were left in no doubt that the Fathers, as they expected, were going to be powerful abanyabutaka. When the Queen Mother wanted to dispossess a Christian living on Mara Hill of his banana grove and give it to one of her sisters, she sent one of her men to politely inform the Save Fathers. On occasions like these the missionaries could be singularly obtuse:

We let her know that it was a question of principle, that our Christians are her men like all the rest. But the Batusi are far from admitting this; those who came to

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1. Zaza Diary April 1906

2. There was a major caravan halt at Rukira, not far from Zaza, where some trading took place. The White Fathers were still alert to their role as alleviators of the slave trade, see Zaza Diary 24 November 1906



instruction are our men. Musinga had started by saying that since Joakim was Father Brard's man he should simply go and build his hut at the mission. We pointed out that this was quite wrong and that we had no villages; it is hard to see things from his point of view.<sup>1</sup>

Yet the parallels were obvious; just as the Tutsi's garagu repaired their lord's enclosure and kept night-watch, so the White's garagu were expected to labour at the mission and learn strange phrases off by heart.

By weathering the storms of 1904 the Fathers had demonstrated that they were as strong as the court. And by becoming garagu of the Whites, the Hutu could share in this power and remove themselves from the more oppressive exactions of the Tutsi. It was in vain that the missionaries began preaching Monsignor Hirth's directives on obedience to lawfully constituted authority. Baptised Christians at Rwaza went on full-scale razzias and elsewhere others drifted away to the patronage of German troops when allegiance to the mission became insufficiently rewarding.<sup>2</sup>

The feudal nuclei that had grown up around the Tutsi households in the nineteenth century had seeded the young Church, and no amount of weeding by the Vicar-Apostolic was able to remove the overgrowth. Its very luxuriance in these

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1. Save Diary 2 June 1905

2. Rwaza Diary 3 January 1905

early years showed how quickly the Hutu could convert the mission, and how the entropy of Catholicism brought it back swiftly to its ground-state of feudalism. On reflection the Fathers realised that their entanglements had brought them into a deeper and more abiding opposition to the Tutsi than they had ever intended. In relation to the court they were rebellious nobles.

The greatest obstacle to evangelisation is the way the country is administered; the king has all the important chiefs as his clients; they in turn have all the minor Tutsi, and these, the influential Hutu; it all forms a compact mass that is difficult to attack; they are all agreed that to frequent the Whites is to become their clients and to set up as a rebel against the king; you cannot serve two masters, they think, God and the king.<sup>1</sup>

The foundation of Kabgayi mission and the widespread rebelliousness of Hutu Christians aroused the hostility of the court. The Father-Superior at Save stated that catechumens were being proclaimed far and wide as inyangarwanda, haters of Rwanda, and abagome, rebels. Sub-chiefs were said to have been instructed to send anyone frequenting the mission to court.<sup>2</sup> The Zaza Christians so incensed the usually friendly Banyagisaka chiefs by

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1. Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 114 March 1905, 143

2. Save Diary 17 February 1905



their repeated insults that complaints were lodged against the mission at Nyanza.<sup>1</sup> According to the Fathers, the slogan 'death to the Christians' could be heard from Save to Nyanza.<sup>2</sup> Three Christians who lost goats confiscated by a sub-chief and had the audacity to ask for them back were sent to court in chains; it was soon being said that the Whites were poor patrons if they allowed their clients to be chained up.<sup>3</sup> At last the mwami and his councillors seem to have realised the full implications of throwing the Hutu to the 'wild animals' from Europe.<sup>4</sup>

Life at Rwaza might have been going on in a different world; the Tutsi were absent except on the Mulera plain. Chiefs plied the missionaries with gifts and sent their garagu to pay court. In January 1905, Ruhanga arrived with one of Nshozamihigo's concubines and offered her in marriage to the Father-Superior.<sup>5</sup> It was a traditional tactic to form marriage alliances with powerful and troublesome local leaders, but the missionaries declined the offer. A month later they received a polite letter from the king requesting their help in the annual

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1. Zaza Diary March 1905

2. Save Diary 17 February 1905. 3. *ibid.*

4. The name ibisimba, 'wild animals', seems to have been given to Europeans after von Grawert's savage punitive raids in the north, see Rwaza Diary 17 November 1904; Dufays Pages d'Épopée 78

5. Rwaza Diary 3 January 1905. In the 1950s Jean-Baptiste Rwabukamba tried in similar fashion to marry one of his

collection of ikoro.<sup>1</sup> It was followed by an obsequious Kakwandi who wanted a supply of rifles and a mission agent to protect his party on their rounds.<sup>2</sup> In no sense was there a national policy for dealing with the missionaries, as the Fathers themselves developed for dealing with the Tutsi, rather a series of ad hoc local adjustments.

On the strength of his visit to the mission, Kakwandi set about pillaging cattle and even attacking a garagu of an important noble, Rwidegembya. The mission was besieged by Tutsi from the Mulera plain asking for guns to defend themselves. The mission was a pawn in the game between Banyanduga and the people of Mulera, but had to go along with the intrigues... 'since his Lordship asks it of us'.<sup>3</sup> The precaution was taken of withdrawing the mission cattle from Ruhanga's herds; nonetheless.<sup>4</sup>

So numerous were the contending groups around Rwaza that the missionaries were at a loss to formulate any other policy than the vague one they had been handed down. The ibirongozi put their weight behind the Fathers and now sought to control the local market and tax transactions.<sup>5</sup>

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daughters to the Hutu leader Bicamumpaka with similar results.

1. Rwaza Diary 17 February 1905

2. *ibid.* 20 February, 1 March 1905

3. *ibid.* 17 March 1905

4. *ibid.* 28 March 1905

5. They were led by Nyagasaza who was a powerful force in the region, see Rwaza Diary 30 March 1905



A powerful Hutu leader to the west, Lukara Iwa Bishingwe, interested in mission support, was being pillaged by Kakwandi.<sup>1</sup> The Twa under their bandit chief, Basebya, had offered the mission their assistance in the past and were another force to be contended with in the north-west. Meanwhile, Rwaza's own catechumens, sporting their medals as a sign of their commission, meandered across the hills collecting goats as they went.<sup>2</sup> It was only in March 1905 that the Rwaza Fathers finally brought themselves to give Kakwandi outright assistance and delegated to him a local catechumen.<sup>3</sup> Six months later the missionaries were reporting that tax collection had taken place successfully.<sup>4</sup>

The year 1905 marked the onset of an invasion of Tutsi from Central Rwanda who came to build and stay. Chiefs who had not been seen in Bugarura since Rwabugiri's days appeared at the mission and shamelessly expressed their thanks to the Fathers for enabling them to collect crop dues.<sup>5</sup> The Mulera Tutsi, poor families who had been eking out a living around Ruhengeri, were as outraged as the Hutu and sent teams of abapfumu to curse the missionaries.<sup>6</sup> The Banyanduga wanted 'to profit from the presence of the missionaries to settle and saddle the people with the most arbitrary of taxes',<sup>7</sup> and they were now fully assisted.

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1. Rwaza Diary, 1 April 1905

2. *ibid.* 4 April 1905

3. *ibid.* 31 March 1905

4. *ibid.* 19 September 1905

5. *ibid.* 12, 14, 20 April 1905

6. *ibid.* 14 April 1905

7. Hirth to Livinhac 24 March 1905, 095098 Dossier 95 W.F.A.R.

The price of the mission's acquiescence in the imposition of rulers from Central Rwanda was a permanent force of twenty armed auxiliaries, with a night-watch of two or three men.<sup>1</sup> Despite these precautions a Hutu raid resulted in a mission workshop being burnt to the ground. Members of the Gesera clan and Yoka lineages had formed a blood-pact with the Chakohogo and attacked at night.<sup>2</sup> Tension was heightened by the presence of the Anglo-Belgian delimitation commission to the north. A fortnight later the Singa mustered their forces and a major assault looked likely. The Hutu were aroused and waging a regular campaign against the Tutsi newly arrived and their mission patrons.<sup>3</sup>

The variation in the court's approach to the different stations depended not only on the local political context, but on the changing role of the mwami at Nyanza. While Musinga was completely overshadowed by Kabare and the Queen Mother, the missions offered him an uncomfortable way to increase his stature. On December 4th. 1904, Prestanci was called back to court and, a few months later, the Fathers were reporting that the king was speaking tolerable Swahili.<sup>4</sup> By August 1905, there were two teachers at court, the Ganda, and Wilhelmi, a Hutu, giving

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1. Hirth to Livinhac 24 March 1905

2. Rwaza Diary 24 April 1905

3. *ibid.* 17 May, 30 July 1905

4. Save Diary 4 December 1904



reading and writing lessons to the mwami and fifty ntore.<sup>1</sup>  
The king could now do without interpreters and thus had an advantage over his uncles in dealings with the Europeans.

Musinga's use of mission teachers did not indicate any fundamental change of heart; he remained undecided and vacillated in the face of conflicting pressures.<sup>2</sup> He summoned a neophyte to Nyanza in July 1905 to quizz him about missionary attitudes: Had Kaizuka and Ruhinankiko, two recently disgraced nobles, visited the mission in recent months? Did the Fathers believe that Musinga was the legitimate king? Did they intend one day to leave the country?<sup>3</sup> He later confided to Wilhelmi that he had nothing personally against the Christians.<sup>4</sup> 'Their salvation does not please', he merely remarked, perhaps comparing unfavourably the Lamb of God with Iyangombe's sheep, or the plucking of harps with the alcoholic revels on Muhavura.<sup>5</sup> It was his entourage who hated Christians, he alleged, adding however that mission men did not clap their hands respectfully before him in the style to which he was accustomed.<sup>6</sup>

The Fathers did their best to please, sending off to Mombassa for the special beads and rough red cloth that he liked.<sup>7</sup> During his 1905 visits, Monsignor Hirth:

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1. Save Diary 17 August 1905      2. *ibid.* 5 July 1905  
3. *ibid.* 6 October 1906      4. *ibid.*  
5. Hirth to confrères July 1906 CR

attempted to bring about another wave of reforms; after a further two hundred Easter baptisms were performed at Zaza, he called for 'less and better' neophytes.<sup>1</sup> Even under the 'White Fathers' Rule the task was difficult.

Le difficile partout, c'est d'obtenir un vrai catéchumenat, et non pas seulement quatre années pour la forme et pour satisfaire à la lettre.<sup>2</sup>

The catechumens nearing baptism at Save were given an intensive course of lessons each Sunday for six months, the girls being taught by a pious Tutsi widow who had joined the mission. Problems over land were eased somewhat by old internat students marrying and settling around the stations to form a small Christian community.<sup>3</sup> The Vicar-Apostolic banned the building of a big church at Rwaza to avoid trouble, and told the Zaza Fathers not to 'disturb the people' and to supervise catechumens personally. He was still unhappy at the amount of force being used.<sup>4</sup>

But the mwami's goodwill was easily strained against a background of continuing squabbles over building and

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1. Chroniques Trimestrielles: No. 125 March 1906, 170

2. Hirth to Livinhac: 24 March 1905

3. Rwaza Diary 12 October 1906; Zaza Diary 11 November 1906; Chroniques Trimestrielles: No. 119 September 1905; 430; *ibid.* No. 125 March 1906, 164-166

4. Hirth to Livinhac: 30 June 1906



wood-cutting. The lack of tact was sometimes prodigious; since the mission had neither the men, materials nor population to warrant building a station at Kabgayi, an impoverished Tutsi, Leon Rutwaza, was sent as a kind of caretaker. He told the Fathers that his uncles stole all his cattle when he became a Christian, and, bolstered by his new position as mission agent, he proceeded to get them back.<sup>1</sup> His uncles were duly pillaged with the tacit approval of the missionaries. Unfortunately, the offended parties were garagu of the mwami, one a keeper of a royal grave. The mwami already aggravated by Kabgayi was outraged and called for Leon's head. The Germans requested his removal, though he was still hanging around Kabgayi several months later.<sup>2</sup> It was by such blunders and obstinacy that Musinga was driven into the hands of the Catholics' Ega detractors.

At the end of September 1906, the Fathers first noted that Musinga was dealing with European affairs alone with Kabare and Rwidegembya absent from audiences. He had dismissed his ntore classmates and was having lessons now with only three others.<sup>3</sup> Contemporary with this unifying of State authority in the person of the king came the creation of a permanent Residence for Ruanda-Urundi under von Grawert at Bujumbura. Rwanda was served by his able and experienced plenipotentiary, Dr. Richard Kandt. The

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1. The uncles were Iwiyamwa and Rubuya  
2. Kabgayi Diary 2, 24 March, 24 July 1906, 5 January 1907  
3. *ibid.* 8, 30 September 1906

court emerged strengthened by Musinga's rise while Kandt's expertise in Rwandan affairs made him more than a match for the missionaries.<sup>1</sup> Kandt, both diplomat and administrator, soon began to turn the entente between court, Germans and White Fathers into the more orthodox colonial structure of Indirect Rule, by mediating as much as possible between Musinga and the missionaries and ruling through the court.<sup>2</sup>

On arriving at Kabgayi towards the end of March 1906, Kandt immediately complained to the new Father-Superior about the nuisance that had been caused by requisitions and tree-cutting, adding the threat that von Grawert was annoyed enough to be contemplating a new military post at Zaza to keep the Fathers in line.<sup>3</sup> Leon Rutwaza had finally to go; 'it was not the moment to multiply the grievances of the native authorities'.<sup>4</sup> A severe curtailment of some of the worst mission excesses was clearly top priority.

This tightening of German rule was partly a product of the Maji-Maji war which had broken out in Tanganyika at the end of July 1905, and partly the natural process of changing to normal civil administration. Von Grawert was jumpy

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1. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 105-106, 145-146; Austen Northwest Tanzania 72

2. Mecklenburg Ins Innerste Afrika 85-87

3. See Von Grawert to Father-Superior Kabgayi 11 July 1906  
Dossier 112 WFA

4. Kabgayi Diary 24 March 1906



enough that Christmas to issue instructions to all missionaries that defensive laagers were to be formed at Shangi and Save in the event of an attack.<sup>1</sup> The Germans were fighting for their lives in Nyamwezi, and the 1904 'bullets to water' stories in Rwanda were very close to the ideology of Kinjikitile that had sparked off revolt in Tanganyika.<sup>2</sup> The missionaries had to be restrained.

On the other hand, Kandt was shrewd enough to recognise the value of Christianity as a bulwark against risings legitimated by traditional religions; at least he gave the Fathers that impression.

In short the good doctor seems ready to favour us; he knows well enough that our Christians will be the people on whom he can count in case of attack. He would like to see as many as possible, and in Marangara. He told us: "Above all, do not cross the king right from the beginning as you did in Uswi or there will be no end to the trouble."<sup>3</sup>

A similar carrot-and-the-stick approach was used with the Rwaza Fathers who were warned to beware of intermediaries between the mission and chiefs. Reminding them of the

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1. Von Grawert plainly only intended to hold the south-west, Kinyaga, where Kandt had two camps as well as the post at Shangi. He made a point of warning the Rwaza Fathers that they settled in the north-east at their own risk, see Dufays Pages d'Épopée 18

2. Gwassa C.G.K. 'Kinjikitile and the Ideology of Maji Maji'

mighty levy of ten thousand at Zaza, he deflected the reproach to Dar-es-Salaam: 'Never', he told them, 'would the Government at the coast countenance that sort of thing'. And if the Catholics ignored the chiefs, he warned, then the Lutherans<sup>1</sup> would get them all.<sup>2</sup>

That the Rwaza Fathers did not cry out in anguish at another advocate of Tutsi rule was explained by recent helpful stirrings from the south. A number of ngabo had come up towards the end of 1905, though they suffered some disastrous encounters with Basebya's Twa.<sup>3</sup> In February 1906, von Grawert showed the flag again, and two months later the missionaries felt sufficiently reassured to send away their Sukuma and Bugoyi guards.<sup>4</sup> Local politics assumed its normal pattern with a bloody dispute between Sigi and Zigaba clansmen; Ruhanga and Kakwandi struggled against each other and against the Hutu, and, whenever a nyampara made a nuisance of himself collecting wood, the show of Hutu spears was met by the mission guns.<sup>5</sup>

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in The Historical Study of African Religion ed. T.O. Ranger & I.N. Kimambo London 1972, 202-219 3. Kabgayi Diary 24 March 1906

1. See Mirbt G. Mission und Kolonialpolitik in den deutschen Schutzgebieten Tübingen 1910, 30-36 for details of Protestant missions in German East Africa.

2. Rwaza Diary 3 October 1906

3. Save Diary 20 July 1905; Rwaza Diary 18 August 1905

4. Rwaza Diary 14 February, 16 April 1906

5. *ibid.* 4 October 1906, 30 January 1907



The Germans were able to offer the Rwaza Fathers a period of relative peace and they in their turn were the key to the expansion of the court's influence, the mainstay of German policy in Rwanda.

The era of the great individualist troublemakers like von Beringe and Brard passed away with better administration and communications; Monsignor Hirth now insisted that all correspondence with the court pass through him. Relations between Hirth and Brard deteriorated throughout 1905 until, by September, the great Terebura was drinking large amounts of pombe to get to sleep and seemed on the verge of a nervous breakdown.<sup>1</sup> On December 27th. 1905, a great weight was lifted from the Vicar-Apostolic when Brard returned to Europe to attend the General Chapter of the Society. A year later he entered, never to leave, a Carthusian monastery in Italy; Terebura could only get on with God.<sup>2</sup> His place was taken by the pious apparatchiki, Father Leon Classe, who within months became a virtual representative for the Bishop.<sup>3</sup> Henceforth the triumvirate, Musinga and the two representatives, Kandt and Classe, ruled Rwanda, pulling together like three well-groomed weasels in a box.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Save Diary 26 August 1905; Hirth to Livinhac 12 September 1905, 095103 Dossier 97 WFA

2. Nothomb Church History 20

3. Save Diary 9 December 1906

CHAPTER. THREE.

Musinga and the Missionaries:

1907-1910



Father Leon Classe, Monsignor Hirth's representative in Rwanda, was born on June 28th. 1874 and went to a minor seminary at Versailles. After being ordained in Carthage on March 31st. 1900, he was marked out early for distinction in the White Fathers' Society by being appointed secretary to Monsignor Livinhac.<sup>1</sup> From the office of Superior-General's secretary he descended to a particularly rough passage through the ranks in the stations of Nyundo and Rwaza where Gregorian chant was mixed with the sound of the Mauser 71.

With Fathers Veckerlé, Dufays, Barthélemy and Loupias, he became a 'northerner'. Despite a respect for authority and age that had served him well in Carthage and with Monsignor Hirth,<sup>2</sup> he cordially disliked Father Brard; the veteran leader of the southern missions regularly failed to send on mails, and kept the northern stations undersupplied; after the 1904 troubles he led the talk

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1. Van Overschelde Father A. Monseigneur Léon-Paul Classe Kabgayi 28 June 1945, booklet, White Fathers' Library W FAR

2. Classe was something of a 'son of the Church'. He left his birthplace, Metz, and went with his parents to Paris at the age of six where he first studied at St. Nicolas du Chardonnet. When he entered the White Fathers in 1896, he filled in the forms himself giving as his parents or guardian 'Abbé Sterney, Curé de St. Denys et de l'Estrée (Seine)'. So it may be assumed both his parents died before he was 22. Personal Communication Rev. Père René Lamey, Archivist, W FAR.

of closing down the northern stations. A southern faction of Fathers Smoor, Tribout, Pouget and Lecoindre agreed on this drastic action, but the northern priests had fought hard for their many catechumens and could not conceive of abandoning them.<sup>1</sup>

Monsignor Hirth did not visit the Rwandan stations regularly enough to notice the tensions that had arisen amongst them. His 1903 and 1905 tours produced a flurry of reforms but, once he returned to Tanganyika, the Fathers slipped back into their old ways. Not enjoying the bureaucratic aspects of the episcopacy, he was always happy to delegate responsibility.

His reshuffle of personnel after Brard's departure in 1905 helped calm missionary nerves. Instead of the abrasive Terebura, Father Lecoindre, both diplomatic and relatively gentle, took over affairs at Nyanza school. Instead of violent confrontations, Father Classe with his Parisian training wrote mild protests and formal apologies; the mission had begun to turn another, and more aristocratic, cheek.

The effect on Classe of coming south after five years was marked: he was 'totally amazed to note that the King had great authority in Rwanda and was not the dog friends of Nyundo and Rwaza mission called him'.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Lecoindre Rev. Père 'Le Ruanda. Raisons qui ont nui beaucoup au développement de la mission au Ruanda' handwritten MS, undated (c.1918) WFA

2. *ibid.*



Like that of all new converts his sudden faith in the mwami's power and in the importance of supporting Tutsi rule was somewhat exaggerated; while at Rwaza he had loyally tried to further the court's cause but had had no evidence that it was a sensible policy. Experience had taught him that violence was the disease of the north, so he was already wary of paths that led to Hutu emancipation. 'We do not cease', he wrote ingratiatingly to Maison-Carrée in 1906, 'to draw the attention of our catechumens to the need for obedience to their chiefs'.<sup>1</sup> The Church's teaching on authority was, for him, the sine qua non of both catholicism and civilised society. 'The absence of respect due to authority', he continued, 'can moreover only be harmful to us; for this critical attitude to authority will be carried over by Christians into their relations with missionaries. God preserve us from a christendom of that sort'.<sup>2</sup> He had now found the authority he was looking for, and the northern faction who dragged their heels found him strangely blind to the daily realities they still lived.

For Classe, the Tutsi were a caste like the Brahmins in India whose conversion would guarantee the success of the Rwanda mission. That the Germans saw them as the lynch-pin of their colonial policy made the argument all the more cogent. 'We must force ourselves by all the

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1. Rapports annuels 1905-1906, 184.

2. ibid.

means in our power not to leave the Batussi on one side', he wrote. 'Our dear mission in Rwanda can look forward to some really dark days if we take no interest in this apostolate to the ruling class, if, by our acts, we give grounds for the opinion that the Catholic Faith is that of the poor'.<sup>1</sup> This was indeed the Church of Versailles; Cardinal Lavignerie's missiology, Classe's facility in dealing with the nobility, both German and Tutsi, and his memories of Rwaza under arms, conspired to make future mission policy a foregone conclusion. Like many of his contemporaries,<sup>2</sup> the future Vicar-Apostolic was fascinated by the world of the 'sanguinary despot' borne on the shoulders of a faithful peasantry, a fascination that was to make the Church a gullible accomplice of European fascism.<sup>3</sup>

Any aspiring cleric would have been relieved to slot into structured authoritarian world of Nyanza after the anarchy of the north, and Father Classe was to prove as successful in the subtle dealings of court life as he was amongst the higher ranks of the White Fathers and, later, the Belgian colonial service.<sup>3</sup> Once amongst the Tutsi, as Van Overschelde put it, 'he was from then on the "leader", doubly so because a "gentleman" and... a mututsi'.<sup>4</sup> But

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1. Rapports annuels 1905-1906, 185

2. See for example Mecklenburg's references to 'absoluter Autoritat' of Musinga in Ins Innerste Afrika 77, 82, 87

3. See Chapter Seven

4. Van Overschelde Classe 5



if the grubby splendour of court life won his heart, it separated him just as surely from his confrères left behind in the north. When he was formally made Vicar-General for Monsignor Hirth in October 1907, acknowledging what had for some time had informally been the case, the alienated northern missionaries saw him as something of a defector, and were ready to take offence at any heavy-handedness or even inadvertent slights. Within a year of his arriving at Save, he was showering them with reams of directives and missiological reflections of great theological delicacy.<sup>1</sup> His superior manner and excessive piety did not endear him to gun-toting priests.

It was plain that the voice of Maison-Carrée was going to be heard along the wooden catwalks again, and, this time, obeyed.

Let those of our missionaries who do not believe they can reconcile the duties of the apostolate with the practice of our Rule look for a Society which has as its Rule only the caprice of its members, or let them simply return to their dioceses.<sup>2</sup>

Such ultimatums were provoked not by some grave moral lapse but by certain Fathers' habit of travelling singly instead of with another missionary, according to the Rule.

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1. The period 1913-1914 was a vintage year capped by a thirteen page work dated 5 November 1914 on the sacrament of penance.

2. Classe to Confrères: 5 July 1907 CR

Like a good sergeant-major covering for a mild and incompetent officer, Leon Classe set about lashing Rome's troops into shape.

What Classe contributed in divisiveness to the mission he more than made up in his handling of Musinga and Dr. Kandt. The principal result of the 'Brard method',<sup>1</sup> fisticuffs before diplomacy, was a ban on new stations which lasted from 1906-1908. Von Grawert had complained about the White Fathers to a retiring Von Götzen and the Imperial Government issued a local embargo on expansion.<sup>2</sup> Although the Berlin Reichstag was dominated by the Catholic Zentrum Party, its members had virtually no direct control over colonial affairs. After the intense pressure of 1900 which resulted in mission school agreements to counter the rise of the muslim elite in German East Africa,<sup>3</sup> the religious interests of metropolitan Germany played no direct role, least of all in the little known backwater of Rwanda.<sup>4</sup> By 1906, Hohenlohe-Langenburg, an ultra-protestant aristocrat, was Colonial Director.<sup>5</sup> Good relations at the

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1. Lecoindre's term, see p.162 n.1

2. Kandt to Classe 11 March. 1909 No. 101/09 (German ref.)  
C.O.; de Lager Ruanda 397

3. Austen Northwest Tanzania 70

4. Mecklenburg simply assumes that Rwanda will stay  
underdeveloped, see Ins Innerste Afrika 87

5. Iliffe J. Tanganyika under German Rule 1905-1912  
Cambridge 1969, 42



local level were all important.

As always, the Catholics were now thinking of expansion. Monsignor Hirth was considering a station in Ndorwa near the capital of the Nyabingi prophetess, Muhumusa, to act as a link with Bukoba.<sup>1</sup> His worst fears were confirmed when German Lutherans under Pastor Ernst Johanssen arrived in July 1907.<sup>2</sup>

The Protestants from the Bethel bei Bielefeld mission, that had eight stations and had served in German East Africa since 1890, were well received by Musinga who questioned them closely.<sup>3</sup> They were given land five hours walk from Zaza, at Zinga, and began building immediately; a second station was begun the same year at Kirinda.<sup>4</sup>

Although the initial contacts between the White Fathers and the Lutherans were superficially friendly, the priests helping the pastors with the language and giving them tips on brick-making,<sup>5</sup> alarms were being sounded behind the scenes; the Vicar-Apostolic asked the Fathers:

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1. Notes on Catholic Missions by Father Martin, 1925, Derscheid Papers

2. The Evangelische Missionsgesellschaft für Deutsch-Ostafrika, begun in 1886, was moved to Bethel bei Bielefeld in 1906, and numbered 22 missionaries in German East Africa in 1909, see Mirbt Mission und Kolonialpolitik 30-31

3. Johanssen E. Ruanda: Kleine Anfänge, Grosse Aufgaben der evangelischen Mission in Zwischenseengebiet Deutsche-Ostafrikas Bethel bei Bielefeld 1915, 39

4. Zaza Diary 8 August 1907

5. Kandt to Buisson 17 July 1908 C.O.; de Lager Ruanda 406

to reduce contact to a minimum; catechists were to be trained immediately and placed 'incognito in threatened spots'.<sup>1</sup> Mission adepts were henceforth to be referred to as Bakatholika and, in case any confusion remained, chapels to the Virgin Mary were to be erected at each station.<sup>2</sup>

Since the Lutherans were reputedly being called Bafransa in Buganza, some confusion clearly existed.<sup>3</sup> In a flush of ecumenism, or in the hope of slipping in unobtrusively, the Protestants had not, it seems, emphasised at court their differences with the Catholics. Musinga told Father Classe accusingly that the Lutherans were proclaiming the same doctrine as the White Fathers and were similar to them. 'Yes', retorted the Vicar-General with great panache, 'in the same way as a Mututsi and a Muhutu are similar'.<sup>4</sup> The humour was certainly not lost on the king; the choice of sites for the Lutherans indicated that he hoped to contain Catholics with Protestant competitors on the model of Uganda.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Classe to Father-Superior Kabgayi 4 August 1907 CR
  2. Hirth to confrères 11 April 1908; Hirth to Father-Superior Kabgayi 13 May 1908 CR
  3. Kabgayi Diary 22 October 1907
  4. Save Diary 31 August 1907
  5. Kandt to Ruccius 20 September 1907 P.1735 Film No. 167 AA  
Des Forges Rwanda under Musinga 120



At their home base the Lutherans were not so adept at keeping their competitive instincts at bay. In a missionary conference in Trier, Pastor Ruccius got carried away with Lutheran fervour and denounced the Catholics in Rwanda. His anti-popery tirade reported in the Wittenberger Tageblatt caught the eye of the Regional Provincial of the White Fathers, one of whose priests, Father Peter Schumacher, had recently left for Rwanda. A protest was made to Pastor Johanssen who ingenuously pleaded that such a 'ruhigen, besonnenen friedlich gesonnenen Mann' as Pastor Ruccius could not have been so unkind.<sup>1</sup> With Dr. Kandt acting as intermediary, the affair was batted back and forth between Trier and Rwanda until Pastor Ruccius was obliged to retract.<sup>2</sup>

Although the new Governor of German East Africa, von Rechenberg, was an aristocratic Catholic educated by the Jesuits in Madrid,<sup>3</sup> the White Fathers felt at a disadvantage in competition with German Protestants. The Society, strained to a maximum, still only provided five German priests for Rwanda by 1912 as against nineteen French.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Johanssen to Classe 2 December 1908 C.O.

2. Johanssen to Kandt 11 December 1908; Trittelvitz to Dr. Froberger 28 January 1909. Pastor Ruccius was finally not accepted for the Rwanda mission because of this outburst.

3. Iliffe Tanganyika 52

4. Kandt R. Annual Report for 1912 P.1728 Film No. 166 AA  
A mission-house was built in Trier in 1894 but a full German Province of the White Fathers only began in 1905.

Five out of six Brothers were German but some Hutu mistook them for the Fathers' garagu, in one case working off a debt;<sup>1</sup> the roles were clear to all and such distinctions running along national lines were not designed to reassure the Imperial administrators. The Lutherans were suprised to learn from the people on arriving that the country belonged to the Bafransa, a word synonymous with Basarcedoti, priests.<sup>2</sup>

Von Rechenburg, a Catholic in a strongly freethinking or Protestant administration - Kandt was a follower of Nietzsche - was unlikely to flaunt his religion.<sup>3</sup> He preferred the company of Muslims whom he saw as the natural heirs to the colony.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, his presence in Dar-es-Salaam made it unlikely that any discrimination against Catholics would be attempted. Kandt, in fact, treated the Lutherans in a very off-hand manner; none were invited to a reception for the Duke of Mecklenburg attended by Fathers Classe and Dufays.<sup>5</sup> The success or failure of the Catholic mission hinged not on the religious affiliation of officials at the coast, nor

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1. Kabgayi Diary 18 April 1907

2. Johanssen Kleine Anfänge 32, 41: 'Intschi hi ni ya mufransa'; de Lacger Ruanda 397

3. De Lacger Ruanda 420

4. Iliffe Tanganyika 199-200

5. Mecklenburg Ins Innerste Afrikas 125-126; de Lacger Ruanda 419. The Catholics probably owed their invitation to their kindnesses to Dr. I. Czekanowski.



in the Reichstag, but on the Fathers' willingness to support German policy and to behave in Rwanda in a way likely to win the approval of the court. And that depended in some measure on the degree to which Monsignor Hirth and his Vicar-General could make of their missionaries the 'admirable machine' their Jesuit predecessors had striven to create.

Any attempt to check the impetuosity of individual missionaries encountered a multitude of instances when intervention seemed justified. When a Tutsi chief from near Kabgayi fell ill, his Hutu were accused of having poisoned him; in a few days twenty-five peasants were given a potion that made them mentally deranged; taking their induced madness as a sign of guilt the chief had them executed one after the other. Father Lecoindre intervened to stop the slaughter.<sup>1</sup> The next day he was proclaimed mwami wa bahutu, king of the Hutu. In Bukunzi, when a child was born with teeth and was therefore about to be killed, the Mibirisi Father-Superior hastily put a medal around its neck saying 'this child belongs to us'.<sup>2</sup> Such actions were surely blameless, yet for Rwandans around the stations they were just as much unwarranted interference as less highly motivated behaviour. It was furthermore difficult to curb priests living in virtual

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1. This chief involved was Iwibishenga, see Kabgayi

Diary 12 January 1907

2. Mibirisi Diary 14 March 1906.

isolation for long periods.<sup>1</sup>

If the conduct of individual missionaries was a question of discipline within the Society, so potentially open to correction, the mission's drift into clientship confronted Hirth and Classe with a Sisyphean task. Disputes at Zaza between Christians and their chiefs were endless. Becoming a catechumen immediately placed a peasant in an equivocal legal position, even had there not been pro-Hutu priests like Father Pouget to encourage the idea that the missionaries were temporal saviours. Father Pouget began conscientiously calling in the Tutsi to judge cases; but it was generally recognised that decisions went to the man with the most powerful supporter. The penalty for mission failure to sustain this support was 'backsliding into Pagan ways'.<sup>2</sup> So it was perhaps unfair of Monsignor Hirth to confide to Livinhac that, looking at Zaza, he well understood why the Germans had banned mission expansion in Rwanda.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Mails between neighbouring stations, for example, were still being lost in 1907. The Bugesera forest between Save and Zaza made this route particularly vulnerable. The king's excuse was that he could not protect mission mails while traders posed as the Fathers' agents. As a result the mission caravans took to carrying distinctive identification marks, see Zaza Diary 5 March 1907; Save Diary 16 April 1907; Kabgayi Diary 25 April 1907; Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 143 November 1907,

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2. Zaza Diary 30 January 1907; Rapports annuels 1907-1908, 155.



The situation at Nyundo was equally fraught with difficulty after the Germans had turned Kisenyi into a large base and made support for the local Tutsi obligatory.<sup>1</sup> In June 1908, there was a minor Christian uprising against the chiefs; after assembling when mass had finished the Hutu Christians burnt their chiefs' huts in retaliation for repeated insults and persecution. The next day the nobles arrived at the mission with an escort to recuperate their pillaged cattle, and were met by a large, well-armed and hostile Christian mob. In the presence of the Father-Superior, a Hutu spokesman demanded that the Tutsi should rule in a more moderate fashion in the future, then the cattle were handed back.<sup>2</sup>

The Father-Superior explained to Kamgamugara that he had nothing to do with the incident and that it was he and his brother who provoked it by their injustices, and finally that he was very annoyed by the insults which were directed straight at the Fathers, both words and deeds, they all tended to reduce their prestige in the eyes of the Natives.<sup>2</sup>

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3) Hirth to Livinhac: 30 September 1906, 095124: Dossier: 95 W.F.A.R.

1. Hirth to Livinhac: 31 October 1907, 095143: Dossier 95 W.F.A.R.

2. Nyundo Diary 21-22 June 1908. The 'local' Tutsi were, of course, newly arrived in the region and led by a certain Iwakadigi, a munyanduga from near Kabgayi, see later chapters.

As at Zaza the problem was insoluble. Each chief tried to push his peasants to their limit, wrote the Superior, 'and they on their side try to do the least possible, neglecting no means to that end, even going to take instruction if they think it has some utility'.<sup>1</sup> The missionaries' dilemma, and they acknowledged it openly, was that both classes were more or less justified in their complaints once the prevailing social structure was accepted. Dr. Kandt was to bemoan the Christians' insubordination on many occasions, but it was rare that the missionaries pushed their charges to revolt, and rarer that the Germans tried to curb the Tutsi exactions that were partly to blame.

Richard Kandt, a Jewish medical practitioner who had studied geography and taught himself several African languages, was formally made Resident of Rwanda in 1908 leaving von Grawert in Bujumbura. His analysis of Rwandan society led him to believe that it would only be possible to rule through the Tutsi, and he saw no alternative to support for their harsh feudal regime and autocratic monarchy.<sup>2</sup> He had the unaffected respect for knowledge of a Victorian explorer and polyglot; if he saw the Kaiser's 'civilising mission' as anything more

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1. Nyundo Diary February 1909

2. For Mecklenburg, too many Whites would be needed to rule Rwanda so the mwami had, 'unmerklich' to be made into the Resident's right hand, see Ins Innerste Afrika 82, 86; Louis Ruanda-Urundi 146 n.4



than respecting the Tutsi order, it was as injecting rationality into the ruling class through education. His colleagues were able to call on literate and moderately trustworthy Muslims from the coast in Tanganyika, but the Tutsi's aversion to foreigners vitiated any attempt to employ the Muslim elite in Rwanda. He badly needed literate and reliable Rwandan auxiliaries, and the Catholic mission alone had the manpower to provide them.

When the Germans drew up agreements with the White Fathers for their stations in East Africa, they intended a contingent of German-speaking priests to work alongside the administrators.<sup>1</sup> The underdevelopment of the German Province made this impossible. The preponderance of French Fathers meant, moreover, that the Imperial language policy, Swahili as lingua franca with German for an elite, was only patchily followed.<sup>2</sup> The priests do not seem to have bothered to master German. Dr. Kandt saw little to praise in six years of Catholic educational effort, and querulously asked why the priests did not run a proper school at Nyanza instead of a mud-and-straw hovel with an African catechist.<sup>3</sup>

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1. The first agreement was in 1896, and the White Fathers were included in the 1900 agreements in which German-teaching schools were State-aided, see Austen Northwest Tanzania 70

2. Swahili was taught at the station school at Mibirisi and prizes awarded to a Catholic pupil speaking good German, see Rapports annuels 1905-1906, 190

3. Rwaza Diary 3 October 1906

Monsignor Hirth the churchman and Dr. Kandt the statesman both saw African education in instrumental terms. Schooling was the generator of ruling elites; for Kandt, docile, rational nobles for an enlightened feudal order, for Hirth, pious, exemplary Rwandan priests and laity for the corpus christianum. The difference was that Kandt dealt in the practical realities of ruling a highly stratified African State, while Hirth clung to the radical possibilities of his Christian faith. Not for him to call a halt when after ten years effort in German East Africa only seven of the one hundred and sixty seminarians who had passed through his hands were still persevering.<sup>1</sup> The Germans turned instinctively to the Tutsi, to the point where it was said the Tutsi were 'for the Badatchi' but the Hutu 'for the Bafransa'; Monsignor Hirth was indifferent to the class or ethnic origins of his seminarians.<sup>2</sup>

For the Vicar-Apostolic, the creation of an African clergy was the immediate and primary aim of missionary endeavour. Only with the formation of an indigenous priesthood did the Universal Church become fully incarnate in African societies as a visible and Grace-giving institution. Rwandan Fathers were not an additional colourful touch but the essential constituent of the

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1. Grands Lacs 1952, 7

2. Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 125 March 1906, 169; de Lager Ruanda 434.



Roman Church. This was an article of faith for Catholic missionaries, hammered into them by Papal encyclicals and, sometimes, just as thoroughly forgotten. In Monsignor Hirth it was a blinding vision that dominated the last years of his episcopacy to the exclusion of more mundane considerations - like the parlous state of his European clergy.

Any German reading Monsignor Hirth's circulars on education would soon have realised that Catholic schools were only ever going to be of incidental help to colonial administration. The Vicar-Apostolic's aims for station schools were set out in a fourteen page tract circulated on May 12th. 1907

- 1) to prepare first and foremost good recruits for the seminary,
- 2) catechists for villages in the district, though their preparation is for the future as the moment does not yet seem ripe to bring catechists into play,
- 3) elite Christians who know their religion well and practice it in a way to draw others by their example.

The goals were purely religious, the order significant, Kandt's hopes forlorn. The teaching of writing was a reluctant concession to the spirit of the 1900 agreements: 'only what would be adequate to give a certain amount of preparation to a small elite to become assistants to Government functionaries'. All catechumens, however,

were expected to be able to read.<sup>1</sup>

The Vicar-Apostolic's stress on reading is perhaps surprising in the light of his indifference to secular education, but for him it was an integral part of a well formulated catechesis and religious training.<sup>2</sup> Most of the Rwandan converts were youngsters, almost all were aged between twelve and thirty years. In response to Acerbo Nimis, a Papal encyclical of April 15th. 1905,<sup>3</sup> which insisted on a weekly catechism for youths, Hirth designed a course of twenty-five lessons to be given, when they could be spared from their fields, to children preparing for their first confession. At the same time the proofs of the first Kinyarwanda books of piety, like Father Ecker's Book of Prayers, were being circulated round the mission stations for correction.<sup>4</sup>

But the task was now more than pre-baptismal training; as the missionaries tried to remain aloof from Hutu-Tutsi conflicts under pressure from their superiors, increasing signs of 'backsliding' appeared amongst Christians.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Hirth J.J. 'Des Élèves destinés au Séminaire' typed MS: Marienberg 1907 CR

2. This was perhaps a lesson learnt from long contact with Protestants in Uganda since the emphasis, though not uncommon, is unusually strong for a Catholic mission.

3. Pope Pius X. required a compulsory one hour Sunday catechism lesson for youths and special classes in preparation for the sacraments of Penance and Confirmation.

4. Gitabu tshy'abakristu & Gatikisimu mu Kinyarwanda Maison Carrée 1907, see Kabgayi Diary 17 May 1907



With the main thrust of missionary work directed to the young, neophytes did not get enough attention; for instruction they had only a short sermon during sung mass and a Kinyarwanda translation of the Gospel.<sup>1</sup> Much catechesis fell to Rwandans; Save mission had three trained local catechists and fourteen paid 'helpers'. On the hills, though, it was the more haphazard method of Christian teaching family and friends. Thus while Save had a theoretical catechumenate of two thousand, only seven hundred and fifty received regular instruction of a formal kind at the mission and in subsidiary centres. At all stages the mission followers were left to their own devices for most of the time. The Vicar-Apostolic believed that, under these conditions with few missionaries and the need to keep close watch on catechists, pious reading was vital to keep Christians from slipping into the diffuse outer orbit of the mission and finally being lost.<sup>2</sup>

Monsignor Hirth's vision of his neophytes doing spiritual reading in their enclosure was as idealistic as his view of the goals of education. He wanted teachers who would inspire their pupils and be able to 'mettre en

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5) Rapports annuels: 1907-1908, 155

1. Hirth to confrères 9 January 1907 CR.

2. Classe to Father-Superior Kabgayi 4 August 1907 CR;  
Rapports annuels: 1907-1908, 155.

oeuvre toutes les richesses de leur nature en les élevant et les vivifiant par les ressources divines de la grâce'.<sup>1</sup> But such lofty thoughts ill-fitted the sentiments of many Fathers who saw anything other than straightforward catechesis as a frivolous diversion. 'It has been said', Hirth told them, 'that certain missionaries are overdoubtful of their vocation as educators. Has it not been said, even to myself, in a station where today the whole point is that baptisms are only made with some difficulty, that: "what is the use of a school for these blacks"?'<sup>2</sup>

The Fathers were obliged to take directives with a pinch of salt. The first few years of mission work had given the Hutu the idea that the mission would protect them from their chiefs. When, obeying the Vicar-Apostolic, the missionaries withdrew from disputes between peasants and Tutsi, their absence was as politically significant as their presence; the Hutu, feeling deserted and betrayed, stopped frequenting the mission. The Fathers then had to face the Bishop to explain why there was such a high level of 'backsliding' at their station. For idealists like Hirth there was only one explanation, catechesis had not been thorough enough and follow-up was inadequate. Their sublime vocation as educators amounted to paying pupils, or providing them with paid work, to come to school.

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1. Hirth 'Élèves'

2. Hirth to confrères 11 April 1908. CR.



And after six years of attempts at getting a school in Nyanza underway, to the general merriment of the Tutsi who blocked their every move, they were accused of running a hovel by Kandt. Quand même...

The station schools, large open sheds on the mission grounds, lacked books, slates and even the rudimentary equipment that might have been found in schools for working class children in Europe. Classes began at 8 a.m. with a half hour of Histoire Sainte learnt off by heart in silence. Pupils recited their passages before the teacher who questioned them on the previous day's lesson. Proceeding by question and answer, the teacher then gave a short explanation of the day's text. At 10 a.m. the children went out for twenty minutes recreation and games followed by a period of Gregorian chant before they were dismissed.<sup>1</sup>

For the majority, school ended about 11 a.m. though many would stay on at the mission to find paid work in the afternoon. Since the childrens' labour was lost to their parents this was more a necessary inducement than an added incentive. The low mission budgets made it vital to live as much as possible off the land, and there was plenty of work in the large gardens tended by the Brothers around the stations. Each mission was isolated and difficult to supply so all that could be grown was grown. The first successful coffee crops were

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<sup>1</sup> Hirth 'Elevés'

harvested on mission grounds so pupils staying on were able to see intensive agriculture and cash-cropping first hand.<sup>1</sup> Although the main wave of construction had ended, the Brothers still needed assistance and many schoolboys were given a simple training in brick-making, carpentry and construction skills. The small impermanent labour force was paid out of an income comparable to that of a modest European planter, supplemented in some stations by trading at the mission shop.<sup>2</sup>

Those selected for the seminary in Rubyia learnt their Histoire Sainte in Swahili and stayed on with a group of 13-18 year olds for forty minutes writing practice. Priests were not supposed to use corporal punishment and pupils were expected to show a minimal level of politeness and decorum in class; there were lapses on all sides.<sup>3</sup> The most important part of mission education was ultimately the afternoon period when the Hutu could pick up the Brothers' skills and chat with Europeans in a more relaxed atmosphere than the stifling schoolroom.<sup>4</sup> Not suprisingly

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1. Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 143 November 1907, 647

2. Kabgayi Diary 12 January 1908

3. The Vicar-Apostolic complained about the level of violence when he visited the schools, see Hirth to Livinhac 30 June 1906. On the other hand, Father Léonard who visited the Rwanda mission from Maison-Carrée took the view that the pupils could not be expected to sit that length of time in classrooms and the trouble was

inevitable, see Léonard to Livinhac 1 February 1909, 095195

4. Hirth 'Élèves'



the Germans found standards inadequate.<sup>1</sup>

Every two years, groups of boys aged between 13-15 years set off for the seminary. Pupils with 'solid piety, open, respectful and amenable personalities and good health' were selected from their classmates and encouraged.<sup>2</sup> Since the brightest were assumed likely to end up in government employment, it was considered unrealistic to demand more than average intelligence in addition to moral qualities.<sup>3</sup> A wisdom based on his unhappy experiences with his European clergy may have inspired the Bishop when he wrote encouraging the Fathers to send more boys:

Les natures violents doivent inspirer moins de défiance, parce qu'il est plus facile de retrancher que de créer.  
Néanmoins il y a des tempéraments si emportés qu'ils sont impropres à la vie commune. On devra dans cette catégorie discerner les enfants qui se laissent corriger de ceux qui ne se laissent pas dominer; on essaie les premiers, on laisse les derniers.<sup>3</sup>

Right from the first baptisms, the Vicar-Apostolic had underlined the need to select good pupils for his seminary in Tanganyika. In October 1904, ten boys from

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1. Austen Northwest Tanzania 70

2. Hirth 'Élèves'

3. *ibid.*

Save marched for six days to join six from Zaza and the combined group headed east across Gisaka to Kianja. Amongst them was the future first priest of Rwanda, Donat Leberaho. Hardly had they arrived at the seminary near Bukoba before pressure from the Haya chief Kahigi obliged Monsignor Hirth to move the seminarians to Rubya, three hours march from Lake Nyanza. There, they started learning Latin before many had sufficient knowledge of Swahili to converse with the other students who were drawn from a wide range of language groups.<sup>1</sup> In October 1906, a second contingent which included Jovite Matabaro and Isodore Semigabo left Rwanda.<sup>2</sup> The top class was starting philosophy in Latin and learning German by 1909.<sup>3</sup> Later classroom teaching for the theologians was intensive with one hour of Church History and two hours theology every day. Only in 1910 was a 20,000 word Swahili-Latin dictionary available. Despite the extraordinary linguistic difficulties, seminarians became competent in Latin and several pupils corresponded with seminarians at Trier in excellent German.<sup>4</sup>

Leberaho, Matabaro and Semigabo<sup>5</sup> were the only three out

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1. Grands Lacs 1952, 8-10

2. Nothomb Church History 20

3. Hirth to confrères 20 November 1908 CR

4. Schappi F.S. Die katholische Missionsschule im ehemaligen Deutsch-Ostafrika Wiën-Zurich 1937, 162-163, 174

5. All three were, of course, from non-noble families and peasant stock.



of seventy-five Rwandans sent to Rubya who reached ordination.<sup>1</sup> Not suprisingly, the missionaries were skeptical; they had not much reason to believe that the motives of boys who agreed to make the journey to Rubya were entirely spiritual. Their Hutu catechists assumed, and declared openly, that seminary life was easier and more desirable than working under a Tutsi lord in the fields. 'And do you really think', one catechist asked Father Lecoindre, 'that those going to Rubya are drawn by any other motive ?'<sup>2</sup> Even Father Classe wrote privately to Livinhac to inform him that the seminarians, once there, were disgusted with life at Rubya and wanted to leave.<sup>3</sup>

In the past the Hutu had always had recourse to the simple expedient of moving to another region when their lords' exactions became intolerable. To join the mission could be a difficult way out; Christians lost their cattle, were beaten, overloaded with work, and shunned by Tutsi like lepers. Those going to Rubya not only voted decisively with their feet but, with the guarantee of mission protection and no fear of persecution, left Tutsi jurisdiction for good.

In the Rwandan context the material and spiritual motives for joining the Fathers were not contradictory.

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1. Nothomb Church History 20

2. Kabgayi Diary 9 June 1909

3. Classe to Livinhac 14 August 1909, 095212 Dossier 95

The idea of a holy alliance between piety and poverty was as alien to Rwandan society as to the Semites of the Old Testament. The political power of the Fathers did nothing in the peasants' eyes to detract from their religious claims; far from it. Even the traditional notion of kingship was interwoven with salvific themes; when the Fathers were called abami, they were acknowledged thereby to 'have' in some measure the spiritual power of Imana, with undertones of salvation too temporal for the missionaries' liking, but at least providing a rudimentary soteriology which might be transformed by the Gospel.

Nonetheless, whenever the missionaries detected material motives in their catechumens' adherence to the Faith, they felt apprehensively that the Hutu were misunderstanding them and their office. To aim at the material comforts of seminary life - a relative comfort indeed - instead of the perfection of an ascetic sacerdotal ministry was deplorable to men who had given up comforts in search of spiritual excellence. The misunderstanding was mutual and never fully resolved.

All the missionaries could have agreed with Monsignor Hirth that priesthood was the perfect state of Christian life towards which ideally everyone should strive, but most felt that it was premature to push Africans into it before the baptismal water had dried on their forehead. For some, the reservations came from an ingrained pessimism that at times degenerated into racism; for others,



it stemmed from an unruly common-sense that was equally unacceptable to the Vicar-Apostolic. 'Knowing that the vocation comes from God', he admonished, 'we are too inclined to forget that it only flowers and bears fruit through the work of Man'.<sup>1</sup> The early return of all but a small fraction of those sent to Rubya merely increased his intransigence, while allowing the Rwanda missionaries to conclude that his repeated directives represented more a private hobby-horse than a central tenet of Catholic missiological thinking.

The high rate of drop-out from the seminary is explicable in terms of its inhuman life style and the strain of separation from family and country. Donat Leberaho spent nine years away from Rwanda living a celibate existence with strangers, speaking foreign languages and studying philosophy and theology in Latin. Yet more than academic discipline separated teachers and pupils. Since the boys had got as far as Rubya they must have been initially attracted by the priesthood, or at least their vision of it. For the Fathers, it was a state that could be achieved by effort, discipline, application and a sincere love of God. This was the way bourgeois christendom set about attaining the objects of its desires. But Hutu peasants had less evidence than even the European working class that hard work would lift them up the rungs of a stratified society. Undisguised by gentlemanly restraints, the stock-in-trade of Tutsi power politics:

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1. Hirth 'Élèves'

was dissimulation, cunning, violence and flattery. It was these aspects of ruling class culture that aspiring Hutu needed to embrace rather than the physical discipline of the ntore and the warrior courage of the Tutsi ngabo, both now moribund institutions. Behind the priests was a long tradition of spiritual striving and the bourgeois notion of meritorious industry; behind the Hutu seminarian was the deadening inertia of peasant life under the Tutsi yoke.

Peasant culture itself had elements which a glib Freudianism might have labelled highly favourable to the Christian message. The Hutu family was marked by an extreme dependence on the father continuing even after marriage. The authoritarian paterfamilias of the umuryango was projected into the political kingdom in the person of the mwami. The great Patriarch was magnificently distant from the harsh humdrum life of the peasant. He reigned with the Queen-Mother as the source of all authority, having the right of life and death over his brothers and sisters. In this heroic figure were accomplished all the noble deeds held up in court culture for the admiration of the masses. In their stead he realised both the psychological and political yearnings of the peasantry.<sup>1</sup>

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1. De Heusch L. Essais sur le symbolisme de l'inceste royal en Afrique Université de Bruxelles 1958, 50-59



The place of the White Fathers in this pattern of values was assured; they were seen without contradiction as abami and abayeyi, parents; titles like 'saviour of the poor' and 'the feet have come' were bestowed on them.<sup>1</sup> They were endowed with powers to detect robbers, by using a mere piece of paper with writing on it, to control rainfall, cure the sick and bewitch the recalcitrant.<sup>2</sup> To go against their will could be dangerous; a Christian from Save left home to sell skins in Gisaka against the Fathers' advice. While away he had a vision of Christ who told him of the coming conversion of Rwanda and chided him from leaving home.<sup>3</sup> The image of the dominating father, diffracted through the patrilineage to the court itself, was focussed on the Catholic missionaries, and by extension their God, through their ready use of paternalist and authoritarian methods.

If, as seems likely, the Vicar-Apostolic's seminary tempted future seminarians like a great Catholic court, it

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1. Fathers Dufays was called Rukizaboro, saviour of the poor, and Father Lecoindre, Ibirengebyaje, the feet have come. Informants at Rwaza when questioned on the way people looked on the first missionaries often used the word umuyeyi, a parent.

2. Save Diary 13-14 September 1905; Kabgayi Diary 19 January, 9 May, 26 August 1906; Rapports annuels 1906-1907, 162 The Fathers own behaviour could be a mixture of the pragmatic and the magical; for example they gave a woman in difficult labour a half-glass of Holy Water followed by black coffee, see Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 146 February 1908, 152

3. Save Diary 5 December 1906

would have been a bitter disappointment. Few seminarians grasped the notion that the power and glory of the Catholic priesthood were rewards for ten years patient spiritual and educational effort and not a sinecure granted to astute courtiers. It was no longer a question of identifying passively with a hero but of trying personally to achieve a goal, and the goal was unexpectedly distant.

The training of the Catholic clergy after the Reformation had become more arduous and tended to emphasise those aspects of the Catholic tradition that defined it in relation to protestantism. As Monsignor Hirth gently pointed out to the missionaries, the formation of priests did not take place by Grace alone. An excessive sense of vocation, too flamboyant a piety, would result in a pupil's expulsion as surely as repeated misconduct. Saints were venerated in the Church's calendar, not tolerated in his seminaries. What was required of Rwandan seminarians was hard work. The cultural baggage and expectations brought by the Hutu to Rubya did not fit them for this approach to spirituality, so they left in large numbers to seek more immediate and effortless ways to realise their aspirations. In general, it was their ability to manipulate the complex authority network of Rwandan society that determined their success when they reached home again.

With the exception of a few impoverished Tutsi, Church education was the prerogative of the Hutu throughout the



German period. In 1903, Musinga threatened von Beringe that he would move his capital if the Tutsi at Nyanza were forced to go to school, such was the measure of Ega hostility to European learning.<sup>1</sup> Father Smoor visited from Save on occasions but there had never been a priest permanently teaching in the capital. Catholic catechists sent as teachers gained the mwami's confidence though attendance in the small straw-roofed school house remained erratic. In August 1905, Musinga, who was now trying to use education against his Ega councillors, requested the Fathers to build a permanent brick construction at court.<sup>2</sup> Relations between Terebura and Monsignor Hirth were at their most acrimonious at this time, and the Vicar-Apostolic seems to have declined the opportunity on the grounds that anything taking Father Brard to court would be deleterious to the Catholic mission.<sup>3</sup>

Once Hirth could provide a teacher acceptable to the Germans, the court and himself, he wrote to von Grawert for permission to begin.<sup>4</sup> Von Grawert gave his assent from Bujumbura with the proviso that no proselytism or religious instruction occurred in the school. Such education would, he believed, make the Tutsi more amenable to European

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1. Indrumm to Classe 24 August 1909 J.N.780 (German ref.)C.O.

2. Save Diary 17 August 1905

3. *ibid.* 17, 26 August 1905.

4. Hirth to von Grawert 8 November 1906 P.1728 Film No.

influence and a good teacher might, by example, lead them to Christianity without arousing immediate hostility.

On being transported to East Africa, the Germans had lost none of their respect for aristocratic airs. The lowly and cautious Indrumm would refer obsequiously to his colleague von Stegmann as 'hochwohlgeboren'.<sup>1</sup> The urbane Classe and Lecoindre knew how to play the right cords of the heartstrings of the German administrators. Von Grawert could see that there was a gentleman in charge of Save and suggested that 'in der Person der Herrn Pater Classe einen geeigneten Leiter für diese gefunden haben'.<sup>2</sup> He could hardly refuse a school in which Classe promised to teach the Tutsi German and Swahili and about which the mwami was unusually enthusiastic.<sup>3</sup>

Musinga's renewed interest in literacy seems to have been linked with his increased participation in trading. A 1906 Ordinance banning African traders with firearms from entering Rwanda had been liberally interpreted by von Grawert to mean that traders could return provided they were unarmed.<sup>4</sup> Ganda and Haya caravans began to creep back, cautiously going straight to court where they traded cattle for cloth and roupies. Musinga soon got rid of

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1. Indrumm to von Stegmann 11 December 1909 P.1734 Film No. 165 AA

2. Von Grawert to Hirth 31 December 1906 P.1728 Film No.166

3. Hirth to Von Grawert 8 November 1906

4. Rwaza Diary 29 August 1906; Louis Ruanda-Urundi 168



the money to his favourites and the Tutsi flocked to Kabgayi to buy cloth.<sup>1</sup> Rwidegembya put in an order with the Fathers for misheshi, fashionable red beads, and the mission shop that was begun that year was mostly sold out of cloth: such was the demand.<sup>2</sup> The missionaries sent regular caravans of goatskins to Bukoba to replenish supplies.<sup>3</sup>

The mwami, who had been dealing alone with Europeans since October 1906, was flexing his muscles, and the brick school was a sign of the times. The place of Ruhinankiko in the highest councils of state had been taken over by the rich Ega landowner, Rwidegembya, and he had lost his estates in Gisaka to an old Nyiginya chief, Kanuma.<sup>4</sup> Less actively engaged in the persecution of the Nyiginya nobility than his fellow Ega, the young Rwidegembya was favoured by Musinga who pitted him against the combined might of Kabare and the Queen-Mother.

At the beginning of 1907, the court suffered a liturgical calamity; the sacred fire lit at the beginning of each mwami's reign and only to be extinguished on his death was allowed to go out. The extinction of the fire

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1. Kabgayi Diary 7 April 1907

2. *ibid.* 8 April, 14 October 1907

3. *ibid.* 12 January 1908

4. For details of Ruhinankiko's fall, see Zaza Diary January 1905; Save Diary 2 January 1905; Rapports annuels 1905-1906, 180; Pages Un Royaume 624

triggered the release of all the latent tensions at court. The neurotic and timorous Musinga was thrown into a paranoid fit and ordered the execution of all the fire-keepers, Banyamuliro. Kabare and Ntulo were accused of having bewitched the fire.<sup>1</sup> Supported by the canny Rwidegembya, the mwami was able to force Kabare onto the defensive and his final disgrace was only averted by turning the king's fears away from the court. It was a familiar tactic: the foreign campaign to keep rebellious ngabo out of mischief, and the foreign threat to close ranks. The crime was said to have been instigated by a rebel group led by Sebuharara who had taken refuge in Burundi, and were allegedly plotting to return and kill the king. Musinga was not yet ready to dispense with Kabare's services and was ready to believe it.<sup>2</sup>

In April 1907, Leon Classe went to see the king about the school the construction of which had been in abeyance during the drama of the royal fire.<sup>3</sup> He complained about the continuing loss of mails and asked for compensation for stolen mission property. The mwami acceded to all his wishes and the catechist Wilhelmi<sup>4</sup> was able to start

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1. Kabgayi Diary 6 January 1907; Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 140 August 1907, 454.

2. Kabgayi Diary 11 January 1907. Sebuharara was a close relative of Ruhinankiko who fled after the latter's disgrace. Thus Kabare was blaming his Ega rival's lineage, see Pages Un Royaume 205

3. Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 143 November 1907, 651

4. See Chapter VI



writing lessons.<sup>1</sup> But it was soon clear that the king was more interested in the prestige accruing from the activity than in acquiring the skill itself. He would casually wet his pencil in the mouth of a Twa servant and trace out the letters of the alphabet. His writing ability was never to exceed that of an eight year old child, adequate to sign his name and no more; for the rest an amanuensis was employed. His reading knowledge of Swahili was minimal at this time and when letters arrived Wilhelmi was summoned to translate them.<sup>2</sup>

Despite a natural anxiety about which missionary would head the school, the king finally gave the go-ahead for building in June. Adjoining the main classroom were built two bedrooms for visiting Fathers. A priest called every fortnight though the Kabgayi Fathers were sometimes summoned daily to Nyanza when the mood took the mwami. Attending the school, or at least spending some of the day leaping through its windows, were eighteen ntore selected from unimportant Tutsi families.<sup>3</sup> The boys, accustomed to purely physical training in dancing, jumping, spear throwing, archery, swimming and court etiquette, were thoroughly bored by the long classroom lessons and few attended regularly. Their exercise books were sent off

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1. Save Diary 15 May 1907

2. *ibid.* 22 September 1907; Rapports annuels 1907-1908, 169

3. Save Diary 11, 17 June 1907; Rapports annuels 1908-1909,

weekly to Kabgayi for correction. Once several people at court were competent Swahili speakers, the mwami pressed to make some improvement in his German. The ntore had little incentive to persevere since an unspoken rule of the school was that the mwami stayed one step ahead of the rest.<sup>1</sup>

The king's fears, sharpened by the bad augury of the extinguished fire, never left him. When Save church was officially blessed, he sent a representative; Wilhelmi told the Fathers that fear of possible sorcery had kept the king himself away.<sup>2</sup> Panic reigned during the visit of the Duke of Mecklenburg; the kingdom was finally to be taken from the Tutsi, it was Bilegeya returning or a new Ega king.<sup>3</sup> When von Grawert requested the mwami to appear before the Duke in his traditional animal skins, the rumour began to circulate that 'the new European king will forbid the negroes to wear cloth...Tikitiki was only his boy; he had White garagu. What a man !'<sup>4</sup>

But when the king got his terrors under control, he skillfully balanced the power of the Germans, the Ega and the White Fathers; the missionaries had grown into a

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1. Rapports annuels 1905-1908, 168-170

2. Save Diary 9 February 1907.

3. ibid. 22 June 1907; Mecklenburg Ins Innerste Afrika 110

4. Kabgayi Diary 17 July 1907. The mwami was protected during the meeting by 5,000 spearmen and carried in a litter. Chiefs from a wide radius attended Nyanza, see Mecklenburg Ins Innerste Afrika 102-106, 111



counter-balance to his Ega councillors, and he made concessions to them as he would a powerful Tutsi faction. When the European side of the scales became too heavily weighted, as during the influx of Whites and European pomp and circumstance of the Mecklenburg visit, he would frantically try to reduce its strength.

Pressure was put on the White Fathers the moment the king learnt of the size of the Duke's caravan. The Save Fathers were suprised to hear from von Grawert on August 1st, 1907<sup>1</sup> that the Catholics were refused permission to start any further missions because the king was worried about the amount of land they controlled.<sup>2</sup> No outstanding request had been made. A week later the priests received another letter complaining that they stopped Christians going to court and favoured them in local disputes. The Fathers had merely told their Christians that they were not obliged to provision the caravan of a visiting anthropologist, Dr. Czekanowski. Von Grawert was in a flap at Nyanza and passing on all the mwami's complaints without investigation.<sup>3</sup> The king suddenly found the Save missionaries' habit of sending food from Save to Nyanza during their visits

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1. Mecklenburg reached Lake Mohasi on July 28th. 1907 from Tanganyika.

2. Save Diary 1 August 1907

3. ibid. 7,8 August 1907

as an insult to his hospitality.<sup>3</sup> Christians were denounced for burning huts when, at court with the priests, they were miles away from the incidents.<sup>1</sup> While the Duke loomed on the horizon, the Catholics could do no right.

Musinga correctly judged that the Germans would help him curb the missionaries, but there were limits.<sup>4</sup> When German and missionary interests co-incided as over the smooth functioning of Nyanza school, he called in the Ega. The Save Fathers learnt in September that Kabare and Rwidegembya had been summoned to court where they were required to reside permanently next to the school.<sup>4</sup> They joined Cyitatre as the most baleful of education committees.<sup>2</sup>

Despite bouts of uncontrollable paranoia and petulance, Musinga's diplomacy proved successful. The royal ikoro poured in to fill the Nyanza granaries and the power of the leading nobles, Kabare, Kayondo and Rwidegembya was undermined as men and land were taken from them. To keep up their interest in the well-being of the throne while their support was being eroded, he married their sisters.<sup>3</sup> Nyiginya like Ntulo who had risen too rapidly, he disgraced.<sup>4</sup> Reflecting on the changed situation at court, Father Classe wrote in June 1907: 'Musinga is no

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1. Save Diary 14, 22 August 1907

2. Iwangampuye was another watchdog, see Save Diary  
26 September 1907

3. Kabgayi Diary 11 March, 13, 22, 24 June 1907

4. *ibid.* 13 June 1907



longer a minor; he has become a mugabo ukomeye ( a powerful man)'.<sup>1</sup> It had taken the young mwami three years to pull himself up to dominate the court. Perhaps seeing the importance of the Catholics in the equation, Kabare began sending his ntore to pay court to the Kabgayi Fathers.<sup>2</sup>

While Musinga had rapidly proved himself in the inter-Tutsi politics of the court, his standing in relation to rebellious Hutu distant from Nyanza only slowly improved despite European assistance. The umuhinza of Bukunzi, Ndagano, used the proximity of Mibirisi mission as a pretext for refusing to send the tribute of two slaves for sacrifice.<sup>3</sup> The Germans, he ignored altogether refusing to appear at Shangi before the commander. A German patrol with Tutsi auxiliaries was sent to capture him in April 1907, but he slipped through their hands and, despite being formally deposed, continued to hold power in Bukunzi.<sup>4</sup> Musinga, fearing that the royal herds would perish and calamities befall the realm if someone of Ndagano's ritual status were banished, insisted on his re-instatement. German attacks on the famous rainmaker alienated the population and few catechumens

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1. Kabgayi Diary 13 June 1907

2. *ibid.* 4 January 1908; Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 146 February 1908, 159

3. See p.41

4. Mibirisi Diary 28 April, 1 November 1907

came to the mission while he was in hiding.<sup>1</sup>

The Nyabingi prophetesses of Mpororo did not make the same mistake of ignoring the Europeans. A German patrol even left confiscated cattle in the custody of one, while the famous Muhumusa co-operated with Anglo-Belgian survey parties belonging to the frontier commission.<sup>2</sup> By enlisting support from among Hutu lineage heads and by claiming supernatural powers, Muhumusa became a powerful medium and built up a large following. Young girls from her entourage were married to chiefs and created sub-centres through which the leading Nyabingi medium could exert her control into northern Rwanda. A patrol led by von Stuemmer found a young girl behind a curtain in 1905 who claimed to be Nyabingi's servant. The girl told him that Nyabingi had flown up to the sky but had asked her to pay eighteen cows fine and to request German assistance in putting down rebellious chiefs in the district. Musinga was wary of Muhumusa's spiritual powers and large following,<sup>3</sup> but such law-and-order messages from the spirit world had convinced the Germans that Nyabingi was harmless.<sup>4</sup>

The mwami's respect for the abahinza of Busozo and

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1. Mibirisi Diary 15 November 1907; Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 146 February 1908, 152-153.

2. Hopkins The Nyabingi Cult 267

3. Des Forges Rwanda under Musiinga 176-178

4. Deutsches Kolonialblatt 1905, 279 Derscheid Papers



Bukunzi, and his anxiety over the northern priestesses, were partly a product of his extreme emotional insecurity. The memory that he had usurped the throne seems to have been forever gnawing away at the back of his mind; he felt a need for maximum ritual support.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, his willingness to come to terms with northern bandits like Lukara Iwa Bishingwe was more a cold military calculation. Throughout the first half of 1907, Lukara was contesting control of the Mulera plain with Ruhanga and his Tutsi relentlessly pushing him back.

Lukara's lineage had bitter memories of the court. His mother was a Tutsi but his father had been a Hutu, tortured by Rwabugiri and killed by Congolese deserters from the Dhanis column.<sup>2</sup> To increase the power of his lineage, the Rashi, he had recruited personal retainers to form a large but highly mobile war band. In the past Musinga had favoured him as a potential ally but had attempted to have him executed at court in August 1907. As luck would have it, Dr. Czekanowski requested his assistance for investigations of the Twa in the forests of the north-west, so Father Dufays was able to save his life. Once away from Nyanza, an unchastened Lukara began to deride the mwami calling him Kasinga, little Musinga, and

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1. The king had even to be repeatedly reassured that his group of ntore were the best as Mecklenburg watched competitive dancing, see Ins: Innerste Afrika 117

2. Rwaza Diary 22 August 1905, 16 February, 8 November 1907; Dufays Pages d'Épopée 66-67

naming his own encampment 'Nyanza'. Rumour told of how he had insulted the Queen Mother saying that he would never accept verdicts handed down by a woman.<sup>1</sup> His fortunes changed in April 1908 when he attacked a Tutsi enemy who had joined up with another German expedition.<sup>2</sup> Realising his mistake, he sent presents of cattle to the Europeans as compensation, but the damage was done and the Germans began considering a punitive raid against him.<sup>3</sup>

The submission of the north was one of the few desiderata to which Musinga, Kandt and Classe could all subscribe. The mwami wished to emulate his father's glorious exploits and found the rich pickings of Bugoyi and Mulera suitable prizes to keep his nobles occupied in almost constant squabbles. Dr. Kandt was worried that the activities of Twa and Hutu bandits under the nose of the British and Belgians in the north would damage German colonial prestige. Whilst negotiations were going on over Mfumbiro on the northwest frontier, he could not afford to be seen presiding over a rabble of

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1. Father-Superior Rwaza to Resident 19 April 1908  
Dossier 112 bis: WFA; Dufays: Pages: d'Épopée 69
  2. Luzilampuhe was assisting Dr. Kirchstein's party when Lukara fell upon him, see Rwaza Diary 3 April 1908;  
Zaza Diary 17 April 1908.
  3. The Rwaza Fathers warned the Germans that Lukara was operating from caves in the hills and that they had little chance of success if an expedition was mounted, see Father-Superior Rwaza to Resident 19 April 1908



warlords.<sup>1</sup> Father Classe was perturbed by the arrival of more Lutheran missionaries and wanted to stake claims as soon as possible to unoccupied regions of the north. The three differed over the advisability of using Catholic missionaries as a vanguard; the idea appealed to Kandt and distressed Musinga.

The Duke of Mecklenburg's visit had not just produced one of those waves of panic that periodically swept over the court leaving things much as before; the Queen-Mother actually fled the capital and the mwami was guarded night and day.<sup>2</sup> The year 1907, with the Lutherans' appearance, had seen an unprecedented show of European strength; the king had watched fascinated as the Duke's party had blasted away with their rifles at some earthenware pots well out of his archers' range. Like some exhibit in an ethnographic museum, he had been brought out for the visitors and thoroughly humiliated.<sup>3</sup> He now saw that the

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1. The negotiations resulted in the local Derche-Kandt agreement of 19 February 1909 in which the Belgians agreed to withdraw from Lake Bulera occupied by them since November 1908. This was not recognised in Brussels. At the Anglo-German Mfumbiro conference in Berlin on 19 May 1909, it was secretly agreed that Britain should secretly occupy Mfumbiro to present Belgium with a fait accompli. Part of Mpororo was to be British, see Louis Ruanda-Urundi 64, 68-75
  2. Kabgayi Diary 17 July 1907; Save Diary 9 August 1907
  3. Mecklenburg Ins Innerste Afrika 109, 118-123

ban on new missions had been temporary, and a formerly vacillating attitude hardened into a firm and abiding hatred of the Whites who were too numerous to attack. 'The Sultan once said in the course of a discussion with our Superior, Father Classe, in Nyanza!, wrote Father Schumacher later, 'that he would indeed have been able to contemplate war at an earlier date but that the dwellings of the Europeans had increased to such an extent that expressions of violence could no longer be envisaged'.<sup>1</sup>

The mwami was too well schooled in Tutsi etiquette to show his emotions in front of Europeans and was usually courteous to the Fathers, feigning amiability to cover a sullen resentment. Whenever possible he prevaricated, whenever not he gave permission and tried to countermand it in some way. The facade seems to have hidden an angry, anxious child, still dominated by his mother, desperately trying to prove to the court that he alone controlled the uncontrollable, the Whites. The Fathers received letters demanding guns, medicine and cloth; the Christians at Save were pillaged and persecuted.<sup>2</sup> At times the facade would completely crumble. When one of the Lutherans' porters was executed at court, there was great excitement; Father Durand visited Musinga and was shown the porter's

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1. Schumacher to Indrumm 8 September 1909 P.1734 Film No. 165 AA

2. Save Diary 30 September, 17 October 1907; Musinga to Father-Superior Kabgayi 1 July 1909 in Kabgayi Diary



savagely beaten corpse with the warning that the same could happen to him.<sup>1</sup> A few months later the king sent a stiff letter to the Kabgayi Fathers without the normal politenesses, ordering them to send a Hutu to Nyanza for work. The man had been using his daughter, a catechumen, as an excuse for avoiding the annual levy of labour.<sup>2</sup> Yet when Classe and Schumacher visited court in April 1908 all was sweetness and light.<sup>3</sup>

Like a marginal constituency, Gisaka's history of rebellion made it a perennial focus of the court's anxieties. Throughout 1908, the Zaza Fathers were collecting rumours: it was said that Dr. Kandt was hiding Bulegeya at Kigali and that he would soon be installed as king. Christians asked the missionaries if they ought to go and defend Nyanza; an umutware summoned his ngabo and left for Kigali. No less a figure than Rwidegembya appeared to check on

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1. Save Diary: 22 October 1907

2. 'Ndakuramutsa kandi ndakulegera umuhutu waje iwawe yitwa Rukeba: yazanye umukobga iwawe...None umutegeke ko aza kukora aliko ntazayimana umulimo m'bwami' (I greet you and I charge in your presence a Hutu called Rukeba who frequents you and has sent his daughter to you...Now I order you to send him to work because he does not work in the gardens of the king), Kabgayi Diary 3 February 1908

3. Hirth to Livinhac: 30 June 1908, 095154. The pair were now visiting irregularly about once every two months, see Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 155 November 1908, 877 for details of the 27 April 1908 visit.

disturbance in the region.<sup>1</sup> Attention then turned to the Karagwe frontier whence, it was said, a king would come to dethrone Musinga. The death of Father Réant in October brought some relief to the simple-minded since it was proclaimed triumphantly that since Europeans died like other mortals, Musinga was bound to prevail.<sup>2</sup>

After the Protestants had opened their second station at Kirinda, Father Classe began to prepare the ground for expansion. The blessing of Nyundo church provided the opportunity for his first move. Relations between Kisenyi Residency and Nyundo mission were coldly correct; Fathers Veckerlé and Barthélemy had been a little too welcoming to the Belgians but had made amends by going to celebrate the Kaiser's birthday.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Kandt had accepted an invitation to attend the inauguration. 'It is worth repeating', proclaimed Classe in his welcoming speech, 'that missionaries as such are the agents of no country and that here they are working towards the same goals as the Government; they on their side and the Government on its'.<sup>4</sup>

Earlier in the year the Vicar-General had agreed to undertake upkeep of roads near missions and, after the speech, he made a formal request for the ban on new stations:

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1. Zaza Diary 22 June 1908

2. *ibid.* 23 September, 6 October 1908

3. Chroniques Trimestrielles July 1907 No. 139, 401;  
December 1908 No. 156, 139

4. *ibid.* May 1909 No. 161, 408



to be ended.<sup>1</sup> Kandt cautiously promised to intercede with the Imperial Government pointing out that the Tutsi would have to be consulted in each case and that compensation would have to be paid to dispossessed Hutu.<sup>2</sup> If Classe's speech on co-operation was taken to refer only to the northern stations, it was broadly true; the Resident agreed in principle to the two new stations requested, 'aus politischen Grunden'.<sup>3</sup> The missions were to be in Busigi and Kanage, the latter would strengthen the German position on Lake Kivu while the former extended Kigali's influence amongst the people of Mulera and the northern Hutu.

The mwami promptly sent Kandt a cow and asked for the ban to be continued.

In der Tat bat mich Msinga unter Aufzählung der vielen Stationen, die er der Mission bereits bewilligt habe, zu verhindern dass neue Gründungen erfolgen.<sup>4</sup>

The king was worried about the amount of land controlled by the Fathers and feared that his abatware would lose faith in him if he conceded more. Kandt reassured him that the Fathers would settle on unoccupied land, would never again be granted large tracts, and would have to sign formal

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1. Classe to Kandt 18 August 1908 P.1735 Film No. 167 AA;

Classe to Kandt 23 October 1908 C.O.

2. Kandt to Classe 24 October 1908 No.856/08 (German ref.)C.O.

3. Kandt to Classe 3 November 1908 No.867/08 (German ref.)C.O.

4. *ibid.*

contracts. The Germans had turned down proposed extensions of Save and Zaza and seem to have shared the court's concern about Catholic landlordism.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Kandt let the Vicar-General know that no future land grants would exceed twenty hectares, and re-iterated his demand that peasants should be cleared from mission grounds and properly compensated.<sup>2</sup>

The mwami knew that twenty hectares were the thin end of the wedge. He prevaricated saying that newly arrived Fathers should come to Save. Since the Lutherans' presence meant the ban had de facto been lifted, Kandt had little difficulty getting permission from the coast and placed the blame for past difficulties squarely on von Grawert.<sup>3</sup> Whatever Musinga's feelings, two strategic stations were too useful to the Resident to be blocked. On December 22nd. 1908, fifty Christians set out from Rwaza to begin building on Rulindo Hill in Busigi.<sup>4</sup>

The reaction from Nyanza was predictable; all efforts to keep pupils at school in the capital ceased and Wilhelmi was able to teach nothing. A new wave of complaints began reaching the stations in Central Rwanda about their Christians' conduct. The Vicar-General, seeking an audience

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1. Von Grawert to Hirth 12 February 1907 P.1728 Film No.166 AA.

2. Kandt to Classe 3 November 1908 C.O.

3. Kandt to Classe 11 March 1909 No. 101/09 (German ref.)C.O.

4. Rapports annuels 1908-1909, 273; Barthélemy J.B.

'Fondation d'une station au Rouanda' Missions d'Afrique 1910, 271-283



with the king on February 19th. 1909, was categorically refused.<sup>1</sup> Father Classe gently warned that if the king continued in this fashion he would be passed over by Dr. Kandt; since the Resident was already overriding the mwami, the argument had little substance and was ignored.<sup>2</sup>

The fact that the Vicar-General was now trying to reverse the court's formula and using the Germans to club the king was a measure of Kandt's growing hold over the country. There was talk of tax. The nobles took advantage of the opportunity and collected goats from their Hutu on the pretext that they would deliver them to Kigali; hundreds of goats were pillaged as 'tax' and Hutu besieged the mission door with complaints.<sup>3</sup> It was not so much that such raids were orchestrated from Nyanza but that nobles at court were able to communicate with their local representatives and convey valuable information; their garagu on the hills could then gauge how far they could go with the Christians. And conversely the mwami was the centre of a constant stream of stories and complaints about Christians' activities in the provinces. The wrath of Musinga and the persecution of Christians around mission were sometimes causally linked, but not by any simple chain of command. Tutsi around provincial stations had their own

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1. Kabgayi Diary 19 February 1909

2. *ibid.* 16 March 1909. He suggested that if the king wanted to seclude himself then a representative for mission affairs should be appointed. This, of course, was ignored.

3. Zaza Diary 21 February 1909

grievances and needed no authorisation from Nyanza to erupt into violence.

The Europeans continued to console themselves with the anachronistic belief that the intermittent hostility at court during 1908-1909 emanated from a group which they dubbed 'the war faction', Kabare, Rwidegembya and Kanjogera, the Queen Mother.<sup>1</sup> A Rwandan proverb says that it is never the mwami who kills, but his councillors; the pliant monarch surrounded by unscrupulous advisers was a common theme of colonial mythology used to explain why Indirect Rule failed to achieve results. But it was certainly Musinga and not his advisers who was calling the cards now. In August 1908, the king had Rwidegembya's leading garagu, a chief with over four thousand cattle, executed at court.<sup>2</sup> Kabare was forced out of Nyanza under a cloud in January 1909 and meekly turned up at Save mission in March to present the Fathers with a cow.<sup>3</sup> His disgrace was confirmed when Kanuma and the Gisaka chiefs appeared at the door of Zaza mission warning the priests not to give Kabare sanctuary.<sup>4</sup> There was only the shadowy figure of the Queen-Mother left amongst the Ega caucus.

The arrival of the first White Sisters and a contingent of new Fathers at the beginning of 1909 was a further blow

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1. Indrumm to Classe 6 September 1909 P.1734 Film No.165 AA

2. Mibirisi Diary 27 August 1908; Rapports annuels 1908-1909, 266

3. Zaza Diary 1 March 1909; Rwaza Diary 10 February 1909

4. Zaza Diary 1 March 1909



to the king. He had granted a third Protestant station at Rubengera but was still holding out against any Catholic expansion.<sup>1</sup> He was able to salvage his pride by pointing to the way the Germans were helping him; in March a major force of 150 askari with five German officers engaged in a number of inconclusive skirmishes in the north with the Twa, Basebya, demonstrating to the court that the Imperial Government was willing to try to put down the mwami's rebellious subjects.<sup>2</sup> Two months later a patrol brought in a great prize, the priestess, Muhumusa.<sup>3</sup>

The king was now delighted with the Europeans and wrote Classe a fulsome letter asking why he no longer came to court.<sup>4</sup> His pleasure was short lived. Muhumusa was put under house-arrest in Kigali and, since the Germans only had Musinga's word for her nefarious influence, was well treated.<sup>5</sup> This was a serious miscalculation. The presence of a powerful medium near Nyanza acted as a magnet for court dissidents; visitors trooped to see her and before long she was summoning important abatware from Gisaka.<sup>6</sup> The feeling grew at court that it was a monstrous trick and that this 'Queen of Ndorwa' had been

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1. Kandt to Classe 11 March 1909 C.O.

2. Langenn to Kandt 15 April 1909 P.1734 Film No.165 AA; Rapports annuels 1908-1909, 277

3. Gudovius to Kandt 17 June 1909 P.1734 Film No. 165 AA

4. Musinga to Classe 1 July 1909 in Kabgayi Diary

5. Des Forges: Rwanda under Musinga 177-178

6. Zaza Diary 24 June, 25 August 1909

brought south of the Nyabarongo to instal Bilegeya.<sup>1</sup>

The missionaries were the first to suffer from the inept handling of the Muhumusa affair. The mwami did nothing while gangs of Tutsi youths wrecked Nyanza school, then wrote to Kandt's deputy, Indrumm, informing him that no priest was in future to reside permanently at court.<sup>2</sup>

The Fathers pointed out how bad such hooliganism was

for 'Europaertum' and tried to get the Germans to take a stand, but Indrumm was too flurried to bother.<sup>3</sup>

A German trader called Buchfink who had been acting as an unofficial spy began reporting tales of an impending rising. Indrumm

told the missionaries that pressure on the mwami at such a juncture would be inopportune and, if they insisted on

having a priest full-time at Nyanza, they would have to appeal to Dar-es-Salaam.<sup>4</sup>

A police-officer was sent to calm down Musinga and Muhumusa was bundled off to Bukoba.<sup>5</sup>

The Catholic school, though, was again reduced to a playroom for the ntore.

It was now the Germans turn to panic. Indrumm, frightened that in Kandt's absence he might be facing a rebellion, took the stories with the utmost seriousness.

A warning was sent to all missions on September 6th. 1909 and the Ind. Company was ordered to cross into Rwanda.

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1. Zaza Diary 7-8 September 1909; Des Forges Rwanda under Musiinga 176-177

2. Lecoindre to Indrumm 19 August 1909; Indrumm to Classe 14 August 1909 J.N.711 (German ref.) C.O.

3. *ibid.* 4. Indrumm to Classe 24 August 1909 J.N.780 C.O.

5. Indrumm to Classe 6 September 1909 C.O.; Louis



from Bujumbura; a further contingent of seventy troops with five officers and two machine-guns were on their way from Bukoba led by the Resident, von Stuemmer. The mwami was told that the small army about to descend on his country was going to protect the northwest frontier against Belgians and British. On the other hand, Indrumm presented his show of force to the Fathers as necessary protection for the missions, and intimated that the story told Musinga was to allay his fears.<sup>1</sup>

Since November 1908 when Belgium had occupied the Lake Bulera area, all eyes had been on the northwest.<sup>2</sup> Von Stegmann unashamedly asked the Nyundo Fathers to report on troop movements giving numbers and location of Belgian patrols.<sup>3</sup> The king himself interrogated Father Schumacher during one of his school visits on the relative strengths of British and Belgians.<sup>4</sup> It was a question everyone had been asking, including the Colonial Secretary in Berlin, Lindequist, who was predicting calamity on the

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Ruanda-Urundi 153

1. Indrumm to Classe 6 September 1909
2. Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 158 February 1909 139;  
Louis Ruanda-Urundi 74
3. Von Stegmann to Father-Superior Rwaza 21 September 1909  
WFAR
4. Schumacher to Indrumm 8 September 1909 P.1734 Film No. 165 AA. Mecklenburg was also surprised at the sharp questions the king asked him, see Ins Innerste Afrika 110.

basis of highly inflated estimates of Belgian and British troop strengths.<sup>1</sup>

The missionaries were told to do the least possible, to avoid arousing suspicions, and discreetly to take precautions. Von Stuemmer's forces were to be a shot across the Ega's bows that did not unduly arouse the mwami's fears.<sup>2</sup> It was hard to tell whether all this was sabre-rattling or teeth-chattering. Von Stuemmer, a veteran of the north, was well suited to a policing operation on the border, but the fear of a rising was real enough. The spectre of Maji-Maji and the revolt in southwest Africa still hung over the German Colonial Office, and it was feared that a dismembered Rwanda, torn between three colonial powers, would rise up against 'Europaertum'.<sup>3</sup>

The missionaries simply thought Indrumm was making a fool of himself. The Lutherans enquired archly: 'Herr Buchfink ist ein Beamter?', suggesting that gossip collected from Bujumbura kitchen boys was not the most solid foundation for summoning half the German forces in the region.<sup>4</sup> The Catholics were perforce less blunt. 'There is always bad feelings towards Europeans in Rwanda', wrote Schumacher, 'and I am convinced that the Watussi will take the first opportunity to settle accounts with the Europeans'.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 75 n.3, 76.

2. Indrumm to Classe 6 September 1909

3. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 75 n.3

4. Johanssen to Indrumm 9 September 1909, copy in WFAAR

5. Schumacher to Indrumm 8 September 1909 AA



'We are so very accustomed to such rumours', he added mournfully, 'that we do not assume the situation to have deteriorated if we do not have any reason to do so'.<sup>1</sup> The Vicar-General, who enjoyed being asked, puffed out his feathers and produced a short dissertation on unity amongst Europeans, pointing out the obvious, that Musinga was waiting to see the outcome of the Mfumbiro controversy.<sup>2</sup> Rwaza and Nyundo were offered as refuelling halts for German troops, and a small gratuitous kick aimed at the Lutherans.<sup>3</sup>

The calm will be maintained more easily, therefore, if all of us stick absolutely with the Government. And for that I do not care for certain denominations.<sup>2</sup>

It was a very Catholic unity that impugned the loyalty of German Protestants in their own colony.

Although rumours about Bilegeya and a king from Burundi brought armed guards to the banks of the Kagera,<sup>3</sup> ripples caused by Muhumusa's descent into Central Rwanda slowly faded away.<sup>4</sup> The large numbers of askari in the rebellious north demonstrated the folly of Ega talk of destroying the Germans and, by implication, the wisdom of Musinga's policy of accommodation. From his own spy, a half-brother who was chief of Mfumbiro, the mwami

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1. Schumacher to Indrumm 8 September 1909 AA

2. Classe to Indrumm 18 September 1909 P.1734 Film No.165 AA

3. Zaza Diary 26 September 1909

doubtless learnt that Indrumm had been giving him an accurate picture of events.<sup>1</sup> The missions, each with about one dozen Mausers and several hundred cartridges, declined protection from askari and tactfully pretended the scare had never happened. The mwami gave a written undertaking that he would intervene to stop any damage to Nyanza school, and allow the Germans to punish vandals; priests would be allowed to teach in the school, but it had to be either the Vicar-General or his delegate, and Wilhelmi had to gain the king's permission on each occasion. Otherwise the school premises were out-of-bounds to missionaries.<sup>2</sup> Tutsi who had been to see Muhumusa were denounced by the king.<sup>3</sup>

With their undertaking signed in Musinga's shaky hand in their pocket, the Fathers pressed on with expansion. In December 1909, the Germans began marking out the land for Murunda mission in Kanage and a contract was signed with the mwami's representative. The ever-cautious Indrumm underlined that there was to be no expropriation, a directive which was directly contrary to Kandt's policy.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Nyindo's garagu, Muvunandinda, had already appeared at Rwaza in May 1904, see p. 119 n.1. Nyindo himself came in July 1905; he was aged eighteen and the Fathers remarked how much like Musinga he looked, see Rwaza Diary 19 July 1905

2. Indrumm to Classe 17 September 1909 J.N.874 (German ref.) C.O.; Musinga to Classe 24 September 1909 C.O.

3. Zaza Diary 26 September 1909

4. Indrumm to von Stegmann 11 December 1909; Classe to



Despite prevarication, persecution and the king's attempt to check them with German officials and Protestant missionaries, the White Fathers had forced their way into two more stations; their overall number of Christians had risen to 4,500. At Save, within a few hours of the capital, there were 1,500 baptised Hutu and 1,400 catechumens. Kabgayi in the Tutsi heartland had become a rich centre where both classes increasingly made contact with the missionaries through exchange of gifts, goats and cattle for cloth and favour. At each station the school and gardens drew in the youth. At Nyundo, 1,300 Hutu Christians were ready at the slightest provocation to take up arms against the newly arrived Tutsi lords.<sup>1</sup> The Gorgon was sprouting a new head at Kansi in the south. The king had won his Tutsi, but was losing his Hutu to the Europeans, and with them, his land.

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Indrumm 11 December 1909; Veckerlé to Oberleutnant Kisenyi  
26 December 1909 P.1735 Film No. 167 AA

1. Rapports annuels 1908-1909, statistics for the period  
July to July

CHAPTER FOUR.

French Catholicism versus German Colonialism

1910 - 1912



The Vicar-Apostolic had effectively handed over direction of the Rwanda mission to his Vicar-General, Father Leon Classe, by the beginning of 1910.<sup>1</sup> Even after returning to the life of a simple priest, Monsignor Hirth remained distant from his missionaries, now something of a figurehead, setting a personal example but blithely unaware of the grosser passions that swirled around him. 'A tall, fine figure of a priest', Governor Schnee described him, 'demanding respect, one of the oldest Africans, honoured and esteemed by everyone'.<sup>2</sup>

The magnitude of Rwanda's problems had exceeded him. The optimistic beginnings with a directory for the catechumenate and teams of catechists were soon past. The quality of the first Christians and the violence of the catechists disturbed him. He tinkered with the directory, adding examinations, giving special preparatory courses before baptism, dividing up age-groups and sexes, and insisting that Christians buy the new books of piety.<sup>3</sup>

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1. He handed over temporarily while travelling, see Hirth to confrères 22 April 1907 CR. Then he began sending Classe's reports direct to Maison-Carrée, see Hirth to Livinhac 30 June 1908, 095154 WFA. Hirth to confrères 6 December 1908 CR complains that he cannot go on.
  2. Deutsches Kolonialblatt 1 September 1913, quoted also in de Lager Ruanda 436
  3. Hirth to confrères circular No. 12 1907; Hirth to confrères 31 March 1908 CR; Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 114 March 1905, 146; No. 119 September 1905, 430; No. 125 March 1906, 166-167; No. 149 May 1908, 404; Rapports annuels 1905-1906, 186; 1907-1908, 154, 160

The system of individual proselytism was introduced; each catechumen brought two others. But sanctity could not be prescribed; the Fathers forgot or ignored the directives and the reforms remained largely a dead letter.<sup>1</sup> So the problems recurred: pagans were forced to attend Sunday catechism classes by mission agents, abalungu<sup>2</sup>; 'un peu partout', wrote a shocked Father-Visitor from Algiers, 'aussi on emploie les gifles comme moyen d'apostolat'.<sup>3</sup>

Discouraged by the incomprehension and disobedience of his clergy, the Vicar-Apostolic withdrew increasingly into a comforting world of paper pastoral theology and personal piety. His energies were expended on the development of an indigenous clergy, but the moment his back was turned the seminarians wavered.<sup>4</sup> Failing eyesight gave him a God-given excuse to leave Father Classe to bear the brunt of his missionaries' discontent. 'Monsignor has as a principle the Mission above everything', the Father-Visitor reported back to Livinhac. 'Father Malet<sup>5</sup> has as his principle above all the missionaries, their souls. I would come down rather on the side of Father Malet'.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Lecoindre 'Raisons qui ont nui'

2. Hirth to Livinhac 31 December 1906, 095127 WFA

3. Léonard to Father-Superior Kabgayi 6 November 1910 CR

4. Classe to Livinhac 14 August 1909. The seminary was, of course, ultimately successful and produced many priests.

5. As Visitor, Father Léonard represented the missionaries' interests vis-a-vis the Society. In this case he is pitting an important priest in the French Province against the Vicar-Apostolic.

6. Léonard to Livinhac 30 January 1909, 095194 WFA



Yet Hirth did not retire as Vicar-Apostolic. Too much of a churchman to drop the most significant and symbolic of his functions, to act as a bridge between Rome and the bush stations, he continued to pass on both the sublime and the ridiculous in the Vatican's thinking. 'For the past two years', he told his harassed clergy in 1910, 'we have tried especially to resolve in the most practicable fashion the question of adopting the new edition of Gregorian chant'.<sup>1</sup> In 1911, the Fathers were required to replace the Scapular of the Brotherhood of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, a pious confraternity, with a medal showing on one side the Blessed Virgin and on the other, the Sacred-Heart of Jesus.<sup>2</sup> He faithfully conveyed the baubles of Romanesque catholicism yet staunchly advocated to his clergy the speedy development of the indigenous priesthood. The worst excesses of cultural imperialism and the best support for the Rwandan Church, albeit Romanised, came from the same source, the Vatican, and relied for its impact in Rwanda on the same value, obedience. If there was sometimes a cold aloofness about Hirth, it was doubtless because he recognised how few of his confrères shared his most obvious of insights, that since the Church had no frontiers, it could have no frontier dispensation.

Even had the weaknesses of the White Fathers in Rwanda not produced disunity, the great cultural differences between

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1. Hirth to confrères 15 January 1910 CR

2. Classe to confrères 24 March 1911 CR

north and south would have imposed different approaches on the Fathers-Superior. Even had the missionaries been waxen flowers of French spirituality instead of big men in big boots - Father Loupias was a broad two metres tall - violence at a high level was tolerated in Rwandan society and could not have been kept out of the Hutu Church. Many arguments ended in a quick spear thrust, and the northern clans seem to have lacked mediators other than Tutsi to end their recurrent blood feuds. Tutsi fear of the Hutu was expressed in sorcery accusations; suspected Hutu barozi were executed.<sup>1</sup> The path to the close entourage of the mwami was littered with corpses.<sup>2</sup> Hirth recognised that the violence of Rwandan society was infectious but clung to the belief that, given suitable conditions like a stable Christian home, and occasional purges, his neophytes and young Church could be protected. But the faith was growing thin.

We had wanted to bring neophytes together who were already married so that, with some hope of success, we might train real catechists who would not turn out to be the semi-askari that we know; but where and how is it to be done ?<sup>2</sup>

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1. Kabgayi Diary 13 January 1907; Chroniques Trimestrielles No.130 September 1906, 678, quoting Mibirisi Diary 16 May 1906
  2. Especially for rainmakers, see Save Diary 20 January 1908; Kabgayi Diary 6 June 1909; Chroniques Trimestrielles No.135 February 1907, 77; No.140 August 1907, 456
  3. Hirth to confrères 6 December 1908 CR



The warrior ethic of the Tutsi and their skills in manipulating client relationships were emulated by aspiring Hutu Christians who became half-crusader, half confidence trickster. But Hirth would not be moved from the thought that the answer lay in books like Knecht's Praktischer Commentar zur biblischer Geschichte or Turcan's Catéchisme de Persévérance. An almost eighteenth century assumption of the rationality and malleability of man, underpinned by a transcendental assurance in his 'civilising mission', blinded Hirth to the reality that the problems of the Hutu Church lay in a culture which tolerated sudden outbursts of anger, and nurtured repressed Oedipal fears in its child-rearing methods.<sup>1</sup>

His missionaries were perhaps more likely to see that regulation of the dosage of pious reading was not going to cure a problem that they otherwise spoke of as 'Original Sin'. And the Fathers were much less restrained about replacing this alien culture with a theocracy - by inadvertence - as they set about rooting out the source of the trouble. Inasmuch as the priests were thaumaturges they forever risked becoming revolutionaries.<sup>2</sup>

The split jurisdiction that existed de facto, though not de jure, in the Rwandan vicariate greatly reduced the missionary Church's ability to respond to the growth of dissension and disunity. Fathers disagreeing with, or

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1. De Heusch Essais 37-50, 60

2. Wilson B.R. Magic and the Millenium London 1973: 22-26

indifferent to, Classe's directives were able to justify their inactivity with the thought that he was only the Vicar-General, that he was intolerably bumptious, and had no right to impose himself in such a fashion, and might anyway be out of tune with Monsignor Hirth. By comparison with White Fathers' vicariates elsewhere,<sup>1</sup> Rwanda was singularly acephalous, each Father-Superior being almost 'his own little Pope'. The Catholics' strongest card in the mission field, the chain of authority envied by businesslike Protestants, was missing from the Rwanda mission. The resultant disarray was compounded by the pluriformity of each station, the very problem which depended on harmonious relations and an acceptable authority structure for its solution. The Fathers-Superior needed the autonomy to make local decisions and adapt inappropriate general directives, but not as the expression of defiance and lack of communication.

The arrival of the Protestants put a new urgency into the Fathers' quarrels about the coercion of the peasantry and the apostolate to the ruling class; Kandt's threat of a Lutheran monopoly of the Tutsi was believed.<sup>2</sup> The German Protestants, however, made much the same mistakes as the Catholics in their first two years, involving

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1. For example in Malawi and Zambia, see Linden I. Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland London 1974

2. Rwaza Diary 3 October 1906



themselves in Hutu-Tutsi disputes and seeing in the 'sturdy Hutu peasant' the future of Rwanda.<sup>1</sup> Once the Catholics saw that the Germans were forcing Banyanduga on the north, they were obliged to take the Tutsi fully into account. The argument for local adaptation was gone and, when they began translating the Gospels of St. John and St. Matthew in 1908, Monsignor Hirth insisted on the use of court Kinyarwanda rather than Kiga.<sup>2</sup> An enforceable uniform colonial policy had pushed the Catholics into an unenforceable countrywide mission policy.

Few of the northern missionaries had the Vicar-General's experience of Nyanza, so they opposed the imposition of a policy designed to serve the interests of a court which they saw to be powerless. Some missionaries cherished notions unlike Classe that Christianity was the religion of the poor,<sup>3</sup> others again who felt that they themselves could knock a respect for authority into their Hutu Christians without any need for Tutsi. A description by Father Lecoindre gives an idea of how Father Huntzinger instilled the timor dei into recalcitrant sub-chiefs:

A scare was given to these people by putting them through the darkroom treatment, a room in which the shutters were closed.

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1. Kandt Annual Report for 1912 P.1728 Film No.166 AA; Johanssen E. in Koloniale Rundschau December 1912, 752-754; Johanssen Kleine Anfänge 241
  2. Hirth to confrères 11 April 1908 CR
  3. See p.163 n.2

with a table on which a revolver lay.<sup>1</sup> While the sub-chief, paralysed with fear, was seated next to the Father-Superior chains were rattled in a side room to add a lugubrious note to this macabre scene.<sup>1</sup>

Unknown to Monsignor Hirth as he sat in the confessional at Nyundo, reluctant penitents were rounded up by Huntzinger and added to the volume of sin absolved by the Vicar-Apostolic.<sup>2</sup>

With the Kivu-Mfumbiro conference going on in Brussels, the Nyabingi prophetess, Muhumusa, escaped from Bukoba and at large in the north, and powerful Hutu leaders like Lukara rampant, the eyes of both Germans and Tutsi remained fixed on the volcanoes and plains of Bugoyi and Mulera. On May 14th. 1910, Britain, Belgium and Germany signed protocols in which the Kaiser handed over portions of north-west Rwanda and Kivu to the two other colonial powers. Although Musinga had only nominal jurisdiction over much of the lost territory, it had been thought of as part of Rwanda since Rwabugiri's time and its loss was a severe blow.<sup>3</sup> The bitter pill of an expanding Catholic mission had been sweetened for Musinga by the hope that the Whites were providing him with a new foothold in the mountainous north; now this was more than offset by the loss of the chieftancy of Nyindo, his half-brother, in Mfumbiro.

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1. Lecoindre 'Raisons qui ont nui' 2. *ibid.*  
3. Des Forges Rwanda under Musinga 179; Louis Rwanda-Urundi 79-95, 189



Lukara, the northern Hutu leader, was thirty years old and at the height of his powers, with a large following and a herd of 1,600 cattle.<sup>1</sup> The site of his encampment at the base of Muhavura volcano, Iyangombe's sacred mountain would suggest that he perhaps claimed some protection from mandwa spirits; even White Fathers who approached the mountain were thought to be risking their lives.<sup>2</sup> His followers swore by the name 'Lukara Iwa Bishingwe' rather than by that of the mwami, and their naming of the camp 'Nyanza' would suggest that Lukara manipulated to some extent the symbols of kingship. Whatever the religious claims, the immediate cause of his great prestige was his mobility and Musinga's failure to kill him.

The segmentary character of all Hutu political groupings was a built-in restraint on such bands of kin and clients. In early 1910, two of Lukara's kinsmen, Sebuyangi and Kumana, led a breakaway taking with them over six hundred cattle and many camp followers. The Rwaza Fathers first noted Lukara's difficulties when copious gifts began arriving at the mission instead of the

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1. Von Stegmann to Father-Superior Rwaza 27 July 1909;  
Rwaza Diary 1 April 1910 WFA

2. Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 136 March 1907, 118: 'Lors d'un voyage des P.P. Classe et Dufays au Muhavura, Kinigamazi, frère de Lukarra Iwa Bishingwe, ne leur avait pas apporté de nourriture au pied du volcan, parce-que disait-on, les Blancs ne descendraient pas de la montagne; Iyangombe les y ferait périr', Rwaza Diary 21 June 1906

rotten eggs he had sent in the past. Despite visits and presents, Father Loupias refused to act as mediator. Lukara turned to buying off mission nyampara who combed the region of the volcanoes for wood, while Sebuyangi stepped in to ply the mission with gifts. Loupias again refused to intervene and sent both parties to Nyanza with a note explaining the case. Lukara was forced to send a representative to court and could have had little hope of getting satisfaction there. The price for obeying the Vicar-General's directives was increased difficulty in getting wood, as Lukara denied the Rwaza mission agents access to timber in 'his' forests.

On January 20th. 1910, Loupias set out with a large body of Christians to confront Lukara over wood supplies. The two parties came upon each other in the forest. Lukara, trying a last trick, pointed to smoke curling up from below in the Mulera plain and claimed that it was Sebuyangi raiding his villages. The distant sound of shouting could be heard, but one of the mission nyampara warned the priest that the smoke and noise were pre-arranged, staged to bring the mission into the dispute. Loupias refused to budge. Furious, Lukara told him that if the mission would not help him they could look elsewhere for their wood. Loupias struck the Rashi leader and snatched at his gun; for a moment it seemed that the mission party would be attacked, then the Rashi melted away into the forest.<sup>1</sup>



Musinga responded by sending a man to Rwaza mission presumably in the hope of reasserting his control over the Rashi lineage through the missionaries.<sup>1</sup> Faced with a direct request from the king to accompany his man to Lukara's, Father Loupias could hardly refuse. The Rashi were convoked and at a large meeting Lukara reluctantly agreed to recognise the autonomy of Sebuyangi and Kumana. But, buoyed up by the presence of the Catholic missionary and his Christian retinue, the Banyanduga became overconfident and tried to press home their advantage. Ruhanga, Nshozamihigo's agent, stepped forward and called on the king's man to prosecute Lukara for cattle theft. Sensing a trap, Lukara jumped to his feet to protest. Loupias stood up to restrain him. As Lukara instinctively ducked, perhaps on some hidden signal, a hail of arrows fell on the White Father mortally wounding him in the forehead and liver. The mission nyampara bore him back to Rwaza where he died on the evening of April 1st. 1910, the first casualty of Classe's policy of co-operation with the court.<sup>2</sup>

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1. The northern Hutu's use of foreign mediators probably allowed the Tutsi to infiltrate clan lands in the past. Iwakadigi, for example, was called in earlier to mediate between Lukara and another kinsman, Lugira, see Chapters Five and Six; Nyundo Diary 1 February 1908; Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 154 October 1908, 811
  2. Rapports annuels 1909-1910, 318. The impact of Loupias' death on Rwaza may be judged from the fact that several informants could give vivid accounts of his six wounds, while remembering little else from this period.

Loupias' death sparked off a wave of resistance to European and Tutsi colonisation. Within two days a Christian was murdered by one of Lukara's allies.<sup>1</sup> The small German camp at Ruhengeri was threatened and its unteroffizier began retaliatory raids across the Mulera plain with the aid of Christian spies from Rwaza.<sup>2</sup> But the Hutu guides used on German patrols were untrustworthy and the troops blundered about aimlessly confiscating cattle, burning huts and killing innocent peasants.<sup>3</sup> What direction they had seems to have been provided by Sebuyangi who used the askari to settle old scores and pick off some of the Rashi's ancient enemies.<sup>4</sup> Such was the solidarity of the Hutu that three weeks after Loupias' death not a single one of the Rashi ringleaders had been caught. By October, the Germans were beginning to despair of ever making contact with Lukara and now insisted on non-Christian spies; they were looking for someone capable of tracking the rebels until nightfall and reporting back secretly to Ruhengeri using a password. 'Mir stehen gegen Lukarra

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1. Lukara had made a number of blood-pacts with lineage heads etc., see Rwaza Diary 4 April 1910
  2. *ibid.* 5 April 1910. The first raid resulted in the death of Ntibakunze, the father of a certain Sebatwale who was suspected of having murdered the Christian. Ntibakunze lost 16-20 men in Graf von Sparz's raid; he was an old opponent of the Banyanduga, see Rwaza Diary 30 March 1904
  3. Von Sparz to Delmas 11 April 1910; Kandt to Delmas 26 April 1910; Falkenstein to Delmas 24 May 1910 W.F.A.R.
  4. One patrol attacked Luzilampuhe, see p.202 n.2



keine zuverlässigen Leute zur Verfügung', bewailed Falkenstein who had been tracking the rebels for six months.<sup>1</sup>

If the reaction in the north to Loupias' death had been to present a solid front against the combined forces of missions, Banyanduga and Germans, the reverberations in Central Rwanda were more muted. Musinga must have been impressed by Lukara's exploits for there were many at Nyanza who would have dearly loved to emulate his deeds.<sup>2</sup> By way of substitute perhaps, Kaizuka, an old friend of the Save missionaries, had his eyes put out.<sup>3</sup> Around Kabgayi the chiefs became insulting to the Fathers and refused them wood, but Nshozamihigo who had many fiefs in the north, sent a letter to bring them to order.<sup>4</sup> Like Rwidegembya who later began to court the Twa leader, Basebya, the king tested out the possibility of an alliance with Lukara.<sup>5</sup> According to mission spies, Banyanduga in the north received messages from Nyanza that they should give cows and presents to Lukara. The Rwaza:

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1. Falkenstein to Delmas 8 October 1910 WFA; Rwaza Diary 5 May 1910; Louis Ruanda-Urundi 178
  2. This was the beginning of a demythologisation of the Fathers. People no longer asked questions like 'were missionaries born with beards?' or when new Fathers arrived, 'did a return to Europe rejuvenate a man?'. In 1912, Rwakabibi attacked a priest with a spear in an attempt to kill him, see Zaza Diary 10 January 1912
  3. Save Diary 2 April 1910
  4. Kabgayi Diary 19 June 1910
  5. Rwaza Diary 2 November 1910; de Lacger Ruanda 44

Fathers heard that a court envoy had seen Lukara at a secret meeting near Muhavura, and a puzzled Ruhanga arrived to ask if he should obey the king and present Lukara with five cows. It was apparent, though, that by November Lukara had no intention of acceding, from a position of strength, to an alliance he would barely consider when weakened earlier in the year.

After the frustration of fruitless patrols and the loss of territory to British and Belgians, the German officers appeared more than usually jealous of their authority. The Christians at Rwaza, aping Lukara's warrior band, had formed themselves into a permanent armed group around the missionaries and burnt the hut of the king's garagu.<sup>1</sup> Similar brawls were going on around Mibirisi under the nose of the Shangi garrison.<sup>2</sup> Friction was inevitable.

The most serious incident involved the refusal of Rwaza Christians to provide mazimano, provisions, which their chiefs needed to supply German patrols. The situation was common enough; the Hutu could rarely gauge when their chiefs were passing on legitimate demands or exactions of their own devising. The Fathers, also not aware why the food was being collected, stepped in to support their men and collided with Captain Wintgens. 'One has heard it announced on more than one occasion', he wrote, 'that these are the Mission's men, Missionsleute,

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1. Wintgens to Delmas 29, 31 December 1910 WFAR

2. Mibirisi Diary 24 October, 2 November, 28 December 1910



and need obey no-one else'. The 'Übergriffe der Watwale' he would concede but not 'such meddling in my jurisdiction'. 'You can tell the people with the Bible "Give unto Msinga what is Msinga's", he suggested, adding that, were it not for the rashness of Loupias, he would not have to mount such distasteful expeditions sowing misery and discord throughout Mulera.<sup>1</sup>

There was, of course, much humbug in the Germans' pained reaction to Christian vigilante groups. Whatever Wintgens' protestations, he had not the remotest chance of protecting the Hutu from their chiefs, and the missionaries had good grounds for complaining about the Imperial Government's indifference to the peasants' lot.<sup>2</sup> Wintgens' crocodile tears dried remarkably fast and, within two weeks of the dispute with Rwaza, his troops had slaughtered sixty-five people and made hundreds homeless in a punitive raid to avenge the death of a single askari, found later to have been a rapist.<sup>3</sup>

The behaviour of Christians and Fathers had been rankling in Kandt's breast for some time, and the spate of incidents in 1910, coupled with a minor dispute with the Kabgayi Fathers, combined to set off an explosion of

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1. Rwaza Diary 27 December 1910; Wintgens to Delmas 19 December 1910, 27 December 1910 W.F.A.R.; in October all the Rwaza Christians had been ordered by Gudovius to pay their taxes. The chief had claimed that the Fathers were stopping them but the opposite was true, see Rwaza Diary 5 October 1910.
  2. Kandt Annual Report for 1910 AA
  3. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 179, 179 n.1

German wrath that reverberated as far as the coast. Even when the Fathers were being helpful, it was galling to the Germans to see how much the Imperial Government relied on foreign missionaries. And as they killed and maimed Hutu in the north, laying bare the reality under the pretentious facade of colonial administration, they did so under the reproachful and righteous gaze of the White Fathers.

An incident at Kabgayi involving no very important chief and the sort of cattle dispute that occurred monthly was brought to flashpoint by the intervention of Father Schumacher. It was the case of the wrong man at the wrong time; Peter Schumacher was no hillbilly backwoodsman to be patronised by the German aristocracy. A sharp and somewhat arrogant German ethnographer who could dismiss a fellow priest in a few biting phrases, he was later to be commissioned by Pope Pius XI to study the forest Twa. It seems often to have been the Alsatian and German White Fathers who, wishing to be more Catholic than German, irritated their fellow countrymen by sharing their authoritarianism yet using it for very different goals. Younger than Kandt, Schumacher was easily his intellectual equal, a position that laid him open to the Resident's worst insult, 'temperamentvoller'!

During the Basebya campaign, a Tutsi chief, Ruhigirakurinda, had confiscated four cows from one of his Hutu who refused to join his ngabo. This was a perfectly proper punishment meted out by an umutare to an



insubordinate member of his regiment; the gift of cows implied willingness to muster when called. For a second refusal to obey orders in December 1910, the Hutu lost a further three cows. Since this second confiscation had taken place at a time when the man was beginning to frequent the mission, Father Schumacher leapt to the conclusion that the peasant was being persecuted. Kandt took the equally likely but opposite view: 'According to the evidence of the witnesses and of the man himself, Rubandahe is getting instruction for the very first month', wrote the Resident. 'One might suppose that the man went to the mission when the dispute arose so as to take advantage of the mission's help'.<sup>1</sup> Schumacher gave the outrageous judgement that Ruhigirakurinda should give back all seven cows, so the Tutsi appealed to Kandt to judge the case. It was common practice to go from one judge to another until satisfaction was achieved, or bribe money ran out.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Kandt to Classe 3 January 1911 No. 1356/(German. ref.) C.O. Extracts from this letter appear to have been sent to Rechenburg in Kandt to Gouvernement 3 January 1911 R.U. III I/D/33, quoted by Louis Ruanda-Urundi 180 n.5. Unless Louis is translating extremely freely, it seems more likely that Kandt sent a second report, rewritten but drawing heavily on his letter to Classe, to the coast.
2. For an example of cases being handed on, see Zaza Diary 26 November 1913. Ruhigirakurinda first comes into mission records in Kabgayi Diary 13 January 1907, when he is reported to have moved away from the mission. He had allegedly wanted to kill a Hutu for bewitching his wife. The priests had stopped him i.e. a long-standing clash.

The matter might have rested there had not Schumacher heard from the Hutu the not improbable story that Ruhigirakurinda had bribed Kandt's interpreters with two cows so that he received a highly doctored Swahili version of the case. The priest immediately wrote a cutting letter to the Resident pointing out how he had been hoodwinked. The king, fearing the case might go badly, also wrote to Kandt a letter full of what the Resident had once called 'all the misunderstandings he enjoys'.<sup>1</sup> The mwami protested, quite beside the point, that not even he who had been taught by Kandt for a whole year and was his friend, would bribe the Resident. 'Where will all this lead?', asked the king. 'There are missionaries all over the land. Are all the chiefs to be chased out whenever a servant who has had cattle confiscated as a punishment complains to the mission?' The Resident confirmed that there was a serious misunderstanding if the Marangara Fathers thought they could expel chiefs, and the mwami seemed satisfied.<sup>2</sup>

The combination of Schumacher's insulting note and Musinga's clever appeal drew from Kandt a long letter to the Vicar-General in which anger was barely submerged by pedantry; missionaries were not so much wicked children, more crassly stupid ones in need of his superior wisdom.

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1. Kandt to Classe 16 March 1910 No. 351/10 (German ref.) C.O.

Kabgayi Diary 4 January 1911

2. Kandt to Classe 3 January 1911



No institution that believed as firmly as the Catholic Church in the rule of elites could be all bad. 'Die Katholische in der für sie charakterischen Mischung von Orthodoxie und Rationalismus', he had once written with sneaking regard, 'glaubt nicht recht an Wunder in der Gegenwart'.<sup>1</sup> This had been something of an excuse for the Catholic failure to turn the Tutsi into more malleable rulers through baptism.

Firstly he pointed out that, since there were no mission cattle involved, the Fathers should not have intervened in the dispute at all, and if they wanted to help their Christians the case should have been addressed to Musinga. Nonetheless, he did not advise seeking the king's favour since this only pushed the Tutsi to bribe witnesses. Nor was it the first time that the Kabgayi Fathers had involved themselves in cases 'into which not even the Resident would consider entering'.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Kandt then favoured the Vicar-General with his personal assessment of the structure of Rwandan society, feudalism as its unchangeable essence.

Die Eingeborenen bis hinauf zu Msinga  
haben ein grosses Verständnis dafür,  
dass ein Herr seines Dieners oder  
Schutzbefohlenen annimt. Fast alles gute  
und schlechte in den Institutionen von  
Ruanda hängt hiermit zusammen.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Kandt Annual Report for 1910 AA

2. Kandt to Classe 3 January 1911

3. *ibid.*

Thus he appreciated that no matter what their intentions, the missionaries' actions carried feudal implications; but all the more reason for staying out of cattle disputes. Some friction between Church and State was inevitable, he thought, but the trouble came not from the missionaries pursuing their legitimate religious interests, but from exceeding their powers. In short, he took the view that with limited personnel it was unrealistic to hope to regulate the day-to-day working of the Rwandan State; support for the Tutsi and a policy of Indirect Rule was the only rational approach to Government. 'I must now in the interest of the mission request you in the strongest possible terms to drop this course of action', he continued.<sup>1</sup>

But Indirect Rule was a little more than the much vaunted pragmatism of German Rule.<sup>2</sup> Professor Hans Meyer, a traveller through Rwanda, noted that officials practised almost a cult of the Tutsi.<sup>3</sup> The richness of court culture, the splendid ntore, and the sheer height and dignity of the nobles were admirable to all but the dreariest Puritan spirit. Small wonder that in some Teutonic hearts admiration slipped into adulation of the new-found Black "Übermensch", the Hamite beautiful in his degeneracy.

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1. Kandt to Classe 3, 5 January 1911. Kandt spoke of 'matters which they had been forewarned would offer them little hope of success', and this was an ultimatum.

2. Mecklenburg Ins Innerste Afrika 82-83

3. Classe to Livinhac 25 November 1912, 095319 WFAR; c.f. Baumann O. Durch Massailand zur Nilquelle Berlin 1894, for equal skepticism of Tutsi rule by a traveller <sup>224</sup>



Whatever the murky undercurrents in the minds of some administrators, Dr. Kandt spelt out his policy to the Vicar-General in the presentable context of expediency.

The policy of the Imperial Government and therefore that of the Residence has to be in all cases to strengthen and make consequent the authority of the Chiefs and Sultan, even if sometimes this results in injustices to the Wahutu. The judgements of European justice are not always just. From year to year the blessings of this policy have impressed themselves on the Residence, never more than in recent times. The Wahutu are of savage character inclined to disobedience and insurrection. The Residence who has to deal with them by the thousands every year knows what an extremely difficult element they are to govern. If I attempted to uphold the Wahutu's complaints against exactions, albeit unjust, of their chiefs against the decisions of the Province Chiefs and the Sultan, there would soon be the same anarchy in the country as there is everywhere, for example on the northern frontier now, where there are no chiefs or only chiefs who are powerless. In the last two months there have been three itinerant traders murdered and all nine murderers await judgement in chains. Why? Because they all live in regions where the chiefs respond by handing over the men to the Residence in order not to become accomplices to murder. Three days ago an askari was killed near Rwaza mission, but any thought of catching the murderer is a priori

out of the question, even in this last case despite a pitiless raid on the hills,<sup>1</sup> because the chiefs have no authority. The Residence experiences the advantages and disadvantages of such contrasting conditions, in little and big ways, every day. For this reason, as long as I have the honour to be the Resident here, I am not proposing any other policy or principles than those of the Imperial Government ...the Mission must adapt itself to this policy if it does not want to endanger its vital interests, particularly her expansion.<sup>2</sup>

The Vicar-General could hardly fail to have been touched by both reasoning and veiled threats. 'Wohin sollte es führen', Kandt asked, 'wenn <sup>(wir)</sup> die Partei irgend eines uns garnichts angehenden mhutu gegen seinen rechtmässigen Hauptling nehmen wollten?'<sup>3</sup> For a thoroughbred Catholic like Father Classe there was no answer to that kind of reasoning; he shared the Resident's premise of inequality, whether in Rwanda or in Europe. It brought home to him sharply that whatever his own convictions, the actual practice of the missionaries was producing an 'anti-government party' and pushing the Hutu into disrespect for authority.<sup>4</sup>

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1. See p.233 n.3

2. Kandt to Classe 3 January 1911

3. *ibid.*

4. Classe L. 'Relations avec les

Batussi dans la mission du Ruanda' handwritten, undated MS (c.1911) part of which appears in Classe to confrères 17 March 1913. This is one of the most interesting documents on Classe's social thinking as he is jotting down thoughts in a 'stream of consciousness' freedom. W.F.A.R.



The virtual abdication of Hirth had opened up a profound gap between missiological theory and pastoral practice. On the one hand there were the Germans, the Tutsi and Monsignor Hirth sharing a common interest with Father Classe; on the other, their unruly subjects, the missionaries and northern Hutu, thrown together in an unholy and violent mixture of conflicting aims, but sharing a common resentment of a law and order that constrained their individuality and forbade them freedom of expression. The fissure lines separating rulers from masses had cut deeply into the Church. Significantly neither Classe nor Kandt adverted to the obvious opposition between ecclesiastical and secular authority, save to play it down. In none of Classe's many subsequent directives does he emphasise a conflict between French Catholicism and German colonialism, his authority and the Resident's. He did not see it in that light; from his position the problem was technical, missiological; it could be resolved by a rational approach to the conversion of the Tutsi. By concentrating eagerly on the management of ecclesiastical power, the Vicar-General was able to withhold from himself the disturbing insight that he was ultimately with Kandt and against his own confrères.

When Father Classe sat down to formulate a plan of action after the German ultimatum, his thoughts naturally turned to Cardinal Lavignerie's Recueil des Instructions, the Society's rule book where the formula for dealing with 'a violent society subdivided into a multitude of tribes

living in a patriarchal state' could be found on page 176. But again, like Kandt, in his jottings enlightenment seems to have come more from common-sense than from ideology.

The Batussi are the chiefs of the country at the moment, but will they always be ? Impossible to know, or rather you would be probably right in thinking yes - that they will find the support of the Government for some time to come. The Government cannot change in one fell swoop the deep-seated structure of a country; there would be revolution, something all Governments wish to avoid at all costs. Meanwhile lets make do with the present structure, be friendly with the present chiefs; we will be as friendly with the chiefs of the future. Certain missionaries seem to want to see the Bahutu reigning one day, and especially the Christian Bahutu...Would things really be any better ? One can hardly imagine so. We know of Bahutu chiefs who are heartily detested by their subjects and far from being the equal of the Batussi. Furthermore we do not have the Grace of state to busy ourselves with the issue.<sup>1</sup>

Like all common-sense, that of Father Classe confirmed the

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1. Classe 'Relations' 37. 'Grâce d'état' was a common theological notion; each state of life, marriage or priesthood for example in particular, was popularly thought eligible for a particular Divine Grace to sanctify it. The laity had the grace to manage worldly affairs, see Rahner K. Mission and Grace Vol. II London 1964, 211-212



status quo in its conservative pessimism.

Privately he admitted that most of the Germans' complaints about the missionaries were justified; when a priest judged a case, the Tutsi defendant usually lost.<sup>1</sup> He saw the Fathers 'digging a profound gulf between us and the Batussi' but saw how intractable the problem had become.

"What is the use of worrying about people who openly despise us and seem to take us for their boys?" - do we not hear remarks like this from the mouth of missionaries? "I simply cannot understand certain confrères who seem to crawl to the king and Batussi. How contemptible! As far as I am concerned you will never catch me consenting to be the Tutsi's boy - rather the other way round" - there again due caution...Neither do I approve of stooping to any level like certain missionaries. With the haughty, one had to be a little haughty oneself, and have the pride becoming a Minister of God. But to give way is sometimes better than wanting always to hold sway. Grovelling, certainly not, but no domination either...We are not "kings"; we are on the contrary poor missionaries, a hundred and a thousand times poorer than certain of the great chiefs who have herds of ten, twenty and even thirty thousand cattle. So it cannot be material influence that we can hope to wield, do not

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1. The first exception I have discovered occurs in the Zaza Diary 30 July 1908 after repeated admonitions from Classe and Kandt, see also 31 December 1906.

dream of it, leave it to others. We seek to have moral influence on them, influence as in the Gospel, the only true one.<sup>1</sup>

The trouble was that this kind of sanctimoniousness from a 'career' missionary had much the same effect on the militant Fathers as Tutsi disdain.

The dossier on the Ruhigirakurinda affair got as far as the new Governor, Heinrich Schnee, in Dar-es-Salaam, and the Germans were still nursing their hurt pride when an official visit to Rwanda took place in March 1911. Schnee was carefully steered round Kabgayi by Dr. Kandt but Father Schumacher, stubborn as ever, marched off to find him. Whereupon Kandt produced Schumacher's insulting letter and showed it to the Governor; he 'found it so "frank" that he said to the Father: "How dare you write to the Resident in such a fashion".<sup>2</sup> This ripost from the mild and ineffectual Schnee brought the matter to a close.<sup>3</sup>

Despite heartsearchings and literary exchanges, things stayed much the same; on the very day of the Governor's visit to Zaza, Kandt caught two catechumens mocking the old Tutsi chief, Kanuma. A mass meeting was called and the Resident explained to those assembled that Christians had to obey their chiefs like anyone else.<sup>4</sup> Hardline

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1. Classe 'Relations' 12, 24

2. Kabgayi Diary 22 March 1911

3. See Ilfiffe Tanganyika under German Rule 202 for Schnee

4. Zaza Diary 2 April 1911



missionaries conceded that they would insist on respect for civil authority as a prerequisite for baptism; all agreed that Christian peasants had duties towards their chiefs, but which duties and which chiefs? <sup>1</sup>

Zaza mission provides a good example of the complexity of the problem. Four leading Tutsi had rights over men and land around the station: Rugambarara from old Gisaka nobility, <sup>2</sup> Nyamutesi, the Rwandan army chief who took over from Mhumbika, <sup>3</sup> and the Nyiginya, Kanuma and Rwamuhama, who replaced the disgraced Ruhinankiko. Wisely, Musinga had not reversed his father Rwabugiri's policy of émiettement of land in Central Rwanda provided an effective brake on the power of rising nobles. When the king began using the Europeans to expand his kingdom, c.1905, probably as a direct result of growing tension at court with the Ega, <sup>4</sup> he kept the same system of multiple jurisdictions as a way of stopping individual nobles from gaining large estates in the northwest and southwest. <sup>5</sup>

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1. The peasants, not to be browbeaten, wanted Kandt to tell them if they were expected to provide chickens for the Tutsi when sacrifices were to be carried out at court, and whether, as was customary, they should stop work for several weeks when an important chief died, see Zaza Diary 2 April 1911

2. He had flirted with Muhumusa in the past but survived, Zaza Diary 25 August 1909

3. See p.93-94

4. See p.152-153

5. Des Forges Rwanda under Musinga 147-152

When, bludgeoned by the Germans and their Religious Superiors into a more tactful approach to the Tutsi,<sup>1</sup> the Fathers began looking seriously into land rights, they encountered a number of conflicting opinions. The position of Hutu residing on mission grounds was the most equivocal and therefore the most contentious. The old men on Zaza mission grounds told the Fathers that the rights of abatware w'umuheto were limited to summoning the ngabo and calling for provisions for the regiment when it went off to war. But, according to Nyamutesi, the army chief himself, the Hutu had regularly to hoe for him, provide ikoro, beer and produce, and generally serve as his ubuletwa labourers. The priests accepted the version of their Christian elders who were probably relating the oldest, and least exacting, relationship. They refused to countenance Nyamutesi's claims which, if he was not inflating the amount of work and tribute out of self-interest, were certainly a recent development; the abatware, deprived of the spoils of war under German rule, were dunning the peasantry for the maximum possible.<sup>2</sup>

There was, of course, no 'traditional' code of feudal dues in the sense of a static, universally recognised system

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1. There was certainly a renewed concern for Tutsi interests shown by the Fathers in the second half of 1911. For example, Father Delmas conveyed to the Ruhengeri Resident Tutsi complaints about a ban on cattle movement in an area unaffected by cattle-pest. Ignored, he got Brother Eigenbenster, a German, to write, see Delmas to Resident 23 August 1911 P.1736 Film No.1846 AA PTO



of taxation paid to landowners; the amount wrested from the peasantry merely seems to have been inversely proportional to their strength in any particular region. The priests with their legal training instinctively looked for a corpus of customary law. Left to themselves they preferred to think in terms of landlords and rents; they owned the property so Hutu living on it should not have to pay ubutaka dues to chiefs outside. For Rwandans, though, the patron-client relationship was paramount. The Fathers became most aware of the dilemma when the Hutu, treating them as their new abanyabutaka, tried in traditional fashion to set them against the local abatware.

Even after 1906 when the chiefs began signing contracts alienating their fiefs, a stroke of the pen did not change land for them from a benefice containing unwanted White squatters to the western concept of private property. The Hutu on mission grounds invariably opted for the gentler rule of the Fathers so that expulsion came to be used as a penalty for polygamy and other misconduct.<sup>1</sup> This did not

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2) The Fathers concentrated on the rights of army chiefs because Dr. Kandt conceded that abanyabutaka had no further rights over land purchased by missionaries, see Zaza Diary, 4 April 1911

1. For example attendance at Iyangombe ceremonies, see Kabgayi Diary 22 January 1908. Proximity to a station gave the Hutu the benefits of the Fathers or Sisters' medical knowledge, often rudimentary but enough sometimes to save life by a speedy injection.

stop their old chiefs from trying to manipulate a relationship they knew to have ended.

The problem became acute when a peasant farmed more than one plot and found himself after the Fathers' arrival with fields both inside and outside mission property; mission Hutu with banana groves on neighbouring hills had the same difficulty. Under these circumstances, the chiefs felt perfectly justified in trying to reactivate the feudal obligations, demanding ikoro, part of the harvest, or a hand of bananas. If a peasant refused, which more often than not he did, the Tutsi would try to confiscate the banana grove or put another peasant into the defaulter's plot.<sup>1</sup>

Acculturation soon took place, the Fathers treating Christians on mission grounds as their garagu rather than mere tenants. Naturally this was socially most welcome for the impoverished Hutu who found themselves with the most powerful of patrons.<sup>2</sup> The Tutsi made valiant efforts to accomodate the missionaries' idiosyncratic concept of property. Shortly after the Governor's visit to Zaza, Rwamuhama came to the mission with a rationalisation of the Fathers' dilemma. 'What I would like', he told them, 'in order that we might have peace together is that you give me all (the land) that those on mission grounds have outside

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1. Zaza Diary 28 November 1908.

2. Especially as such residence could lead to ownership of a cow.



and I will concede to you what my men have within mission grounds'.<sup>1</sup> A calculation convinced the priests that this would result in a net loss for the mission so they declined, promising however to see to it that ikoro was paid for fields on Rwamuhama's land. They sought advice on the matter from Kanuma but he replied vaguely at much at a loss as the Fathers.<sup>2</sup> Three weeks later Rwamuhama was back again trying to get the mission Hutu to build him a hut.<sup>3</sup>

No sooner did a strong directive set the missionaries weeding out one set of patron-client relationships than another set cropped up. When, behaving correctly, the Zaza Fathers asked the Germans to assign them trees in collaboration with the chiefs who 'owned' the forest, they sent forest guards to protect them until sawyers could come. As it was difficult to get hold of the Germans to mark the trees, and it took weeks to assemble a gang to transport them to the mission, a long time elapsed between the Fathers' acquiring ownership and their use.<sup>4</sup> Timber guards<sup>5</sup> soon settled down to become 'masters of the forest'; chiefs were refused access to their own trees without a payment and the guards threatened to cut down the chiefs' trees if they

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1. Zaza Diary 23 April 1911

2. The reply is stuck in the Zaza Diary 22-26 April 1911

3. Zaza Diary 15 May 1911

4. Such delays were the occasion for the first acrimonious dispute with the Lutherans, over the ownership of trees, see Roehl to Father-Superior Kabgayi 7 March 1911 C.O.

5. Kabgayi Diary 24 March 1906

were not adequately bribed. After handing over hoes, goats and cows to mission nyampara, nobles were in no mood to accept new exactions. It was only when the chiefs refused to allow Hutu to carry logs that the missionaries became aware that their men were using the mission's authority to lord it over the Tutsi.<sup>1</sup>

The stations still owned large herds but, with their land grants limited by the Germans, the Fathers suffered like the Tutsi from shortage of suitable pasture.<sup>2</sup> To avoid the complexities of farming out the cattle to Tutsi, the Zaza Fathers sensibly came to an agreement with Kanuma and Nyamutesi who had rights of umukenke over large tracts of land; the missionaries were given permission to graze their herd on the chiefs' misigati or Summer pastures. The land, spread over five or six fiefs, was assigned to the protection of a mission cowherd. The story of the timber guards was repeated; cowherds began pushing other cattle off the pastures, selling umukenke rights for hoes, and trying to build up a private herd.<sup>3</sup>

The only way to counter the pervasive infeudation of the Church was to reduce the material life of the mission to the level of an Anchorite community. Any relationship with the Fathers could be manipulated for gain and many were made with precisely that purpose. The Germans encountered

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1. Classe 'Relations' 67-68

2. The Save Fathers were told to graze their cattle only on Save Hill due to disputes, see Save Diary 6 October 1906

3. Zaza Diary 25 September 1912



much the same problems with their agents whenever they needed labour and materials.<sup>1</sup>

When Rwamuhama approached the Zaza Fathers, the Tutsi were, in general, in retreat. Though no Tutsi from any leading noble family had been baptised nor was receiving instruction, the war of attrition which the court had been waging for a decade had ended. The tactics changed from open hostility in the provinces, and the dissimulated hatred of the court, to a strategy of accomodation. It is difficult to date the process accurately as the change was only later recognised. Looking back the missionaries saw a single event, Kabare's sharing of a calabash of beer with Christians as the turning point.<sup>2</sup> To drink, or even associate with a Christian, had been unthinkable for all well-born Tutsi, an act comparable to eating with a Twa.

The gesture by Kabare was probably made during his fall from power at court in 1909, but this solitary act epitomised a process that had begun in 1908 and was recognised as well underway by 1912. The reliance on Christians to help chiefs collect ikoro, and even deal with court cases,<sup>3</sup> grew in this period into a more permanent type of arrangement, the Tutsi took Christians as garagu in

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1. Nyundo Diary 2 March, 3 May 1911 provides two examples in connection with building at Kisenyi.

2. Rapports annuels 1910-1911, 411; de Lacger Ruanda 403

3. Delmas to Indrumm 10 January 1912 C.O.

order to conscript them as spies or ambassadors to the mission stations. Kabare selected one of the Save Christians, Frederiko Rwagihanga, as a garagu and permanent delegate to the Save Fathers. Rightly fearing that Frederiko might be more the man of Kabare than of Father Smoor, the Save missionaries sent a trusted mission employee, Perfecti Magilirane, to pay court to Kabare and become his garagu also.<sup>1</sup> Although it is clearly untrue that Kabare's gesture brought about the Tutsi's change of strategy, inasmuch as he drank with his garagu, Perfecti and Frederiko, the Catholic myth does point to the key area in which the Tutsi were accomodating the Hutu Church.<sup>2</sup> Musinga himself began using his catechist Wilhelmi as a general factotum, running errands instead of teaching, and Leon Rutwaza became the king's ambassador to the Kabgayi Fathers after his inauspicious career in Marangara.<sup>3</sup>

Several of the old Ega, though, clung to the habit of isolating Christians by pouring scorn on them. The Queen Mother chased out Catholics she found working on her enclosure, and Rwidegembya banned Hutu wearing Holy medals from entering Nyanza; this seriously reduced the value of Christian garagu since their lords spent twelve to sixteen

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1. Nothomb Church History 23

2. Grands Lacs 1950, 34, 41

3. Kabgayi Diary 6 June 1909, 4 January 1911: ' En somme, ces maîtres servent plus les intérêts du roi que les nôtres', see Classe 'Relations' 31



months on end at the capital.<sup>1</sup> Labourers were drafted for periods of up to two months' work in Nyanza, and refusal to appear entailed grave punishments.

By the middle of 1911, there were over seven thousand Christians and six thousand catechumens in Rwanda.<sup>2</sup> Selected from the poor, the patronless and the journeymen they may have been, but their numbers made Musinga unwilling or unable to ban them from Nyanza. With the now humbled but as ever pragmatic Kabare at his shoulder,<sup>3</sup> the king saw that the time for diplomacy had come. Kabare visited Save mission in person for the first time on February 2nd, 1910, and served as intermediary for the Fathers at court until his death in March 1911.<sup>4</sup>

The numerical strength of the White Fathers, 35 missionaries, the large Hutu Church, perhaps also the visit from Governor Schnee, convinced others that it was the moment to come to terms. Kanuma arrived at Zaza mission wanting to negotiate with the Fathers; they could have such-and-such hills provided they did not proselytise certain important Tutsi families, and left him in peace.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Kabgayi Diary 10 May 1909

2. The country's population was between one and two million so this amounted to about 0.5%

3. Rapports annuels 1910-1911, 411-412

4. Classe L. 'Nos relations avec les Batutsi' Missions d'Afrique 1912, 88-89; Save Diary 29 March 1911

5. Zaza Diary 22 April 1911

In the same way rich Hutu offered catechists hoes and goats not to teach their favourite children.<sup>1</sup> The power of the mission station can be glimpsed from reports that mission employees were demanding presents from chiefs before they agreed to take them into the presence of the Father-Superior.<sup>2</sup>

The movement for accomodation gained ground at court and, instead of the usual round of persecution which followed a mission defeat, Musinga apologetically told Leon Rutwaza after the Ruhigirakurinda affair that he would deal with future cases himself to keep Kigali out.<sup>3</sup> The king, furthermore, went to the point of announcing in public that were it not for the first and sixth commandments he himself would consider becoming a catechumen; it seems unlikely that he meant it. Father Classe wrote optimistically 'Musinga is rather well disposed towards us. He knows that we respect his authority and make those around us respect it. He asks us questions about religion very frequently and interrogates his catechists often, sending for Christians even from distant stations to enquire what they have been taught'.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Save Diary 17 October 1907; Classe 'Relations' 47.

The root of resistance was the fear that no children would honour a head of umuryango when he died if they were all Christians, see Arnoux Les Pères Blancs 120-121

2. Classe 'Relations' 52

3. Kabgayi Diary 4 January 1911

4. Rapports annuels 1910-1911, 409



Several influential chiefs at the capital began to make approaches to Christians; others readily accepted the advances of ambitious Christians and took them as garagu for delicate dealings with Europeans. Rather as American statesmen sought the services of sinologists in response to the growing power of China in the 1960s, so the Tutsi gave cows and made garagu of Hutu experts on the White Fathers. Although both sides felt such intermediaries dangerously contaminated by an alien ideology, they served as valuable channels of information. 'This movement is being favoured by us', wrote Father Classe, 'and we are pushing our Christians to join the "families" of chiefs. In such a way, <sup>many</sup> prejudices will disappear'.<sup>1</sup> The missionaries now had a limited but important access to the ruling class, but at the risk of their men owing more allegiance to the Tutsi than to the mission.

The price of the court's move from isolation to absorption of the intrusive religious system was fifteen ntore catechumens; they were discovered receiving instruction secretly in Nyanza by the king, and the Fathers feared the Queen Mother would order their execution, but a blind eye was turned. Attendance at Nyanza school remained irregular and depended on the mwami's whims. Some days he would supervise the ntore obliging them to pay attention to the lessons; on others he seemed happy to find the

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1. Rapports annuels: 1910-1911, 410

classroom empty. Resistance still occurred in the provinces but there is no evidence that the court encouraged it. Opposition from the Hutu was now as marked as that from the ruling class to opportunist catechists who might now find themselves backed up by a letter from the king.<sup>1</sup>

The departure of kingmakers is the delight of kings, and that of Kabare was no exception; the mwami appeared at last to enjoy himself at Nyanza. The Lutherans, who had only seventeen baptisms to their credit after four years, were summoned to court to engage the White Fathers in dialogue.<sup>2</sup> Pastor Roehl delivered an impassioned discourse about how the voice of Imana had called him to Rwanda. The mwami wanted to know why he taught differently from the Catholics. The pastor, perhaps remembering the God of history, said that he did not. The mwami was not to be deflected and wanted to know why the Protestants had wives; the Pastor replied that the White Fathers had a rule of celibacy.<sup>3</sup> The king, summing up, said that he was not yet

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1. Kabgayi Diary 10, 18, 20, 21 July 1911

2. Kandt Annual Report for 1910 AA

3. Kabgayi Diary 21 July 1911. Relations between Catholics and Protestants in Rwanda remained much more friendly than between Benedictines and the Berlin Missionary Society in Tanganyika, see Grundler to Manley 5 December 1912; 12 December 1912 for a major conflict, G3.A8/02 C.M.S. London. Some accusations were made, see Kabgayi Diary 28 June 1911; Roehl to Classe 31 May 1911 C.O., but the Fathers were soon helping the Lutherans out by providing them with school Bibles, see Johanssen to Classe 23 October 1911 C.O.



ready for Christianity but that he preferred the Fathers.<sup>1</sup>

This ecclesiastical theatre doubtless gave rise to much mirth behind the impassive masks of the courtiers. Yet Musinga had reason to be genuinely interested in the political implications of the differences between the two denominations. The abject failure of the Lutherans seems to have been due to too close identification with the Germans, the much feared ibisimba.<sup>2</sup> Hanging in Lutheran classrooms were portraits of Dr. Kandt and the Kaiser; pupils learnt the geography of Europe and were given talks on German greatness, victories and virtues.<sup>3</sup> If it was true that Rwandans preferred what de Iacger called 'catholicisme francais' to 'christianisme allemande',<sup>4</sup> it was largely because they saw the Lutherans as agents of Imperial Government at a time when German overrule was beginning to be felt. The White Fathers were violent in a fashion Rwandans understood, they lost their temper and struck people; the Germans slaughtered indiscriminately when their authority was challenged, and the Lutherans had the misfortune to be of the same nationality. On the other hand, events had shown that the Catholics were

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1. Kabgayi Diary 21 July 1911

2. After similarly brutal raids in Burundi the Germans were given the same name, 'ferocious beasts', vikoko, see Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 113 1905, 101. The Fathers were shocked enough by Wintgens' 1910 raids to report them publicly, see Rapports annuels 1910-1911, 397

3. Ryckmans to Franck 2 December 1922 M.639 AA

4. De Iacger Ruanda 406

far from being the agents of Kaiser Wilhelm and might possibly counterbalance the German administration.

Father Classe's hopes of using Hutu Christians as a Trojan horse were in vain; the Tutsi saw the priests as powerful barbarians whose cultural grossness was matched only by their technological prowess and spiritual force. The problem of converting the nobles was intractable. Except for Nyiginya like Nshozamihigo, Sharangabo and Cyitature who stayed away from court for long periods for their safety and protection of their fiefs from the Ega, most of rich Tutsi spent most of their time at court. Residence at Nyanza was encouraged by the king since it enabled him to undermine the nobles in the provinces with his garagu and spies.<sup>1</sup> He drank early into the morning with his lords and the Fathers found the greatest difficulty in getting hold of nobles, let alone teaching them the Christian Faith. Each chief came with a retinue of thirty to fifty servants, according to his wealth, and these camped around the capital. They were supplied by relays of workers sent by the lord's delegate at his provincial seat, n-tebe. Those bringing provisions mingled with Hutu carrying ikoro, sleeping rough, often disease-ridden and almost starving amidst the towns swollen granaries. Amongst the elegant huts and enclosures Twa spies would circulate reporting back to the king, while every noble would have his garagu ear

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Cyitature was kept away from the sensitive Save region by enforced residence at court from 1906-1908; see Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 155 November 1908, 872



cocked for news detrimental to his master's interests.<sup>1</sup>  
In this seething cauldron of political intrigue the Fathers were closely watched. Amongst the sophisticated, supercilious banter of the courtiers the Good News of the Gospel fell like ketchup onto caviar. Uncomfortable at the apex of the feudal pyramid, the missionaries were forced unwillingly to the bottom.

Christianity had little to offer against the most pressing problems of Tutsi life, epidemic disease, political assassination and intimidation. Rewards were high but penalties for disfavour grave; an important court diviner like Lubungi would have ten ruko each with a wife, and from six to seven thousand cattle spread between Mfumbiro, Mulera, Buganza and Marangara.<sup>2</sup> For displeasing the king or for a minor ritual failure, he might be executed or disgraced. Gisaka was the cemetery of ambitious nobles; Bitangampunzi, an important anti-Christian chief of Lubungi's standing, was suddenly called to the capital in November 1909 and murdered by the Twa alongside his two sons.<sup>3</sup> Nyamutesi who inherited Zaza in 1902 lost everything in October 1913.<sup>4</sup> Even a chief like Rwidegembya would undertake several sacrifices to decide whether it was safe to return to

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1. Classe 'Relations' 26-30; Mulera Report 1929; Bourgeois 'Rapport de sortie de charge' Shangugu 1934, Derscheid Papers; Mecklenburg Ins Innerste Afrika 102-106

2. Kabgayi Diary 1 February 1907

3. Zaza Diary 15 November 1909

4. *ibid.* 14 October 1913

court, and that at the height of his fame.<sup>1</sup>

As far as the peasants were concerned a decade of missionary endeavour had only scraped the surface of a fraction of Hutu misery. After the decimating famine of 1905-1906, hundreds lost their lives in a famine called Kiramwaramwara, 'he who prowls around stealing', that took its toll during the dry season of 1908. Rwaza suffered from cholera and diphtheria in 1909 and an epidemic of sleeping sickness reached the court itself.<sup>2</sup> In the same year six thousand people died of amoebic dysentery within a fifteen to twenty kilometre radius of Nyundo mission.<sup>3</sup> Smallpox struck Save in 1912.<sup>4</sup> The number of Rwandans annually struck down by sudden death from disease, or the prolonged death of starvation, ran into thousands.

After the arrival of further contingents of White Sisters in 1909, the informal medical work done by missionaries was transformed into regular dispensaries and clinics. Hutu Christians took full advantage of them but the Tutsi, fearing poisoning or pollution, would only use salves and creams for sores, refusing any medicines that had to be taken orally. To avoid embarrassment, Hutu

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1. Kabgayi Diary 16 October 1911. 'Il n'y a pas de grande famille qui n'ait plusieurs de ses membres tués par le roi. Cela n'empêche pas les autres de lui faire la cour quand même', see Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 152 August 1908, 657

2. Musinga to Father-Superior Kabgayi 1 July 1909 WFA; Save Diary 18 June 1908; Rapports annuels 1908-1909, 264 Dufays Pages d'Épopée 45



garagu were usually sent on their lords' behalf with specific requests. The Sisters at Zaza managed to reduce infant mortality amongst families attending their ante-natal clinic to 6/92 live births during 1909-1910.<sup>1</sup> What they could not do was explain in spiritual terms why death should have fallen on the six rather than on the other eighty-six babies. And it was this area of explanation shunned by the missionaries, except in their most unreflective moments, which was central to the hold that traditional religion held over even committed Christians. The missionaries had relegated the connection between the spirit-world and disease to the back of their mind as a fall-back system of explanation and one they rarely used with their catechumens. They spoke of Providence and immediate punishments for sin more as a pious invocation, a kind of religious exclamation mark, rather than as a valid causal analysis of events.<sup>2</sup>

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3) Rapports annuels 1909-1910, 317; 4) ibid. 1911-1912, 396

1. Classe 'Nos relations avec les Batutsi' 86; Rapports annuels 1910-1911, 388

2. For example the following: ' Un de nos voisins, Bitangampunzi et son fils chrétien, Antoni, faisaient autrefois à nos néophytes de Sangaza une opposition plus ou moins sourde. Mais la Providence voulût qu'un revers de fortune ou de politique amenât Bitangampunzi et ses deux fils à la capitale où le roi les fit exécuter', see Rapports annuels 1909-1910, 314. The more educated the missionary generally the less such remnants of 'folk-religion' were manifest.

When it came to a diagnosis that was credible and relevant to the peasant, and for the wide range of psychosomatic conditions, the Catholic priest was inferior to the diviner. Some traditional medecines were effective and there were elementary forms of asepsis, wounds were cauterised by a spear-tip dipped in boiling butter.<sup>1</sup> The Fathers took several months to obtain vaccines against epidemic diseases and there were few available, so during the worst outbreaks the Fathers were often as powerless as any hill diviner. The missionaries never indicated that becoming a Christian would protect Rwandans against misfortune, but the Hutu asked of their religion that it should control the dark penumbra of the spirit-world in which they lived their daily lives. They flocked to receive baptism as a protection against dysentery but sadly found that it did not.<sup>2</sup>

The diviner in Rwandan society sought to bring order into life by explaining the chaotic and random. For this reason the Hutu were always tempted to turn to them when disasters occurred; the 1905 drought brought a widespread move for consultations. Some diviners were remarkably open-minded with no partie prise for any one religious system; finding that all traditional remedies had failed, the missionaries reported that one diviner had sent a pagan to live with a younger Christian brother whose new

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1. Arnoux Les Pères Blancs 125

2. Rapports annuels 1908-1909, 278



religion might have had some curative powers. It was not unlike the western doctor who shuffles through his repertoire of anti-biotics. When local rainmakers failed, Europeans were tried out in the same way.<sup>1</sup>

The Fathers did not respond favourably to magical demands on their spiritual expertise. They saw their activities rather strictly divided up into acts of charity, healing the sick, caring for orphans and looking after widows, and their priestly ministry which largely was performed at the altar and in the confessional. The connection between the two was theologically strong but, in practice, simply tactical; the dispensaries brought the peasants to them; they were only 'religious' in the limited sense of a witness to Christ's love. As Kandt pointed out, the Catholic mixture of orthodoxy and rationalism meant that the Fathers no longer believed their presence would bring about a miracle.<sup>2</sup>

It was therefore small wonder that Rwandans clung to the mystical protection afforded by initiation into the Iyangombe cult. To chiefs like Cytatire, who lived for some time on the edge of the mission orbit, Christianity seemed unable to protect Rwandans, and they were as well off protected by mandwa spirits,<sup>3</sup> their indigenous 'good

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1. Mibirisi Diary 25 September 1910; Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 125 March 1906, 174

2. p.237 n.1

3. Arnoux Les Pères Blancs. 143-144

angels'. They had Imana instead of Mungu;<sup>1</sup> they appreciated the stories of demons since they suffered from bazimu.<sup>2</sup> They saw little difference between the Godparents and confirmation ceremonies of catholicism and their structural equivalent in the Iyangombe cult; 'byose ni kimwe' - it is the same thing - so why convert to the Whites' religion?<sup>3</sup> Such was the argument of the sophisticated; for many of the Hutu catholicism was still frighteningly alien. Thus, despite the missions' gains, Dr. Kandt could write with some truth in his 1911 report: 'The Natives, as far as can be seen, have no desire for Christianity and treat it with a certain mistrust'.<sup>4</sup>

Despite their punishments, the Fathers were unable to eradicate the hold of the Iyangombe cult over their flock. Catechists colluded with their neighbours demanding a present not to inform at the mission that Christians and catechumens were attending the ceremonies.<sup>5</sup> Some catechumens even made sacrifices to protect themselves from possible side-effects of baptism.<sup>6</sup> 'You know how your Christian subjects follow the Wanyaruanda and Iyangombe', Kandt had

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1. Zaza Diary 14 October 1909

2. Some even saw Palm Sunday as a Christian form of kubandwa, see Kabgayi Diary 18 May 1909

3. Arnoux Les Pères Blancs 143-144

4. Kandt to Gouvernement 1 June 1912, Annual Report for 1911  
AA

5. Kabgayi Diary 22 January 1908; Nyundò Diary 1 August 1911;  
Classe 'Relations' 47

6. Mibirisi Diary 4 November 1909



been able to write to Musinga assuring him of Catholics' loyalty.<sup>1</sup> There was no open conflict, the Christians preferring to go in secret rather than challenge the Fathers. Since the cult only existed at the level of the hill community and the mwami had no control over it; whatsoever, the Lyangombe mediums were never able to offer any co-ordinated national resistance to Christian religion.

Ten years of Christian missions did not change the Rwandans' minds about the relevance of traditional religion, but it did transform the lives of a few and brought imperceptible changes to the lives of many. In this the Fathers represented only one facet of a European occupation that was slowly altering the economic life of the nation. Dr. Kandt, a staunch 'free-trader', invited a number of Indians to his new town of Kigali;<sup>2</sup> coupled with itinerant Ganda and Swahili traders based on Bukoba and seeking ivory and rubber from the Congo, they introduced the rich to the luxuries of cloth and cheap beads.<sup>3</sup> Cows, goats and sheep, which had once negotiated personal relationships of a feudal kind, came to assume cash value as skins and beef cattle, particularly around mission stations. The cow was still the only worthwhile token of wealth but cash could be turned into cattle, and more people were earning.

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1. Kandt to Musinga 23 October 1912 C.O. 'Na tena unajua kama wakristu watu wako namna wanyaruanda wanafuata(jo) Lyangombe' - Kandt's brand of Swahili.

2. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 169-171

3. Classe to Livinhac 26 December 1910, 095223: WPAR

The Fathers paid their brickmakers at the rate of one roupie per one hundred bricks.<sup>1</sup> Teachers earned forty Heller (0.4 roupie) to one roupie for a period of four days teaching; their pupils were able to earn up to three metres of cloth each term by working in the mission gardens and compound in the afternoon.<sup>2</sup> When the stations were no longer able to meet the demand for work to buy luxury goods, Christians turned to trading their animals or to emigration in search of other employers.<sup>3</sup>

The simple Rwandan economy which funnelled the surplus wealth created by peasant labour to the rich Hutu and leisured Tutsi class, and thence to the court, was soon affected by the presence of large numbers of traders.<sup>4</sup> The demand for skins on Bujumbura market in Burundi pushed up the price of goats twentyfold between 1897-1907. Sheep and goats reached 6-7 roupies but cattle could sell for 35-45 roupies owing to the Tutsis' unwillingness to part with them. Rwanda, with less commerce, had lower prices than Burundi but also showed massive fluctuations according to the presence or absence of traders in a region. When a large group arrived in Kigali for the first time in 1909, the price of cows shot up from 12-18 roupies to 17-23 roupies.

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1. Save Diary 2 June 1905

2. Schumacher Annual School Report for 1911 C.O.; Arnoux Les Pères Blancs 128

3. Christians traded goats for copper or tobacco at Nyundo market, see Nyundo Diary 11 March 1911

4. For details of pre-colonial economy, see Vidal 'Économie de la société féodale' 52-75



per animal. With few Tutsi willing to release cows, they went to the highest bidder with government agents often buying ten roupies higher than the more experienced missionaries.<sup>1</sup>

Nonetheless, the temptation to sell livestock to an eager traveller, or on Kigali market at a propitious time, was overwhelming for those with alternative sources of protection to the chiefs; the Fathers received complaints from the nobles that Hutu Christians were selling their ubuhake cattle.<sup>2</sup> From August to October 1909, the missionaries noticed that brideprice in marriages at which they officiated doubled and even trebled, and they were obliged to peg it for their Christians at seven hoes.<sup>3</sup> Whether this sudden transformation of a symbolic exchange, signifying a real exchange of genetricial rights from one lineage to another, into a financial transaction, was the result of a relative shortage of Christian wives or to inflation alone is hard to say. Young men outweighed girls by three to one in school and the Fathers discouraged marriage with pagans, but it was not strongly discouraged.

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1. Von Stuermer to Father Superior Rwaza 21 September 1909 describes how well the new Kigali market is doing, W.F.A.R.; for prices, see Rwaza Diary 9 September 1908; Kabgayi Diary 18 July 1909; Chroniques Trimestrielles March 1908 No. 147, 186; Louis Ruanda-Urundi 169

2. Kabgayi Diary 28 November 1909

3. *ibid.* 23 October 1909. This was drastic 'price control'; at Rwaza in September 1908 brideprice ran from 6-10 goats or a bull plus 1-4 goats or a cow in calf, see Rwaza Diary 9 September 1908

The children of a mixed marriage belonged to the father's lineage so there was no difficulty when the male spouse was a Christian.<sup>1</sup> The first kiss of the market economy seems to have turned women into chattels just as it had turned the destitute and orphaned into slaves. The old economy with local markets and stable exchange rates<sup>2</sup> gave a measure of security to the poor, they knew what their labour could buy, but the new only added to the insecurity of famine and pestilence.

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1. For example, the Fathers were lenient towards sequentially polygamous men provided the second wife was a Catholic and the first a pagan, on the basis of the Pauline privilege. The formula for the marriage of a Catholic man with a pagan wife contained the warning in the dispensation: 'Simulque eam monui, nolente ipsa ad fidem converti, praedictum...N.N....transiturum ad novas nuptias cum muliere catholica', see Hirth to confrères 27 December 1906 CR. Monsignor Hirth seems to have viewed the Christian-pagan marriage more as a way of spreading the Faith, in keeping with his emphasis on individual proselytism. Classe was less happy about any form of polygamy and saw it in the north as a real obstacle; most wealthy Tutsi and Hutu had more than one wife, and polygamy was a real problem amongst the rich abakonde in the north, see Barthélemy J.B. 'Fondation d'une station au Rouanda' Missions d'Afrique 1910, 281;
  2. For example an uncured cowskin was worth 30 kilos of beans, a young goat or a hoe; 300 kilos of beans bought a bull etc. 'Tax' given to the chiefs, beans, ipfukire, and sorghum, intete, were measured in baskets and only varied from 4-8% of a lineage's harvest, see Vidal 'Économie de la société féodale', 55, 68



While the authority of the Fathers was adequate to solve problems such as rising brideprice amongst Christians, they were powerless in the face of the other effect of commerce, emigration. Three roupies worth of cloth were enough to clothe a man and new neophytes were unwilling to be inferior to the old in dress. As the stations entered a period of financial crisis,<sup>1</sup> Christians sought earnings elsewhere and found little alternative to the German camps and Residences, Indian traders, or emigration to Bukoba and Bujumbura. The Fathers censoriously predicted the outcome, forgetting who had introduced the Hutu to paid labour in the first place.

With the Christians now more numerous, it will be difficult to provide work for all who seek it, and the need to clothe themselves will push people to make distant journeys, to chase after Europeans and after traders of all colours. It is the scourge of the missions. These bad examples will quickly corrupt the simplicity of the poor negroes. Laxity will result and lead to disorder.<sup>2</sup>

Many died as porters on the way to Bukoba and only one man in ten came back with a net profit, but the movement begun 1909-1911 continued. For three weeks' work a porter could hope for four roupies;<sup>3</sup> the new needs and ambitions born in the Catholic classroom could be satisfied in no

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1. Rev. Père Roussez 'Carte de Visite' 9-17 February 1913 CR.

2. Rapports annuels 1907-1908, 161

3. ibid. 1911-1912, 400, Kabgayi Diary, 5 March 1910

other way.

The Europeans had begun a process that was ultimately to undermine the Rwandan economy and its feudal society.<sup>1</sup> As employees of the Germans, and a fortiori of the White Fathers, Hutu were able to slip out of feudal obligations: by payment in cloth or roupies.<sup>2</sup> The logic of the Hutus' move into the Church demanded full emancipation from Tutsi overlordship. This was particularly true of the Rwaza Christians who could only view the Banyanduga's encroachment as an unprecedented attack on their land and lineages. 'Given the character of the Walera and Wakiga', wrote Indrumm, 'it is not surprising. Their chiefs are powerless and they feel under the protection of the mission making this a pretext to refuse the legitimate demands of their chiefs'.<sup>3</sup> And many a journeyman in Central Rwanda sought security, standing and riches on the road to Rome. Kandt believed that all the Hutu 'hoped for an improvement in their social position and some protection against both authorised and unauthorised demands from their chiefs, from their joining a mission'. 'Sie betrachten sich als

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1. Everyone was aware of the impact of trade. Musinga began by banning his subjects from visiting Bujumbura market, see Save Diary 9 December 1903. He then tried to control trade and reward his chiefs with imported goods, see Kabgayi Diary 20 March 1907. 'Le petit commerce pour les marchands arabes, indiens et autres..semblent pour beaucoup le salut' - Classe to Livinhac 28 April 1911, 095226 WFA. The Hutu had seen the possibilities.

2. Zaza Diary 13 April 1909, 30 June 1910, 10 December 1913



Wagaragu (lehnsleute) der Mission', he noted, 'und werden auch von den anderen Wanjaruanda dafür angesehen'.<sup>1</sup>

Father Classe might protest against the morally objectionable aspects of clientship in the Hutu Church; he could not stop it occurring. The Rwandans defined the character and internal dynamics of the corpus christianum that was being built up on their soil, whether as Tutsi whose resistance divided the missionaries against their Vicar-General, or as Hutu whose acceptance compromised the Fathers in the eyes of the Germans, and whose manipulation of every aspect of mission life kept several steps ahead of the priests' attempts to reform.

The position of the Vicar-General was more equivocal than he liked to imagine. He deplored the effects of infeudation on his Church, yet supported the power of the lords who held the feudal system together and drove the peasants into the arms of Mater Ecclesia. He pointed out the Fathers' material poverty and warned them against seeking secular power, yet took fright lest his mission be taken for a Church of the poor, and was never so happy as when at the centre of secular power dealing with Kandt

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The examples all come from Gisaka most affected by trade with Tanganyika. 3) Indrumm to Delmas 9 December 1911 C.O.

1. Kandt to Gouvernement 1 June 1912 Annual Report for 1911 AA. 'They consider themselves to be the Mission's garagu (vassals) and as such even gain the respect of other Rwandans'.

and Musinga. The Church of Constantine and Charlemagne, and that of the poor country priest in secular France, co-habited uneasily in the mountains of Rwanda, where the dialectic of European Church History was played out with new actors but old ideas.<sup>1</sup>

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1. 'Sans les chefs nous n'aurons pas le peuple d'une manière sérieuse. Sans eux c'est avec le régime social actuel qui sera encore fortifié, donner au catholicisme une situation d'infériorité, d'esclave, le condamner à être sans cesse aux prises avec les difficultés et l'oppression. C'est une erreur grave de dire qu'ici le peuple sera catholique sans les chefs, plus grave que partout ailleurs; chefs et peuple ne sont pas ici de la même race. Il y a antagonisme de races, de conquérants et de conquis. Dans beaucoup de provinces, pour ne pas dire la plupart, la conquête est trop récente et a laissé vives les poussées de l'indépendance. Ce double antagonisme sera fortifié encore de l'antagonisme des religions. Le protestantisme est religion du Gouvernement, il a et aura ses faveurs. Maintenant déjà on nous dit assez que nous nous faisons à tort et à raison les défenseurs des Bahutu. De là à un antagonisme politique il n'y a pas loin'. Classe to Livinhac 28 April 1911, 095226 WFAR. What prophetic words for the 1950s !



CHAPTER FIVE

Imperial Rule and Northern Independence

1912-1916

The White Fathers could have no doubts by 1912 that the Imperial Government was going to bring about changes and that over these changes they would have little control. Instead of a Tutsi state in which the missionaries were a dominant White nobility, there were the beginnings of a minor German protectorate in which, despite Indirect Rule, Rwandans were being beaten, and the Fathers harangued, into an unnatural passivity. Indeed, it was probably Kandt's economic programme that pushed Musinga to toy for a time with Christianity.

The Catholics had to come to terms with new demands for better schooling,<sup>1</sup> growing competition from Protestants, the threat of Islam, and above all the dilemma of converting a ruling class supported by the Germans but adamantly opposed to Christianity.<sup>2</sup> Accomodation was alien to the north; it rebelled as naturally as the Tutsi took to diplomacy and infiltration. Despite the German camp at Ruhengeri the north was still unsubdued; Kayondo, the first cousin of Rwidegembya and the second most important Ega chief in the land, was chased out of Rwaza by the Hutu in 1909.<sup>3</sup> It was only in July 1911 that the Germans caught, with the help of Christian guides, the first of Loupias'

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1. Kandt Annual Report for 1913 P.1728 Film No.166 AA

2. Like the Athenians, the Tutsi found the idea of a bodily resurrection laughable, see Rapports annuels 1910-1911, 402

3. Classe to Livinhac 28 July 1910, 095221 WFA



assassins and hanged him publicly.<sup>1</sup>

Musinga's policy in the provinces remained similar to his strategy towards the Europeans: divide and rule but negotiate with invincible opponents. Over sensitive areas he placed either an important noble or an unfortunate who would be executed for inevitable failure. The leading chiefs followed the same policy themselves at the level of their abatware w'intebe and other garagu.<sup>2</sup> Changes of command seem to have taken place in February or March as the nobles came to court with their ikoro, though it may be that the missionaries simply heard about them then.

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1. This was Lubashamakore, see Kandt to Father-Superior Rwaza 7 July 1911 Dossier 112 bis W.F.A.R.; Nyundo Diary 30 January 1911
  2. For example, at Nyundo the noble Bushako kept control of Iwakadigi, his umutware w'intebe, through another garagu, Bizilakuzana. Iwakadigi had originally come from Mwendo near Kabgayi and was typical of the new Banyanduga. In March 1910, Bushako lost Bgishaza province to Rwidegembya whose son was given another sensitive area around Mibirisi. Since Iwakadigi had successfully manipulated the Nyundo Fathers to his advantage, looking after their cattle and seeking their support, and since his shebuja, Bushako, was losing ground, the mwami turned to the head of the Higo clan, Burukumbi, to balance Iwakadigi's power; Burukumbi claimed all Iwakadigi land for the Higo in 1911. Bushako and Rwidegembya's garagu were still struggling for Bgishaza in 1915. Like his father, Musinga was not averse to using northern clan heads in inter-Tutsi disputes. See Nyundo Diary 22 June, 6 August 1908, 27 March 1910, 3 April 1911, 24 April 1918; Mibirisi Diary 14, 23 March 1911; Hirth to Declercq 29 December 1917 C.O.

The German base at Kisenyi and their first wave of building put an unusual amount of power into the hands of the local umutware w'intebe, Iwakadigi, to the detriment of his lord Bushako and the court. And as he shifted his allegiance from the Fathers to the more powerful German officers and askari, life for Father Huntzinger at Nyundo and his comrade-in-arms, the Alsatian priest, Veckerlé, became uncomfortable. The Kisenyi Resident worked through Iwakadigi who took the opportunity to load all forced labour onto the two most rebellious Hutu clans.<sup>1</sup> People paid off the askari when 'selection' was made for abanetsi, labourers, and the Christians who were skilled in the exigencies of European-run life either paid bribes or refused point blank to go on the pretext they belonged to the mission.<sup>2</sup> Soon so many intermediaries were profiting there were no Christians going to Kisenyi at all and insufficient workers.<sup>3</sup> In retaliation, the Resident posted a soldier on the Nyundo road and arrested all able-bodied men on their way to mass. As catechumens began trailing off despondently to Kisenyi attendance at the mission slumped; the protection was gone. As one man put it: 'We do not want to go for corvées at Kisenyi and come to instruction at the same time; one corvée is enough'.<sup>4</sup>

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1. The Higo and Shobyoy, see Nyundo Diary 3 May 1911

2. During the cattle-pest scares, Tutsi bribed askari to allow them free movement of their cattle for watering, see Nyundo Diary 3 May 1911

3. *ibid.* 3 May 1911

4. *ibid.* 5, 28 July 1911



The chiefs took advantage of the tension between Germans and missionaries claiming when they were asked for labourers that they were unable to control the area and that the man to see was the local catechist. Sub-chiefs favourable to the mission were removed and one catechist was reported to have been whipped. Mission prestige took another blow and attendances again fell off. The chiefs proclaiming they were 'the men of the Badatchi' were soon lording it over Bashi immigrants over whom the Banyanduga had formerly no jurisdiction.<sup>1</sup>

At every point in the pyramid groups worked one against the other: nobles, garagu, clan heads, Germans and White Fathers, all competing for the only commodity Rwanda could supply in abundance, the labour of her peasantry. At Zaza the Hutu came to the door of the mission to complain when they thought the missionaries were siding with the chiefs;<sup>2</sup> the Nyundo Fathers spoke of being asked to kukiza, save the Hutu from predatory Tutsi.<sup>3</sup> But in the north if the missionaries would not protect them, the Hutu were ready to protect themselves. The priests spoke of a 'spirit of independence' and even the Germans admired the way the Kiga worked the land.<sup>4</sup> The northerners knew the

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1. Nyundo Diary 1, 8, 20, 29 August 1911

2. Zaza Diary 20 February 1910

3. Nyundo Diary 1 April 1911

4. Chroniques Trimestrielles No. 147 March 1908, 234.

'Esprit frondeur' was a common expression as independence was not a Catholic virtue, c.f. the Save Hutu 'hypnotised' by Tutsi authority, *ibid.* No. 114 March 1905, 144

wealth of a fertile soil and were not alienated by years of feudal rule; they were ready, given the leadership, to make their own history.<sup>1</sup>

Father Huntzinger could justify the martial spirit of his chrétienté on the grounds that German policy and Hutu pressure left no alternative to a third force, a Christian warrior band. Whenever he complied with his superiors' directives and showed the slightest sign of weakness, Hutu attendance decreased. As Kandt said, everybody knew that a gentleman supports his garagu; how could the Fathers do otherwise ?

Although the 1910 Brussels frontier agreement had little immediate effect on Musinga - he was collecting ikoro from the British side in 1911 - its long term effects were detrimental to his interests.<sup>2</sup> The establishment of a British post at Kumba, and the activities of their highly 'efficient' Ganda agents, began to turn the Nyabingi mediums against the Europeans. As the Ganda were rounding up dissident mediums and the delimitation commission dividing Ndorwa into two, the newly escaped Muhumusa arrived in Kigezi.<sup>3</sup> The 'Queen of Ndorwa', profiting from the

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1. This is the main theme of Martin Chanock's 'The Political Economy of Independent Agriculture in Colonial Malawi: the Great War to the Great Depression' Malawi Journal of Social Sciences Vol.I 1972, 113-129
  2. Nyundo Diary 29 September 1911
  3. Ssebalijja Y. 'Memories of Rukiga and other places' in A History of Kigezi 181-183



fame of her escape and claiming supernatural powers from Nyabingi, quickly drew crowds of Kiga.<sup>1</sup> The frontier divided only colonial officials and Muhumusa was able to use it to advantage; on one occasion she slipped away from a British patrol that assumed she was a German protégé.<sup>2</sup> After three months she had formed a small army which swept through southern Ndorwa attacking the delimitation commission agents.

The Nyabingi movement whose focus now shifted to German territory was less an organised religious system than a fragmented congerie of mediums having in common only claims to supernatural powers through spirit possession. Itinerant ababyakurutsa used to enter Rwanda from Mfumbiro and were considered to be intermediaries for Biheko, a spirit concerned with fertility and crops and identified with Nyabingi.<sup>3</sup> Women with difficulties in conceiving would kusanga umubyukurutsa, bearing gifts. The Biheko medium would asperge the woman with water and herbs while in a trance; those with poor crops would be given peas said to yield 'a magnificent harvest'.<sup>4</sup> Pastoral interests as well were exploited. Muhumusa claimed that if she could find a royal Hinda drum, cows would be raised from the ground; it was a distant appeal for a restoration of the Ndorwa monarchy, a recurrent theme in Nyabingi outbreaks.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Hopkins The Nyabingi Cult 268-273

2. Ssebalijja Memories of Rukiga 182-183

3. Nyundo Diary 2 April 1911; Mibirisi Diary 2 July 1916.

4. *ibid.*; Freedman 'Ritual and History' 171-174

5. Denoon A History of Kigezi 213-216

With British Ndorwa closed to Muhumusa she began making contacts with Hutu leaders in northern Rwanda. By November 1911 all the region was in a state bordering on uprising. Lukara and the Twa Basebya had formed an alliance in June and the latter became Muhumusa's main military commander.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile the Yoka clan had risen in revolt against the Banyanduga.<sup>2</sup> Christians around Nyundo dared not leave their hills for fear of attack by followers of Nyina ku Humusa.<sup>3</sup> The priestess was captured on September 29th. 1911 having turned the leaders of the Sigi clan against her and having incurred the disfavour of at least one important Iyangombe medium.<sup>4</sup> Her removal to prison in Kampala did nothing to calm the region; it was quickly claimed that one of her sons, Ndungutse, had escaped and that he would continue the fight against the Europeans.<sup>5</sup>

At one time or another, both Basebya and Lukara had approached the Fathers in the north seeking an alliance, but had been refused.<sup>6</sup> So there was no alternative to the Nyabingi mediums to provide religious legitimation for a rising. The mythology of resistance, the stories of

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1. Rwaza Diary 11 June 1911; Louis Ruanda-Urundi 153-155

2. The clan head, Minane, was being pursued by the Tutsi, Iwangeyo, for some time, see Rwaza Diary 7 September 1911

3. Nyundo Diary 12 November 1911

4. Denoon A History of Kigezi 214

5. Rwaza Diary November 1911

6. Father Superior Rwaza to Kandt 19 April 1908 W.F.A.R.;

Rwaza Diary 18 September 1904



Bilegeya and of shamanistic powers from Nyabingi, were always at hand; leaders rose up at intervals, moulded the ideology to cement alliances between the Twa and Hutu clans, and were themselves moulded by the demands of their followers. Ndungutse was one of many; he rose to power at the end of 1911 largely because of an exceptional ability to respond to the disparate demands of the different northern groups, which included the local Tutsi.

The Rwaza Fathers made a point of announcing that Muhumusa had been captured, but the Hutu immediately switched their allegiance to Ndungutse.<sup>1</sup> For some, he was the new king of Rwanda, a child of the murdered mwami, Rutalindwa, and a descendant of Rwabugiri; for others, he was the kisonga, the minister who heralded the imminent arrival of a young girl without breasts, the rejected of Rwanda, the Queen of Ndorwa, Nyabingi.<sup>2</sup> It was both a cry against the invasion of Banyanduga and the new demands of the Europeans.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Kandt to Father-Superior Rwaza 7 November 1911 WFA

2. Rapports annuels 1911-1912, 411; Louis Ruanda-Urundi 154

3. On both these the Fathers were to some degree sympathetic to the northerners. Fathers Dufays and Barthélemy knew the Twa well and consulted with them, see Dufays. Pages d'Épopée 58-62; Mecklenburg Ins: Innerste Afrika 221  
Also: 'It is probable that the Bahutu have not seen the last of their miseries. It is Mr. Kandt's policy to govern solely through the Tutsi...The new burdens will not supercede the old, rather only add to them, and the Tutsi will not fail to take advantage of the new source of profit', see Nyundo Diary 29 August 1911

To listen to the pagans on this, the king is a sort of Messiah according to their fashion. First of all he is invulnerable. No-one will be able to kill him. The Europeans' bullets will have no effect on him; what is more he will catch them in flight and change them to water in his hands ...Furthermore, this marvellous king has the power to kuloga, to cast a spell at a distance and so bewitch his enemies. The main reason for his coming is to chase out the Europeans from the country.<sup>1</sup>

But if Ndungutse did use the powerful symbols of the saviour king, the sorcerer whose power overcame even western technology,<sup>2</sup> his grasp of political realities was no less astute for this. His initial response to hopes for a European route was nil and he tried hard to gain the White Fathers' support. There were 1,500 baptised Christians and 900 catechumens at Rwaza, and at Nyundo the figures were 2,300 and 2,100, mostly young men aged between twelve and thirty, a powerful army.<sup>3</sup> In February he began

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1. Nyundo Diary 2 February 1912

2. Since water was almost universally conceived of as the 'ground-substance' of spiritual force, and because technology was usually seen as a 'spiritual' power over matter, the bullets to water theme was essentially a belief that a sorcerer could reduce a spiritual power to its ground-state i.e. reverse the process that 'empowered' Europeans. Kingship was the pre-colonial expression of maximal power, technology that of the colonial period; Ndungutse was felt to control both.

3. Baptismal Records Rwaza Mission; Rapports annuels 1911-1912



circulating the story that the White Fathers were his maternal uncles, a claim that did not disturb his patrilineal descent in the royal line but advanced the missionaries as an alternative to his alleged mother, Muhumusa, and as an alternative authority.<sup>1</sup> Talk of an attack on Rwaza mission faded away; everyone was discussing the possibility that the Fathers' flagging opposition to the Banyanduga might be revived by this son of a deposed mwami.<sup>2</sup>

Ndungutse's claims to the Rwandan throne seem to have gained force as he moved south. His first major attacks on Tutsi took place around Rulindo Mission in the province of Busigi. Proclaiming that the Hutu would henceforth be free from Tutsi exactions, he systematically destroyed the huts of Tsobe clan Tutsi.<sup>3</sup>

From Ruhanga's back (sic) the Father was able to verify with his own eyes the ruins left among the Batsove (Tsove) by the people from Rulindo on Ndungutse's instigation. There was nothing left, neither cows, nor Tutsi nor huts save those of the Hutu faithfully spared on Ndungutse's instructions.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Rwaza Diary January, 6 February 1912. It is interesting to compare this relationship with that given the Europeans by the Mwari cult medium in the Matopo Hills of Rhodesia i.e. 'sister's sons', an inferior but friendly joking relationship, see Daneel J.M. The God of the Matopo Hills Hague 1970, 84.

2. Rwaza Diary 6 February 1912    3. The clan of the abiru.

4. ibid. 20 February 1912

The stories now grew in imagination; he had only to extend his spear to set huts ablaze. When Father Durand at Rulindo accepted a cow from him as a gift, it was said that the royal calabashes had been placed in the custody of the mission.<sup>1</sup>

The mwami appears to have been inordinately disturbed by the news of Ndungutse's progress. He consulted the court diviners who told him that it was Rutalindwa's brothers, murdered after the coup, whose spirits were stirring up trouble in the land, thus projecting the king's angst into the public domain where it might be treated by ritual.<sup>2</sup> Massive ceremonies of appeasement were organised; for a day and a night the mwami and the Queen Mother lay bound with lianes to a bed under which were foot-long statues of the royal couple. The lianes were cut in the morning and placed with the statues in a basket that was tied to the neck of a cow. The animal was solemnly led in procession to the place of sacrifice where it was hacked to death. Musinga stood on the side of the carcass while a diviner dowsed him with blood proclaiming the while that he was 'wounding the king'.<sup>3</sup> After washing, the mwami then descended into a deep pit and later emerged following a young

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1. Rwaza Diary 8, 10-11 February 1912

2. In the second half of June there were other annual ceremonies for the veneration of Nyiginya lineage spirits, and also more elaborate rituals, igihatsi, for deceased relatives of the mwami.

3. De Lacger Ruanda 224-225



bullock. In a subsidiary ritual the royal couple imitated the burning of Rutalindwa by standing in a hut that was set alight and then escaping through the back.<sup>1</sup> The cycle was an extraordinary cathartic re-enactment of Musinga's guilt-laden assumption of power; the victors became victims and the public witnessed the regeneration of the Rwandan kingship.

The Germans, thinking they had but another example of Hutu 'insubordination' to contend with,<sup>2</sup> and perhaps hoping that Ndungutse would return to British territory, were dilatory in their response. Kandt was away and his substitute Gudovius was loath to take responsibility for another major expedition. The result was that a mere police-officer and fifteen askari were sent to stop Ndungutse's triumphal march towards Kigali. The Tutsi read the warning signs more accurately; Nyindo arrived at Rwaza mission on February 15th. 1912 on the way to summon his ngabo.<sup>3</sup> Within days, regiments of two thousand men were heading for Rulindo and the Mulera plain only to be turned

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1. De Iacger Ruanda 225-226

2. The movement was much more of a regional revolt than a simple clash between Hutu and Tutsi. Oscar Baumann misunderstood the situation in northern Burundi in just the same way and Europeans were prone to simplistic ethnic analyses, see Chrétien J.P. 'Le passage de l'expédition Oscar Baumann au Burundi (Septembre - Octobre 1892) Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines Vol.VIII No.29 1968, 72-76

3. Rwaza Diary/ 15 February 1912; Louis Ruanda-Urundi 155-156

back by Gudovius' cautious police-man.<sup>1</sup>

The policy of wait-and-see proved disastrous. Ndungutse used his extra time well, manipulating to the full the different grievances in the north. In Bushiru, Buhoma and Kibali provinces, the abahinza and Tutsi of long standing were roused by promises that the Banyanduga would be driven out.<sup>2</sup> The Fathers learnt that a royal drum-maker had sent Ndungutse a drum; he was now carried on a litter and had a bodyguard of thirty men. In Bumbogo and Buliza, he seems to have emphasised his royal claims, and soon swung most of the northern provinces behind him.<sup>3</sup>

Gudovius had a full-scale civil war on his hands by the beginning of April, and the White Fathers appeared far from certain of the outcome. Ndungutse had a hard core of Twa mercenaries and could count on Lukara's men; he had support from the Yoka and from the conservative Tutsi diviners of Bushiru and Buhoma.<sup>4</sup> The umuhinza of Kibali was already staging his own local rising.<sup>5</sup> The

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1. Rwaza Diary 21 February 1912; Des Forges Rwanda under Musiinga 185-191, provides an excellent account of the antecedents to the Germans' later raid

2. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 155, 155 n.7

3. Rwaza Diary 26 February 1912

4. Gudovius to Fathers-Superior of mission stations 8 April 1912 Dossier 112 bis: WFA; Rwaza Diary 22 February 1912; Rapports annuels 1911-1912, 413

5. This was Mwijuka, see Dufays F. & De Moor V. Au Kinyaga Les Enchainés Paris: 1938, 39



movement was more a temporary alliance of dissident groups than a supra-clan army, but it represented the most serious challenge to Musinga since the first shaky years of his reign. The excited northern missionaries saw it as a Hutu 'revolution' and shared the people's doubts about the legitimacy of Musinga's rule.

Their rights over their property, their fields and their cattle had been done away with for the benefit of a prince, thrust aside at birth by his father, and reared by a Muhutu on the Burundi border.<sup>1</sup>

But Ndungutse was far less the leader of a revolution than of a legitimist rebellion which had become intertwined with a wide range of regional and peasant discontent.

The vacillation and uncertainty was abruptly brought to an end on February 27th. 1912 when a party of two askari, two house-servants and three Christian oarsmen were killed on Lake Bulera on their way to join a German officer. The Hutu responsible was not among Ndungutse's close followers, but it was enough to convince Gudovius that the situation had got out of hand.<sup>2</sup> On April 8th. a Verhängung von Kriegszustand was declared; the missionaries were pointedly warned that no Christians would be attacked unless they

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1. Dufays Pages d'Épopée 75

2. This was Banzi who like Sheja, umuhinza of Bugarura, seems to have been in revolt without any connection with Ndungutse, see Rapports annuels 1911-1912, 410-412; Dufays & Moor Au Kinyaga 39

joined the ranks of the rebels or gave them succour.<sup>1</sup> By this time Ndungutse had followers within five hours march of the Nyabarongo.<sup>2</sup>

But the rebel leader had badly misjudged the Fathers. He had sent them presents at almost monthly intervals and, on the third occasion, offered them a pledge not to attack them nor side with enemies of the mission. At their request, as an earnest of his intentions, he even handed over the unsuspecting Lukara to the German garrison at Ruhengeri.<sup>3</sup> Loupias' assassin was brought in exactly one day before Gudovius set out from Kigali with another officer, sixty askari and thirty police, heading an army of almost three thousand Tutsi provided by the king, to smash Ndungutse's troops.<sup>4</sup> The Fathers ordered their flock to refuse the rebels support and gave the Germans valuable information about the disposition of the Twa.<sup>5</sup> The Nyundo missionaries took the precaution of confiscating their parishoners' spears.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Gudovius to Fathers-Superior 8 April 1912

2. The region of Rulindo mission, Bumbogo and Buliza, was solidly pro-Ndungutse, see Classe to Livinhac 25 November 1912, 095319 WFA; Louis Ruanda-Urundi 155

3. Rapports annuels 1911-1912, 412

4. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 156.

5. Dufays to Gudovius ? April 1912 Dossier 203A IRU 6692 AA; Rwaza Diary 24 February 1912

6. Lecoindre 'Raisons qui ont nui'; Indrumm to Delmas 9 December 1911 C.O. makes it plain that the Germans would certainly have attacked Christians suspected of complicity.



When brought face to face with the implications of their policy in the north, the northern missionaries had drawn back. From concrete historical experience they saw revolutionary movements as detrimental to the institution they represented. The availability of an alternative religious legitimation, the Nyabingi cult, had reduced Christian participation in the rising to nothing. Had the revolt been led by 'Cristeros', as in the 1927 rising in Mexico, the story might have been different;<sup>1</sup> indeed it was to be different in the 1950s.

The Germans broke the Ndungutse rebellion on April 13th, leaving its leader presumed dead in a morass of slaughter, arson and pillage.<sup>2</sup> The German troops were only the vanguard for the Banyanduga who swept through Bumbogo, Kibali and Buhoma burning and looting;<sup>3</sup> scores of women were captured and sent back as concubines for the nobles of the court. Thus behind the Mausers, the mwami carried out a traditional raid, and to Imperial punitive measures was added sub-imperial repression.

To make assurances doubly sure, Fathers Delmas and Von Baer led a contingent several thousand strong from Rwaza and Nyundo to attend Lukara's trial.<sup>4</sup> The Rashi

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1.<sup>1</sup> The Mexican Catholic hierarchy approved and blessed this rising.

2.<sup>2</sup> Louis Ruanda-Urundi 156-157

3.<sup>3</sup> Rwaza Diary 17 April, 3 May 1912; Rapports annuels 1911-1912, 413

4.<sup>4</sup> Rapports annuels 1911-1912, 412

leader slipped his chains on the way to the scaffold and stabbed his escort to death before falling under a hail of bullets; his dead body was hanged in public, a grim symbol of the stubbornness of northern resistance and the savagery of German imperialism. He was followed to the grave in May by Basebya, tricked by Rwidegembya's brother Iwabusisi, and shot on sight by the Germans.<sup>1</sup>

Rwaza church rose on the scattered remains of the northerners' aspirations, the last bricks drying in the kilns as the raids died away. Gudovius returned his gun to his holster on May 16th., dismissed his Tutsi cohorts and joined Monsignor Hirth in solemn benediction of the fine new building. The blessing was as much for the policy and perseverance of Father Leon Classe. For the first time since the White Fathers' arrival, in strength, the Tutsi nobility attended a church ceremony; there were twelve chiefs present including a nephew of the king, Nshozamihigo's son, Nyirimbilima. 'Not one of our Christians has suffered', crowed one of the Fathers, 'this has been noted everywhere and our influence has grown correspondingly'.<sup>2</sup>

Even Gudovius seems finally to have recoiled from the brutality that accompanied this Roman holiday; the Fathers were shocked at the indiscriminate killing of women and

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1. Rapports annuels 1911-1912, 413; he was disguised as a trader in order to approach Basebya's camp

2. ibid. 414



children.<sup>1</sup> Government agents colluded to the full in raids, accepting women as abaja, concubines, and sharing the booty. The missionaries, now somewhat ashamed at the company they were keeping, took up the plight of the women as a moral issue to which they might properly give voice; they offered to buy back Ndungutse's chief wife, Nyiraguguze, from the clutches of one of the Germans' interpreters. But the mwami, perhaps fearing a recurrence of Nyabingi mediumship, refused even this concession. Gudovius explained disingenuously to the Fathers that, since her status was that of prisoner-of-war, not slave, she could not be released. The mwami's little anxieties were now afforded the greatest of attention.<sup>2</sup>

However much of a military failure the rising had been, Hutu discontent and the mythopoietic consciousness of the northern peasantry ensured that Ndungutse would not be the last religious leader to threaten the State. Similarly, despite the favourable reaction of the Tutsi to the northern missions' stance, the pragmatic Classe was fitting the events into his equations and finding cause to doubt his earlier calculations. The most ardent of the Tutsiphiles now had reservations. 'However', he alerted Livinhac, 'it seems inevitable that the Tutsi with their rank obstinacy and disdain for the European, their jealous concern to avoid

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1. Rapports annuels 1911-1912, 412; Louis Ruanda-Urundi 157

2. Gudovius to Father-Superior Rwaza 26 June 1912 WFA

all education, will in actual fact be replaced by educated Hutu'.<sup>1</sup> For the less ardent the northern reaction confirmed long held opinions that reforms were needed if the feudal system of Central Rwanda were to be imposed uniformly throughout the country.

One very clear conclusion emerges from this attempt at revolution: the Banyarwanda are tired of the tyrannical yoke which the Batutsi have imposed on them for centuries. The serf in Rwanda is talliable and liable to forced labour at (their chiefs') pleasure. Not a sod of earth, not one tree, not a handful of grass can they claim as their own. The smallest little plot has to be paid for by a lifetime of forced labour and tallage. The circle of small shrubby trees which makes up the enclosure in front of the chief's hut is at the Mututsi's pleasure. The rushes which grow in the waters of the swamp nearby are forbidden fruit for the poor peasant... The Europeans are here: some powerful but pitiless, others compassionate but too weak for their liking.<sup>2</sup>

Both the membership of the Catholic elite and the basic social structure of the Rwandan State were suddenly in question!

The wave of Banyanduga drew back in the dry season of 1912 leaving behind an assortment of ambitious Tutsi like

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1. Classe to Livinhac 25 November 1912

2. Rapports annuels 1911-1912, 428. The writer was right at the heart of the Christian dilemma of the Cross or the Sword.



prickly fish in rock pools. The important nobles withdrew to Nyanza leaving their garagu to fight out ownership of their newly acquired fiefs.<sup>1</sup> The net result of the rebellion was therefore that many Hutu originally free of nobles' exactions, or who had lived under compliant chiefs who counted little and asked little, now fell into the orbit of unscrupulous 'carpetbaggers' who tried to take over as many hills as possible.<sup>2</sup>

Again, the White Fathers dutifully spread the news of Ndungutse's death for the Germans.<sup>3</sup> Their reward for exemplary service to the Imperial cause was that Dr. Kandt warmed to them on his return and acted more as their spokesman at court. 'I know that there was not a single Christian in Mulera found in Ndungutse's camp', he informed the mwami. 'Not a single Christian bore him gifts. They are Nshozamihigo's men in Bukonja'.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Classe to Livinhac 25 November 1912: 'Après avoir construits leurs résidences, ces chefs, voyant les soldats se retirer, ont cru prudent de ne pas pousser plus loin l'occupation de leurs nouveaux fiefs'.
  2. Buisson to Indrumm 30 August 1912: 'Musinga has promised the hill over which the dispute is raging to Sekaganga. Rwabuguri does not want to believe this and roundly refuses to inform himself at court. He states further that he will drive a spear through any Muhutu who dares to submit to Sekaganga. The consequence of this is great confusion amongst the Bahutu'; Indrumm to Father Superior Rulindo 2 September 1912 No.856/I P.1736 Film No.168 AA
  3. Schumacher to Kandt 20 November 1912 C.O.
  4. Kandt to Musinga 23 October 1912 Trans. Swahili C.O.

The northern Fathers were powerful patrons again so Nyundo and Rwaza thrived.<sup>1</sup> The Zaza missionaries, most affected by trade with Tanganyika, suffered heavy losses as Hutu Christians left for Bukoba; at Save and Kabgayi the rapprochement with the Tutsi continued and numbers increased.<sup>2</sup> Only at Rulindo where the Hutu were feeling the weight of newly arrived Banyanduga did the mission policy not pay off. Father Buisson remarked on 'a certain distrust in their relations with the missionaries' and credited it to frustrated hopes and the failure of the 'revolution which almost dethroned Musinga and kicked out the Tutsi'.<sup>3</sup>

Yet the north was far from subdued; both Kibali and Bushiru provinces remained in revolt led by their abahinza.<sup>4</sup> A new Protestant station had begun at Rubengera and a new White Fathers' northern station at Murunda south of Nyundo had finally got off the ground.<sup>5</sup> Kandt who could now have no doubts about the value of missions in the pacification of the north was pressing for another Catholic

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1. Classe to Livinhac 25 November 1912

2. Zaza Diary 10 January 1912; Rapports annuels 1911-1912, 400, 418

3. Rapports annuels 1912-1913, 445

4. In Bushiru it was the Gesera clan under Nyamakwa, and in Kibali, Mwijuka, leading the troubles, see Schumacher to Kandt 20 November 1912; Wintgens to Father-Superior Rwaza 9 February 1914 Dossier 112 bis WFAR; Rwaza Diary 24 May 1913; Louis Ruanda-Urundi 157

5. Roehl to Resident 30 January 1912 198A IRU 6692 AA; Rapports annuels 1912-1913, 453



station in Bushirù province. Musinga had been given a demonstration that his throne rested on German force of arms and had to suffer the ignominy of manifest weakness. He now simply took orders. On trying to oppose Kandt's plans for Rambura mission, he found his objections roughly brushed aside.

But I again repeat to you, the Bazungu only want to teach people the word of God. They have received permission from Emperor Wilhelm to build anywhere in the land. We of the State cannot refuse since this is the law of the Kaiser, nor do we want to refuse since we are also Christians. Now, I hear that you, the Sultan, refuse to allow this building. You want the people to think that you have the honour of being Emperor Wilhelm. But you are not.<sup>1</sup>

But within the week Dr. Kandt had dispatched a letter to Monsignor Hirth upbraiding him for having built a school in Bukonja without his permission.<sup>2</sup> German imperialism was cracking the whip.

The behaviour of the Banyanduga confirmed Father Buisson's dictum that 'to govern for our chiefs always means taking the maximum advantage of a region'.<sup>3</sup> If the Tutsi were to maintain their position as ruling class, the logic of the situation demanded what the missionaries liked to call 'une évolution d'esprit'.<sup>4</sup> To realise the dreams of

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1. Kandt to Musinga 23 October 1912 \_

2. Kandt to Hirth 30 October 1912 C.O.

3. Rapports annuels 1912-1913, 445

4. *ibid.*

an African 'Charlemagne' reforms were needed.<sup>1</sup> Kandt, fresh from Social Democrat victories in the Reichstag, was prepared for progress. A special training school for chiefs was no new idea for him and, by the end of 1912, it was being considered more seriously than ever before by the Fathers. The reign of terror was to be cured with the balm of education.

The Catholics' renewed interest in education was dictated by more than the demands of evangelisation and abstract interest in social improvement. During the Governor's stormy visit in 1911, Father Classe had been threatened with the prospect of an invasion of Swahili-speaking teachers from Tanga training school who were to be placed with leading nobles.<sup>2</sup> There were three post-primary institutions in German East Africa, along the coast at Dar-es-Salaam, Bagamoyo and Tanga; between 1912 and 1913 they turned out 192 Africans capable of taking up positions in Government service.<sup>3</sup> According to Bishop Spreiter, Christians attending these schools were beaten and ridiculed until they converted to Islam.<sup>4</sup> Schnee had been waving the red rag of militant Islam at Classe, and the low standards of Catholic education meant that there was no reply to the challenge.

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1. Schumacher P. 'Échos du Kivu' Missions d'Afrique 1913, 95.

2. Classe to Livinhac 28 April 1911, 095226 W.F.A.R.

3. Iliffe Tanganyika under German Rule 182.

4. Spreiter to Gouvernement 31 July 1912 P.1736 Film No.168



Government service and the towns had proved to be the milieux most susceptible to the spread of Islam. During the first decade of the twentieth century, the missions had become increasingly aware of the renewed vitality of Islam and the way German colonialism was aiding it.<sup>1</sup> In Rwanda, Kandt had already opened the floodgates to large numbers of muslim traders, and was pressing on with the construction of Kigali and Kisenyi townships where government schools were planned. Both Lutherans and Catholics feared that they might be witnessing an inadvertent propagation of Islam through trade, schools and the ranks of public services, police and akidas.<sup>2</sup> The fears were ill-founded. Governor Schnee was quite as anxious about propaganda amongst government agents and the spread of militant brotherhoods.<sup>3</sup>

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1. The insistence of the Zentrum Party in 1900 on the formation of a muslim-free elite through Christian schools was the beginning of the issue in East Africa. It stayed in the mission and colonial press; a 'Mohammedan seminar' was founded in Potsdam in 1909 three years after the Congress of 'Islamic missions' in Cairo. In 1912 a systematic survey of the spread of Islam in German East Africa was carried out and the 'threat' was fully heeded by government. Personal Communication from Lorne Iargon on the documentation on the survey in the Potsdam Archives; Becker C.H. 'Ist der Islam eine Gefahr für unsere Kolonien' Koloniale Rundschau 1909, 266-293; Mirbt Mission und Kolonialpolitik 203-219; Austen Northwest Tanzania 69-70
  2. Roehl to Classe 27 May 1912 C.O.; an appeal for a common front against the muslim menace
  3. Confidential circular No.1024 28 September 1912 P.1736 AA



He left Classe in no doubt that the administration would favour Christian missions as an antidote to Islamic militancy;<sup>1</sup> his second visit to Rwanda in 1913 was an exercise in bonhomie with the Fathers much praised for having added 'labora to ora'.<sup>2</sup> Rechenberg had bequeathed him a muslim elite, and he seems to have vacillated between respect for it and heeding the German Colonial Society's warning that the spread of Islam was 'a political and cultural threat'.<sup>3</sup>

The Catholics' difficulty was that their school system was not designed as a generator of educated government officials. Most pupils at station schools needed some financial inducement to keep them there.<sup>4</sup> As Father Schumacher delicately pointed out in his school report, 'with similar methods', the Hutu could reach the same standards as European children. He did not have to add that conditions were so primitive that few ever did.<sup>5</sup> The Catholic school

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1. Classe to Hirth 1 November 1913: 'Le Gouvernement a décidément ordre de favoriser un peu les Missions pour arrêter du même coup les progrès de l'Islam' Dossier 111  
WFAR

2. Deutsches Kolonialblatt 1 September 1913 in de Lager  
Ruanda 436

3. Iliffe Tanganyika under German Rule 199.

4. 'Schulbesuch wird wie sonstige Arbeitsleistung angesehen und muss von der Mission vergütet werden; ohne Vergütung wäre kein Schüler zu haben...' School Report for 1911; Classe 'Carte de Visite' for 1912 recommends that children should be paid only by way of giving them afternoon work.

5. Schumacher School Report 1911 C.O.



in Nyanza had an average of 43 ntore including one or two sons of minor nobility; most were the offspring of unions between chiefs and their Hutu abaja so excluded from the top chieftancies.<sup>1</sup> The mwami himself worked hard sometimes even taking the whip to truants and laggards; he could speak tolerable Swahili but his writing was still poor.<sup>2</sup>

Catholic fears of Islam were shared by the court, and the king's sporadic forays into the alphabet were stimulated by the prospect of spending half the year in the muslim environment of Kigali under Kandt's tuition. Tutsi were slowly being drawn into the muslim dominated trade system; Lwabusisi, Rwidegembya's brother, paid for cloth and goods by loaning his ubuletwa labourers to carry skins to Bukoba.<sup>3</sup> 'We are not like the muslims who insult the chiefs calling them mshenzi', Kandt would wheedle the king when extolling Christian virtues.<sup>4</sup> And indeed Monsignor Hirth did ban the use of mshenzi in his mission, a term that had become commonplace in Christian circles to describe pejoratively any pagan.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Kandt to Gouvernement 1 June 1912 Annual Report for 1911 AA; Rapports annuels 1911-1912, 423
  2. Schumacher 'Échos du Kivu' 95-96; Rapports annuels 1910-1911, 412
  3. Classe to Simon 21 October 1933 C.O. ( a pre-war reference)
  4. Kandt to Musinga 23 October 1912
  5. The term utazi ibya mungu, 'not knowing the things of God', was used instead, see Classe to confrères 10 December 1913 Dossier 112 WEAR

Rwandans appear to have had a remarkable aversion to Islam; from the banning of Rimaliza in the nineteenth century, it seems that the court was aware of the activities of muslim agents on the borders, in Burundi and northwest Tanganyika, and amongst the Luba and Ganda. Kandt's new school in Kigali had the suprising effect of doubling the number of pupils in Nyanza Catholic school over the period 1912-1913. Musinga went to the point of asking the Fathers to build a new school near Ruhengeri for his nephew Nyirimbilima, who lived dangerously near Kigali; there were soon twenty Tutsi pupils in attendance all learning Swahili.<sup>1</sup> When another government school started in Shangugu, the Tutsi promptly requested Catholic teachers from nearby Mibirisi mission.<sup>2</sup>

Now that good Tutsi pupils were being trained for government service, the mwami tried to control them by ubuhake arrangements; clever pupils were given cows and Wilhelmi Mbonyangabo, 'guten Willens' his secretary accredited to him by the Residence,<sup>3</sup> received part of a hill, the first political appointment of a Christian by the court.<sup>4</sup> After Kandt had begun introducing a new experimental class of government chiefs, provided with fields entirely for the

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1. Rwaza Diary 19 April 1913; Rapports annuels 1912-1913, 437

2. The wave of government school building in 1912-1913 also prompted a second Catholic school to begin based on Save, see Musinga to Lecoindre 27 May 1914 C.O.; Mibirisi Diary 10, 25 March 1914

3. Kandt to Gouvernement 1 June 1912 Annual Report for 1911 AA

4. Rapports annuels 1912-1913, 423



production of ikoro for Nyanza, the king appointed two more Christians to large hills and gave them several hundred Hutu.<sup>1</sup> For the mwami, Kandt's reform of the ikoro system simply provided him with a new style of ibikingi to hand out; for the Resident, the new chiefs were forerunners of a more streamlined system of government tax collection.

The first Imperial head tax was eventually collected in June 1914.<sup>2</sup> Both Tutsi and missionaries had to come to terms with increased commerce and an administration that was beginning to make itself felt in daily life. The Zaza Fathers gave money to selected Christians to help them get started in competition with Indians and Muslims.<sup>3</sup> The Lutherans opened a shop in Shangugu aided by the German Society for Missionary Commerce; there were branches in Nyanza and Kigali where goods were exchanged for skins, furs and ivory.<sup>4</sup> As new markets opened and the old grew in

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1. Rapports annuels 1912-1913, 423; Louis Ruanda-Urundi 152
  2. There had been earlier minor taxation; for example, the White Fathers' guns were taxed at the rate of two roupies per annum, see Hirth to confrères 14 June 1906 CR. The Fathers paid an annual station tax of thirty roupies per annum per mission, see von Stuemmer to Father Superior Rwaza 21 September 1909 Dossier 112 bis WFA. From 1910 a hut tax was levied in Kisenyi, Kigali and Shangui, see Louis Ruanda-Urundi 159 n.6
  3. Gifts of 20-30 roupies, see Zaza Diary 29 May 1914
  4. Mibirisi Diary 20 February 1914; Johanssen Kleine Anfänge 249-252: the handelsmission was designed to combat the spread of Islam through trade.

importance, the Tutsi first opposed them, then tried to tax them.<sup>1</sup> The mwami himself finally asked the White Fathers to build him a shop in Nyanza; it was completed by a Brother in March 1914.<sup>2</sup>

Despite these changes, life around the mission stations remained much the same in the last days of German rule. Zaza was as troublesome as ever, the station most touched by trade through Gisaka and most sensitive to rumour. Christians came in to sleep at the mission during the Governor's 1913 visit since the story gained ground that all Europeans were to be killed.<sup>3</sup> When Christians began buying coffee seeds, it was said that the Fathers were going to confiscate all the land for coffee plantations.<sup>4</sup> To solve the problem of mission land, the missionaries finally handed over all land owned by mission Hutu outside their grounds, and claimed all plots on station property as theirs. Sub-chiefs living on the grounds were required to notify the missionaries in the presence of two heads of imiryango whenever they assigned a plot.<sup>5</sup> Hutu continued to sell their ubuhake cattle but the missionaries avoided the subsequent litigation when Musinga began sending special envoys from<sup>6</sup>

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1. Save Diary 25 August 1912; Nyundo Diary 18 February 1913

2. Save Diary 7 March 1914

3. Zaza Diary March 1913; Rapports annuels 1912-1913, 424-426

4. Zaza Diary 7 December 1913, 21 May 1914

5. Zaza Diary January 1913

6. ibid. 10 December 1913



Nyanza to judge this type of case. Low brideprice now resulted in marital instability amongst Catholics, while trade and portorage kept attendances at the catechumenate low.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the mwami, who profited handsomely from the rise of trade, the missionaries could only deplore developments that limited their success.<sup>2</sup>

Although the northern stations prospered, almost envied by others, the change in fortunes did nothing to heal the rift that had grown up amongst the Rwanda missionaries. Monsignor Hirth informed them that Father Classe would be his replacement and went into virtual retreat in March 1913.<sup>3</sup> Within a month, Classe was circularising his views on the Hutu-Tutsi conflict. It was a broadside that had been in preparation several years; the Fathers were not to meddle in the chiefs' affairs nor in cases between catechumens, Christians and chiefs.

This way of acting increases more and more Government suspicions of the missionaries whom are regularly presented as French and following a policy contrary to their own; the Government wishes the support of the chiefs, to govern and colonise through them; it proclaims their authority to be inviolable, even necessary. Thus it is natural that the Government turns to the Protestants who set themselves up as German masters and wish

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1. Rapports annuels 1912-1913, 412, 424

2. Roussez 'Carte de Visite' for Zaza 1913 CR; Classe to Livinhac 25 November 1912

3. Hirth to confrères 17 March 1913 WFA

above all else, as they never cease writing, to reach the Tutsi and to be their missionaries...The Government therefore reproaches us with, at least, working to form an anti-government party; if that were true we would be working against ourselves, against God by whom we have been sent, and so forming an anti-Catholic party; I will go no further and say that it is our duty to prepare for the conversion of the chiefs.<sup>1</sup>

During Classe's tour of the northern missions, the Fathers might have been being deliberately provocative. The Rwaza Fathers were in another scrape with the Germans over a Christian's refusal to transport wood to Ruhengeri and disobedience to the king's man.<sup>2</sup> In a major reshuffle of personnel to ease matters, Father Huntzinger was transferred to Save mission where he gaily proceeded to shoot the goats of catechumens who missed their lessons.<sup>3</sup> The doughty Father Schumacher went north; he was stunned by the state of affairs at Nyundo. With Monsignor Hirth incarcerated in the confessional from 8 a.m. until 11.45 a.m. and from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. daily, the Christians flocked to show Father Schumacher their bruises from previous missionaries. 'Here, it is a question of undoing and

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1. Classe to confrères: 17 April 1913. He was backed up by Father Roussez, see 'Carte de Visite' 27 March - 7 April 1913 for Kabgayi CR.
  2. Wintgens to Father-Superior Rwaza 24 December 1913, 15 January 1914 WFA
  3. Father Roussez during his 1915 visitation banned



rebuilding nothing less than the entire spirit of the Christians and the catechumens', he wrote to Livinhac. The new Superior was considered soft-hearted; many Christians drifted away until he obliged fifty public penitents to attend church daily for a month; some were guilty of rape. 'Our brigands of catechists in the outstations have formed brigand catechumens of whom not a single one could be baptised.' In one outstation they put their medals round their dogs' necks and called them by their names', he told the Mother-House. Schumacher characteristically put down the debacle to inadequate pastoral theology in Europe before the Fathers' arrival in Rwanda.<sup>1</sup> Men like Huntzinger, however, were quite impossible and had achieved the feat of being persona non grata even amongst his own Christians.<sup>2</sup>

Yet the enemy within was less an impulse for improvement than the enemy without. By 1914, the Protestants had stations at Rukira, Kigali, Kirinda, Remera, Rubengera and Dzinga.<sup>3</sup> Their schools, though fewer in number, were better

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the taking out of guns from stations: 'Cette arme n'est pas faite pour donner aux indigènes la juste idée qu'ils doivent avoir de nous', 'Carte de Visite' 10-20 April 1915 Save mission CR. Fathers Pouget and Dufays went back to Europe in the reshuffle and Rambura was not properly staffed.

1. Schumacher to Livinhac 7 December 1913; Schumacher to Roussez 15 March 1914. Dossier 112 WFAR

2. Classe to Hirth 28 September 1913 Dossier 111 WFAR

3. Contracts signed for Rubengera on July 15, and for Remera on September 14, 1912 P.1735 Film No.167 AA

equipped and taught to a higher standard.<sup>1</sup> Rubengera was shortly to be staffed by graduates of Tanga to become a Normal School.<sup>2</sup> 'Error will soon establish its schools everywhere', Classe had forecast in 1912, 'and we cannot always accept being backward and ignorant'.<sup>3</sup> The Catholics referred to the Lutherans as the 'religion of the Government' and were anxious whenever the son of a noble visited their stations. In reality, the Protestants were having little success in conversion and their better schooling gave no short-term advantage.<sup>4</sup>

The map of Catholic mission effort after a decade of evangelisation in Rwanda was unlike that of countries such as Malawi and Zambia where Protestant competition had been genuinely intense. Instead of rambling networks of chapel-schools and prayer-houses, outstations and catechists, the Rwanda mission was made up of a number of nuclei with no Christians outside a three hour radius around a station.<sup>5</sup> The White Fathers began to take the Protestant expansion seriously after 1912 and the profile began to alter. But it was inhibited from changing quickly; the Germans insisted

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1. Kandt Annual Report for 1912 P.1728 Film No.166 AA

2. Classe to confrères: 'Diffusion du Petit Catéchisme et de la lecture' 20 May 1914 CR.

3. Classe 'Carte de Visite' 1912 CR

4. Classe to confrères 17 April 1913 CR; de Lacger Ruanda 432

5. Classe to Livinhac 30 January 1910, 095218 WFAR



that outstations had a European in residence, and few chiefs were willing to accept a catechist on their hill without a struggle.<sup>1</sup> The only sure way of placing a catechist was as a chief's garagu, a position which limited his freedom of action. Christians at Rwaza preferred not to travel beyond a three-mile radius of the station.<sup>2</sup> As the Catholic counterattack began and outstations and catechists were placed on distant hills, a new wave of opposition to the mission was encountered.<sup>3</sup> For the first time, territorial conflicts, typical of other countries, arose between Lutherans and White Fathers.<sup>4</sup>

The Catholics ability to respond to the double challenge of Protestantism and Islam was greatly limited, in the short term, by Monsignor Hirth's preoccupation with seminary education; the main thrust of education in the vicariate was still towards the formation of a highly specialised indigenous clergy. A couple of straw-thatched hangars with wooden benches and grandly called Nyaruhengeri Minor Seminary was the first stage in the process.<sup>5</sup> The pupils were obliged to converse in Swahili and were taught Latin

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1. Classe to Livinhac 25 November 1912; Rapports annuels 1912-1913, 413-414

2. Rapports annuels 1912-1913, 436

3. Kabgayi Diary 7 March 1914; Nyundo Diary May 1914; Rapports annuels 1911-1912, 396-397; 1912-1913, 414

4. Schumacher to Kandt 17 July 1913 C.O.

5. Rapports annuels 1912-1913, 453

and German, the latter making the institution eligible for a small government subsidy; prizes for fluent German speakers were given by the Resident. A year later, 1913, the first seventeen pupils were moved to Kabgayi to be joined by eighteen from Rubyia; Nyaruhengeri was found to be too unhealthy and the long journey to Rubyia had cut down Rwandan recruitment. With new recruits, a total of seventy-five seminarians started the school year and four went on to studies in theology to form the nucleus of a Major Seminary.<sup>1</sup> The Rubyia seminarians came back speaking good Latin and would sometimes have difficulty containing themselves when the old Fathers used expressions 'which had nothing in common with the language of Cicero'.<sup>2</sup> But the pupils still had their freedom strictly curtailed at Kabgayi and visits from parents and relatives were carefully regulated.<sup>3</sup>

Since so much manpower and money were being expended on the seminaries, the education of Rwanda's 13,000 Hutu Catholics inevitably suffered. A lower percentage than in former years were attending mass<sup>4</sup> and, now, education

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1. Classe to Livinhac 31 July 1918 Dossier 111 WFAR; de Iacger Ruanda 441; Schappi Die Katholische Missionsschule 156, 162

2. Grands Iacs 1952, 11-13

3. Classe to Father Superior Kabgayi 9 February 1914 CR

4. Rapports annuels 1913-1914



had political overtones.

At the present time, education is a necessary and indispensable weapon for the propagation and conservation of the Faith. If, on the pretext that it is difficult, we neglect to assure our catechumens and Christians of its benefits, we are putting them in an obvious state of inferiority in relation to the Protestants and the Government, and we hasten our defeat.<sup>1</sup>

This was Father Classe's corollary to the conclusions drawn from the Ndungutse rising; he intended to have a small Christian elite at hand, Tutsi or otherwise, ready to become government chiefs.<sup>2</sup>

When news spread round in the second week of August 1914 that the 'Badatchi' were at war with the other colonial powers, Rwanda as an object of German economic exploitation was barely one year old.<sup>3</sup> Roupies were still not common currency and the Fathers had to pay their workers in coinage so that they could pay their one rouble tax.<sup>4</sup> A few ambitious Christians had turned to coffee and tobacco cash cropping, but the agricultural wealth of the north was commercially untapped.<sup>5</sup> German 'civilisation' hardly reached

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1. Classe to confrères 20 May 1914 CR

2. Classe to Livinhac 25 November 1912

3. Save Diary 15 August 1914

4. Classe to confrères 5 April 1914 CR

5. Zaza Diary 7 December 1913; 21 May 1914; Rapports annuels 1912-1913, 428-429

Rwanda; like the famous railway line to the Kagera, it petered out in 1915 near Tabora.<sup>1</sup> Imperial rule amounted to the imposition of a tiny German superstructure on the court. Kandt balanced the weakening of Musinga's position, that resulted from European interference, by the stiffening of his askari and the brutal repression of the north. Despite 'tax' chiefs employed to fill Nyanza's granaries without the intervention of nobles, Kandt did not hesitate to bypass the court whenever it suited him; by 1914 he was requesting the Fathers to send all their 'Christian' cases to him at Kigali.<sup>2</sup> Although the Europeans had shorn up the Rwandan State and expanded it in the face of northern dissidence, they eroded the mwami's power by substituting Kigali for Nyanza as the administrative capital, and German askari for Tutsi ngabo as the prime agents of State control. Already chiefs like Iwabusisi were experimenting with new forms of patronage and life-styles.<sup>3</sup> By the end German Indirect Rule had lapsed into Direct Rule with bullying and bluster making up for lack of manpower.

The immediate effect of the war on the bicephalous Rwandan State was to raise the value of stability and hence of the ruling class. Despite an early and successful raid

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1. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 166 n.2

2. Classe to confrères 20 March 1914 CR

3. Mecklenburg, for example, seems to have been quite friendly with 'Bussissi', see Ins. Innerste Afrika 109; similarly it was Iwabusisi who succeeded in capturing Basebya for the Germans, see p.290 n.1



on Idjwi Island in September 1914, the Germans could not hope to hold back an allied army of British and Belgians without the full support of the Tutsi.<sup>1</sup> This was readily forthcoming; the court heard that the Belgians confiscated many cattle, and the mwami hoped to regain his lost territories in the west and north.<sup>2</sup> He sent two fervent letters to Wintgens at the end of 1914 pledging his loyalty to the German cause and his willingness to provide troops.<sup>3</sup> Nyindo, his half-brother in Mfumbiro, immediately rebelled against the British and was supported by German troops in a major raid on Chahafi in January 1915.<sup>4</sup>

The possibilities afforded by the European conflict were exploited to the full in Mfumbiro and around Lake Bunyoni. A number of Nyabingi prophetesses recruited followings by using anti-European propaganda; Katuregye, the son of a priestess, mobilised support from the Twa.<sup>5</sup> As the thrust of Kiga dissidence was now directed against the British, the Germans were happy to keep the pot boiling. A certain Bichubirenga, 'the clouds pass by' - perhaps a

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1. De Lager Ruanda 449

2. Rwabugiri's main military interests lay in expansion to the west so the initial capture of Idjwi must have been very pleasing to Musinga, see Newbury 'Les campagnes de Rwabugiri' 181

3. Musinga to Wintgens 24 September, 9 October 1914 P.1734-  
Film No.165 AA

4. Bisamunyu E.N. 'Baganda agency 1911-1924' in A History of Kigezi 207

5. Rwabihigi D.Z. 'Chief Katuregye: the Man and his times' in A History of Kigezi 150 - 152

reference to the transitory nature of European rule - appeared at Rwaza in December 1915. His emblem was a white sheep and he spoke of times when the Europeans would be driven out; more in the Lyangombe tradition, he seems to have been less threatening to the Banyanduga than former mediums and gained Tutsi support.<sup>1</sup>

This new figurehead, said to be of Hunde extraction, inherited the accumulated wisdom of former risings; he won Nyindo's friendship and tried to convince the Germans at Ruhengeri to back him. His wrath was directed mainly at the White Fathers; Christians at Rwaza were told not to frequent the mission and parents were asked to send their children to him in order 'to vomit up the poison given them by the Whites'.<sup>2</sup> His followers believed that he could bewitch European guns to make them fire only smoke; Captain Wintgens gave him cows and promised him support.<sup>3</sup> In January 1916, he attacked the Belgian post at Chahafi with a force of almost two thousand men but ~~was~~<sup>he</sup> driven off. The days when dissidents looked to the Fathers were gone.

It took time for the outbreak of war to make its impact on the mission. As an international missionary society, the White Fathers owed allegiance in theory to

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1. Both Ruhanga and Luzilampuhe supported him, see Rwaza Diary 3 December 1915, 6 February 1916; Bessel 'Nyabingi' 82; Hopkins The Nyabingi Cult 287

2. Rwaza Diary 9-10 December 1915

3. *ibid.* 12 February 1916.



no one country. Father Classe appealed for charity and put the Fathers on their honour to give loyalty to the German administration. 'No exterior sign' of opposition to the Germans was to be expressed, and under no circumstances were missionaries to voice their personal opinions in front of Rwandans.<sup>1</sup> As in all crises the Church had to freeze into neutrality. But only a few months earlier Father Lecoindre, one of Classe's few allies, had been complaining about the 'Germanic' atmosphere of the country.<sup>2</sup>

Soon money ran out at Bukoba and Mombassa but the priests sent their cheques to Trier to be cashed.<sup>3</sup> All supplies were cut off from September 1914 and the price of cloth began to rise steeply.<sup>4</sup> There were five German Brothers, Mohr, Klein, Leyendecker, Mehan and Steyle immediately eligible for conscription.<sup>5</sup> It was only in April 1915 that all French clergy were asked to move back sixty kilometres towards Tanganyika and, two months later, Fathers Gilli and Canonica were arrested and sent to Tabora for internment after 'Italy's betrayal'.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Classe to confrères 8,9 August 1914 CR

2. Lecoindre to Classe 15 January 1914 Dossier 112 W FAR

3. Classe to confrères 9 August 1914 CR

4. Classe to confrères 2 September 1914 CR

5. Wintgens to Klein 24 October 1914; Wintgens to Resident 27 September 1914 P.1734 Film No.165 AA

6. Wintgens to Hirth 8 April 1915 Dossier 112 bis W FAR; Save. Diary 29 April 1915; Rwaza Diary 8 June 1915; Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 282, 288

Lack of supplies and restriction on the movement of priests began to disrupt the mission's work by the end of 1915; most important, mission employees could no longer be paid.<sup>1</sup> As the allied counter-offensive gained ground the missions took on great strategic importance; Monsignor Hirth had a valuable bargaining counter to trade for the full deployment of missionary personnel whom he could not afford to lose to the war effort. While the Lutherans quickly turned their stations in supply depots, the Catholics negotiated hard to get a number of concessions before they were obliged to follow suit.<sup>2</sup> The Italians were allowed to return as a result, and all missionaries permitted to continue their normal pastoral duties.<sup>3</sup>

By the beginning of 1916, mission work had come to a virtual standstill. Save mission was a key node in the supply lines; the local peasants were all mobilised for portage to Rubengera and the station was ringed with huts.<sup>4</sup> Belgian patrols were intermittently visiting Nyundo mission and, in January 1916, the White Sisters were forced to evacuate to make way for German troops billeted in their house.<sup>5</sup> The Fathers left one month later and the station

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1. Roussez 'Carte de Visite' 22 March-5 April 1915; Classe to confrères 12 August 1914 CR. & Dossier 111 WFAR
  2. Personal Communication from Monsieur Bernard Lugon, Dept. of History, University of Butare, Rwanda
  3. Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 309
  4. Save Diary December 1915
  5. Nyundo Diary 5 June 1915, 6 January 1916



became the Germans' main base for the northwest front.<sup>1</sup> Mibirisi was turned into an ammunition dump; the Fathers at Rwaza were sent to buy beans to provision Ruhengeri camp.<sup>2</sup> The Rwaza schoolmaster was dismissed for lack of funds and very few catechumens now attended the mission.<sup>3</sup> Since the Fathers could no longer afford to pay their pupils to come to school, classrooms emptied;<sup>4</sup> despite the loyalty of catechists sometimes working on half or no pay, their numbers dropped from 119 to 82.<sup>5</sup>

The Hutu bore the brunt of the missions' poverty; those on the Rwaza grounds no longer had to bring inzoga, banana beer, but to provide the missionaries two days work per week for twelve weeks of the year.<sup>6</sup> The Tutsi behaved as usual, using their new-found importance to force an extra day's ubuletwa from the Nduga Hutu, to increase crop dues and introduce ubuletwa to the northern provinces for the first time. Throughout 1915, the Banyanduga tightened their

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1. Nyundo Diary 20 March 1916; Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 295

2. 'Compte Rendu des Séances de Conseil' Rwaza 17 January 1916, loose papers in the possession of the Father Superior Rwaza Mission;

3. 'Compte Rendu des Séances de Conseil' Rwaza 14 February 1916

4. The mission was understaffed by Europeans and Rambura abandoned; Hirth's policy had meant few trained catechists. The situation was therefore critical before the war even.

5. Nothomb Church History 36

6. 'Compte Rendu des Séances de Conseil' Rwaza 24 January 1916. Widows had to give one day's work instead.

hold over regions conquered in the wake of the punitive raids against Ntungutse's followers.

The Hutu equally suffered from the Germans' demands; hundreds were mobilised to provision the troops and several chiefs began asking an additional tax of one hoe on each harvest as compensation.<sup>1</sup> Despite a second round of head tax in the dry season of 1915, one rouble per head of umuryango, peasants were still open to forced labour in Kigali and Kisenyi.<sup>2</sup> Movements like that led by Bichubirenga channelled rising Hutu discontent against the Allied forces. But the idea that the war was going to bring all European rule to an end was widespread and brought panic to some regions.<sup>3</sup>

German-White Father relations began to deteriorate as the Belgians, strengthened by British carriers and arms, began to prepare for their major offensive in February 1916. The Fathers did their best to avoid becoming

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1. Some ngabo were mobilised for service in the north, see Zaza Diary 17 June 1915. Classe L. 'L'Organisation politique du Ruanda', notes by the Vicar-General for the Belgians, 28 August 1916, Derscheid Papers, discusses how the Tutsi tightened the screw. Father Buisson wrote: "Le Gouvernement allemand, plus que jamais, devait favoriser l'élément noble: il avait besoin du Nyanza des Batutsi. Devant le spectre d'une révolte possible à l'arrière, moins que jamais, il était disposé à céder aux Bahutus quoi que ce fût de "l'autorité intangible" des chefs", see Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 284.

2. Nyundo Diary 13 August 1914, 1 April 1915.

3. Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 289, 305



embroiled in the conflict, even going to the point of hiding from patrols in the bush;<sup>1</sup> but with the Germans heavily outnumbered, it was inevitable that the readiness with which the French White Fathers responded to requests for requisitions differed from that of the German Lutherans.<sup>2</sup> Christian joy was not easily distinguished from a smirk of Allied triumph.

On April 21st. 1916, Mibirisi mission was shelled by the Belgians and a German Brother, Fulgence, killed in its defence.<sup>3</sup> Father Cunrath's neutrality was such that he was made prisoner-of-war.<sup>4</sup> Confronted with breakthroughs along the western front, Wintgens retreated to Nyanza<sup>5</sup> so the advancing Belgians in the northwest encountered no resistance. The White Fathers were now under pressure to withdraw with the retreating columns; both French and German missionaries wrote to Classe requesting that he insist on their right to remain at their stations.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Interview with Leon Rukeratabaro, Rwaza, June 1973.

Fathers Delmas and Knoll seem to have been 'on the run' for some time from the opposing armies. Father Knoll had been trying to avoid his fellow-countryman, Captain Wintgens, see Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 300

2. 'Devant les réclamations et les menaces nouvelles du Gouvernement qui se plaint que des missionnaires..', Classe to confrères 24 March 1916 CR

3. Mibirisi Diary 21 April 1916

4. Mibirisi Diary 26 April 1916

5. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 220

6. Deprimoz, Schumacher, Buisson, Delmas & Parmentier to Classe 4 May 1916 CR

Von Langenn's last hasty letter to Monsignor Hirth, dated May 12th., gave the necessary permission; the 'Ritterlichkeit' of the invading Belgian officers was assured, but he suggested that the priests should appear in full missionary attire.<sup>1</sup> The Lutherans joined the Germans in their main retreat to Tabora on May 19th.<sup>2</sup> Thus, when Father Lecoindre came out to welcome the advancing Belgian troops in Kigali, the Catholics were in the happy position of being the only Christian missionaries in Rwanda.<sup>3</sup>

Musinga plaintively exclaimed that the Germans had assured him that the Kaiser would win, and he begged the Belgians not to spoil his country.<sup>4</sup> But he had profited from the war; Tutsi rule had been extended and the Ega nobles, Rwidegembya and Kayondo, kept in check.<sup>5</sup> The missionaries had been forced to stand by helplessly in Gisaka while the Tutsi pillaged rebellious Hutu clans.<sup>6</sup> Now the boot was on the other foot; the end of German rule left the ruling class in disgrace as the Kaiser's infantry.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Von Langenn to Hirth 12 May 1916 C.O.
  2. Wintgens to Hirth 7 May 1916 Dossier 112 bis: W.F.A.R.; Save Diary 21 May 1916; Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 258
  3. Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 251
  4. Musinga to Grand Seigneur des Belges 20 May 1916 AE/II 3287 No. 1842 AA
  5. Save Diary 20 February 1915; Rwaza Diary 12 June 1915
  6. Zaza Diary 10 July, 24 December 1915, 4-26 February 1916
  7. Nyindo was used against the British, for example, until his capture in 1916, see Rwaza Diary 23 May 1916, 20 June 1916; Rwabihigi 'Chief Katuregye' 151



'Liberation' was a word that came easily to the missionaries' lips after the Belgians' arrival.<sup>1</sup> They had the pleasing experience at the Save Corpus Christi procession that June of watching 'the dais officially escorted by Christian soldiers under arms and followed by European officers'.<sup>2</sup> For de Iacger, Belgian anti-clericalism faded into the background:

Le victoire des Belges était dans le fond une victoire catholique et latine. Une alliance, inscrite dans les coeurs plutôt que dans des instruments diplomatiques, s'inaugureait entre l'Église et l'État au Ruanda-Urundi plus étroite que sous le régime allemand.<sup>3</sup>

The missionaries had survived the first sixteen months of war intact whilst the Tutsi had been defeated. For Rwandans the message was clear: colonial administrations came and went, but the 'Bapadri' went on forever. Although some of the Catholic stations were in ruins,<sup>4</sup> the White Fathers were in possession; 'catholicisme francais' had triumphed over 'christianisme allemand'. Classe could no longer complain with customary overstatement that Protestantism was the 'religion of the Government'.

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1. Except, of course, for the pro-Kaiser Dutch and German priests, see Save Diary 21 May 1916; Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 311

2. Save Diary June 1916.

3. De Iacger Ruanda 463

4. Nyundo Diary 10-11 May 1916

CHAPTER SIX

The Belgians

1916 - 1922



When the Belgian commanders came to consider problems beyond the immediate needs of their advancing columns, they could turn to no-one but the White Fathers for advice. Their previous experience in the Congo provided them with few guidelines for ruling a kingdom like Rwanda beyond the vague notion of supporting local chiefs. The Congo Reform movement had left Belgian sensibilities extremely raw, and on that occasion some of their main supporters had been Catholic missionaries.<sup>1</sup> The priests were generally welcoming; only the most militantly atheist of the new administrators felt called to refuse their services.

It was a pleasant change for the White Fathers. The intransigent Kandt, alternately rewarding and punishing, had chided his foreign assistants into a semblance of order within the framework of Tutsi hegemony. Classe and Hirth had sheltered behind his firm paternalism. Behind all the blandishments had been the Lutherans, sufficiently unsuccessful not to panic the Catholics into territorial behaviour, but active enough to put them on their mettle and keep them politically orthodox. Now they were gone. The lid was taken off the box in 1916, releasing conflicts and emotions that took several years to check.

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1. Slade R. English Speaking Missions in the Congo Independent State 1878-1908 Académie Royal des Sciences Coloniales Mémoire in 8<sup>o</sup> Tome XVI 1959, 255, 298-300; Louis R. & Stengers J. E.D. Morel: History of the Congo Reform Movement Oxford 1968, 183

From being the reluctant agents of Germano-Tutsi imperialism, the missionaries became again the principal actors in the colonial drama, defining the nature of the problems, and interpreting the apparent disorder of Rwandan society to the new invaders. The Vicar-General no longer enjoyed the safety of the bureaucratic intermediary, but found himself in the centre of the stage in the dangerous role of expert adviser and manager of a divided vicariate. Nonetheless the opportunities were great. When the Belgians requested Classe's opinion on Rwanda's political organisation, he was able to head them off the uniform social policy that had caused so many of his former headaches. The emphasis in his report was on regional variation, political complexity, and the limitations of Tutsi sub-imperialism; he mentioned how the Tutsi had recently tightened their grip on the country, the levying of arbitrary taxes in Nduga and the northwards spread of ubuletwa.<sup>1</sup>

Added to his fundamental dilemma, that the nobility were refractory to Christianity yet without them, so he believed, there would be anarchy, was the more immediate

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1. The Report, 'L'Organisation politique', began: 'Le régime politique du Ruanda peut être assez exactement assimilé au régime féodal du Moyen-Age'. To illustrate the problem of land tenure, he gave the example of Mbare Hill near Kabgayi. It nominally belonged to Nshozamihigo but he had only four Hutu there. The mwami had on it three ibikingi belonging to his garagu, Sebatwa, Sebakunda and Nyabukonde.



problem that he had become the advocate of the Mission to the court, but the court was now in disgrace. He found a solution in the distinction between a good 'pro-European' faction consisting of the Nyiginya, and a 'bad' group of Ega reactionaries. He was realist enough to admit that Nyiginya support was enlightened self-interest, pointing out for example that the main concern of the syphilitic old Nshozamihigo was the protection of his fiefs from the Ega. While he wrote of the Tutsi's 'complete contempt for Europeans', he wanted later to differentiate between 'real Tutsi' and the rabble of petty landowners that exploited Marangara. It was a discriminating survey and altogether a remarkably poor reference for the Rwandan ruling class from the champion of Tutsi rule.<sup>1</sup>

Had Classe been finally soured by the readiness with which the Tutsi had gone out to fight the Allies, and now hoped for Direct Rule? Or was he merely saying what he thought the Belgians would like to hear - Nyanza was being treated by them like a rebel camp? <sup>2</sup> Vanity rather than pure opportunism or anger is probably the best explanation; subtle distinctions are expected of experts and Classe enjoyed being the expert. And this was not a policy

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1. Most interesting was the distinction made between abanyabutaka and abatware, the latter described as 'plus aimés parce qu'ils assistent leurs gens dans leurs procès, leur font rentrer en possession de leurs biens'.

2. The report is in reply to Collignon to Classe 28 July 1916 C.O.

statement to clergy in bush stations. When Nshozamihigo died in December 1916, Classe immediately wrote an unsolicited letter explaining the importance of the Nyiginya and European sympathisers, emphasising again the power of the Ega Queen Mother, Musinga's weakness and the shaky legitimacy of the court.<sup>1</sup> If there was an arrière pensée, it was a hope for reform and a desire to strengthen the monarchy as an antidote to feudalism.<sup>2</sup>

The mwami was making things difficult for even the most ardent royalists. In September 1916, two askari were killed near Save; Musinga contemptuously handed over five innocent men to bear the Belgians' punishment and poisoned the only one who tried to protest.<sup>3</sup> As the main

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1. Classe to Van den Eede 6 December 1916 C.O.

2. 'Peu en surêté à cause du très grand pouvoir de la famille des "Bega" et de son hostilité, surtout de celle de Nyina Yuhi, la mère de Musinga, les fils de Lwabugiri, de tout temps, s'étaient rapprochés des Européens et leur étaient favorables tandis que les Bega avec leurs chefs Kabale (1912) et Rwidegembya son neveu, puis Rwidegembya avec Lwabusisi, son frère, Kayondo son cousin germain et Nyantabona, le fils de Kabale, leur demeuraient résolument opposés'. The distinction between the harried royal line and the 'wicked' Ega is overdrawn as is the pro-Europeaness of the Nyiginya. See also Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 248-249

3. 'Rapport mensuel: Corps d'occupation Zone de l'Ouest' February 1917 No. 1828 AE/II 3287 AA. Henceforth this series is abbreviated to 'Rapport mensuel' and date.



body of Belgian troops moved south away from the capital, rumours of revolt grew. Captain Stevens, left in Nyanza with no reliable information save that fed him by Musinga, the Father Superior of Save, Huntzinger, and Father Classe's anti-Ega letters, and fearing a rebellion behind Belgian lines, arrested the Ega leader Rwidegembya and imprisoned him at Kisenyi.<sup>1</sup> Only later did he realise his mistake.

Indeed, Rwidegembya, too rich for Musinga's liking, who had been dreaming for some time of dividing up his wealth, had been worrying the king. Rwidegembya was a victim of Gihing's plots, hatched with Musinga and his satellite Kashamura, and, a little bit as well, of the prejudices of certain missionaries against him who represented him as the custodian of the cultural practices and diabolical arts of the Mtuzi race.<sup>2</sup>

Musinga must have been suprised at the gullibility of the new Europeans and went on to depose the Zaza army chief, Rugambarara, for a son of the Nyiginya, Kanuma.<sup>3</sup> The Ega counterattack was not long in coming; Rwidegembya's son, Rwagataraka, told the Belgians of contacts between Musinga and the Germans.<sup>4</sup> The mwami's secretary was suddenly given an important fief, probably to pay for his silence, but the

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1. Save Diary January 1917; Kabgayi Diary 19 December 1916; 'Rapport mensuel' December 1916.

2. 'Rapport mensuel' January 1917 No.1610 AA

3. Zaza Diary 15 January 1917: the son was called 'Lukara'; 'Rapport mensuel' February 1917

4. Captain Wintgens had made public a list of Tutsi killed by the Belgians so some contact must have existed.

Belgians uncovered a cache of forty rifles at court and readily believed stories of German envoys and secret letters. The Captain learnt with horror that his milk was poisoned and, by March 1917, the Belgians were listening to every gross calumny put about by their ambitious interpreters.<sup>1</sup>

It was the same story as early German rule in Burundi; insecure and newly arrived, lacking a clearly formulated policy, the Belgians reacted precipitately. To the military mind and in the urgency of war, the imperative of European rule was 'to limit Musinga's powers and make him bend before all of our demands'. Indirect Rule could not be contemplated in an atmosphere of sedition and mockery. 'Musinga has simply been laughing up his sleeve at us and scorning the orders we give him', complained Stevens. 'He intends to play the leading part in the politics of his country and to relegate the European authorities to the background'.<sup>2</sup>

On March 25th. 1917, a telegram was sent from the headquarters of Malfeyt, the new Commissaire Royal at Kigoma, giving the go-ahead for the mwami's arrest.<sup>3</sup> As Musinga was bundled off at gunpoint to jail, the climax was reached in one of the most astonishing reversals of

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1. Save Diary February, March 1917; 'Rapport mensuel' January, February 1917; Collignon to Classe 29 March 1917 C.O.

2. 'Rapport mensuel' February 1917.

3. 'Note sur le Rapport Politique du Ruanda' 3 January 1919  
AE/II No.1847 3288 AA



fortune the court had known.<sup>1</sup> The Tutsi nobility were now brushed aside. The Belgians judged cases at Zaza without reference to the chiefs, and the church filled again with Hutu who perhaps had got wind of the upheaval.<sup>2</sup> That year, minor provincial chiefs got away with not paying ikoro.<sup>3</sup> But the decapitated Rwandan polity was soon ungovernable; Musinga, utterly humiliated, was released.<sup>4</sup> The passage from conquest to administration had been telescoped to a single year, but the price in bitterness and chaos was still very high.

The political havoc created by the Belgian commanders was trivial compared with the catalogue of 'natural' disasters that struck the peasantry in 1917. The north-eastern shores of Lake Kivu had been a key defence line and Bugoyi had seen several major skirmishes.<sup>5</sup> The retreating German army pursued a scorched-earth policy, cutting down banana groves which afforded cover and food to the enemy.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Des Forges Rwanda under Musiinga 214-216

2. Lieutenant Carlier seems to have been particularly autocratic in Gisaka, see Zaza Diary 31 January, 8 April 1917

3. An interesting example of this was chief Ntolero from near Mibirisi. A Ganda had taught him to read and write; he had requested Catholic teachers, a common enough case history of the type of Tutsi who wanted to emancipate himself from court, see Mibirisi Diary 10 March 1914; 'Rapport mensuel' February 1917

4. Des Forges Rwanda under Musiinga 217

5. Rapports annuels 1915-1916, 295; Louis Ruanda-Urundi 215

6. Classe to Stevens 22 March 1917 C.O.

Troops had been living off the land since October 1914 and when, in 1916, the peasants should have been planting, hundreds fled the battle zone. Finally the famine Rumanura came.<sup>1</sup>

When the Fathers returned to a battered Nyundo mission, pillaged and overgrown by bush, the roadside was littered with corpses. A region which had once been the garden of Rwanda was now scrub where wild animals and scrawny cattle roamed freely.<sup>2</sup> The missionaries had the agonising decision of how to distribute their meagre supplies; they opted to feed only those fortunates who had got seed into the ground and so could hope for a sorghum harvest in May 1917. Those who had escaped the European manhunt for porters by hiding in the bush, and who therefore had planted nothing in December 1916, were reluctantly abandoned to famine and death. The missionaries fed two hundred daily at Nyundo; one priest sold everything he owned down to his chalice in order to buy food in Kisenyi.<sup>3</sup>

With the granary of Rwanda in Bugoyi depleted, other crop failures compounded the misery. Severe pest infestation destroyed the main bean and potato crop around

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1. Nyundo Diary December 1916; Malfeyt to Renkin 29 June 1917. AE/II No.1842 3287 AA; Rapports annuels 1915-1916, 300-301

2. Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 245

3. Oomen to Stevens 3 April 1917 & an undated letter c.1917 AE/II No.1842 3287 AA; Rapports annuels 1915-1916, 302



Kabgayi; as a result 276/650 Christians moved south to Save or Kansi in search of food.<sup>1</sup> The aftermath of malnutrition was epidemics of smallpox, cerebrospinal meningitis and dysentery. The missionaries vaccinated thousands but many died before the end of July 1918.<sup>2</sup> Amongst the Nyundo Christians, families with privileged access to mission supplies, the death toll rose from about three hundred in March 1917 to over two thousand in July 1918, over 50% of the parish's neophytes; in the same period Murunda mission lost 20% of its flock.<sup>3</sup> The Fathers put the overall mortality in some parts of Mulera at 75%; the massive mobilisation for the European war had literally decimated the population of Rwanda.<sup>4</sup>

When Major Declerck arrived in Kigali to take up his position as first Belgian Resident in 1917, he faced chaos.

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1. Classe to Livinhac 3 April 1917 Dossier 111 WFAR; Rapports annuels 1915-1916, 259
  2. Father Hurel was prominent in the struggle against cerebrospinal meningitis at Ruhengeri. Around Save the death toll was about 2,000, see Stevens to Classe 12 October 1917; Stevens to Hirth 8 December 1917; Lejeune to Hirth 4 December 1918; Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 244
  3. The Nyundo Fathers baptised over 700 dying of smallpox. Around Rwaza, a Rwandan began inoculating with pus from smallpox sores, explaining that, like a blood-pact, it would keep the smallpox's hatred at bay, see Rwaza Diary 20 February 1918; Classe to commandant 22 March 1917; Rapports annuels 1916-1917, 302; 1917-1918, 245-273, 301
  4. Thousands of head of cattle were requisitioned, see Stevens to Malfeyt 21 May 1918 AE/II No.1842 3287 AA; Nyundo Diary 17 December 1917

Brigands preyed on travellers along all major tracks in the north, and rich families had begun to buy domestic slaves in exchange for surplus food. His troops were without supplies or porters.<sup>1</sup> The missionaries had alerted the Belgians to the severity of the famine when they returned to Nyundo, but no action had been taken for two months.<sup>2</sup> It was only Declerck's arrival at the end of May that produced a response, a paltry five thousand francs to buy food for the starving.<sup>3</sup>

The administration of the country remained dominated by military considerations, with an eastern sector headquarters at Kigali and the western one at Kisenyi.<sup>4</sup> Not that there was any uniform policy; Van den Eede in Kisenyi was initially all for getting rid of the Tutsi and redistributing their land to the Hutu.<sup>5</sup> As the Belgians misunderstood the political geography, changed administrators, and moved from one mistake to the next, the different northern factions took the opportunity to regain ground lost to them during German days.

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1. Declerck to Stevens 29 May 1917 AE/II No.1842 3287 AA;  
Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 291

2. Malfeyt to Renkin 10 June 1918

3. Stevens to Classe 9 June 1917 C.O.

4. 'Note sur le rapport politique'. This meant the Kigali administrator found himself sending troops to support Tutsi chiefs in places as far apart as Mulera and Bugesera, see Rwaza Diary 12 January 1918

5. Stevens to Malfeyt 21 May 1918 AA



The Rashi, now led by Lukara's son, Nyirinkwaya, waived a vendetta with the Sigi and began attacking mission employees on the grounds that the Fathers had been willing accomplices to Belgian and British pillaging of cattle. In November 1916, a Rwaza Christian sent to look for food across the Mulera plain was murdered.<sup>1</sup> The conflict with the Banyanduga became more intense since unchecked by strong rule. The Father Superior of Rambura mission became the figurehead of a movement to chase out the Tutsi, a prophet malgré soi, whilst in Bugarura the Rwaza Christians put up so much resistance, the Banyanduga complained it was impossible to govern.<sup>2</sup> It was not for want of trying: 'I saw in March of this year', wrote Father Delmas in 1917, 'two Batutsi, one from Iwangeyo and one from Kanuma, both ask for tax from the same Bahutu'.<sup>3</sup> Iwakadigi, who had lost several of his residences pillaged by the Belgians, slunk out of hiding back to Nyundo and was soon in control.<sup>4</sup> The starving Bugoyi Hutu were in no position to resist, and his cattle trampled freely through the few banana groves and sweet potato patches under cultivation.<sup>5</sup> The Bukamba and Mulera Hutu were better off because the Belgians had

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1. Schumacher to Kisenyi Resident 12 December 1916, 18 May 1917, correspondence found at Rwaza Mission.

2. Rwaza Diary 25 January, 18 February 1918; Des. Forges: Rwanda under Musiinga 233

3. Schumacher to Kisenyi Resident undated (1917) Rwaza Mission

4. See p.275 n.2

5. Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 301

appointed local clan heads as rightful chiefs, and they could seek support against southern intrusion.<sup>1</sup> But such innovation brought further resentment at Nyanza; in Malfeyt's words: 'les conceptions politiques de certains fonctionnaires territoriaux tendant à provoquer la division du royaume et l'émancipation de la race dominée n'étaient pas de nature à rétablir la confiance dans l'entourage du roi'.<sup>2</sup>

Major Declerck was highly thought of by the White Fathers who esteemed mainly those who heeded their advice and council. His price for putting the kingdom together again was reform and uniformity. The Belgians had been paying their porters four francs, about one roupie, for the journey to their lines; the Tutsi were confiscating it on the Hutus' return as compensation for the time they had spent away. Declerck got the mwami to sign a decree condemning to up to thirty days imprisonment anyone taking legitimately earned money from a Hutu. He announced before all the assembled nobles in Kigali that henceforth no peasant was to be prevented from attending a mission. Musinga put his signature to the improbable concept of religious freedom. Finally, Hutu were to have five out of

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1. Rwaza Diary 25 January 1918. One of these, Kadiho, rose to be a powerful force in the north and resisted the later change in Belgian policy towards support for the Banyanduga, see Rwaza Diary 24 December 1919

2. 'Note sur le rapport politique' AA



seven days free for their own work, and were asked to double their cultivated land-holding as a protection against future famine.<sup>1</sup>

The Fathers if not the originators were to be the watchdogs of the reforms. 'Since it is beyond doubt that many of the Batutsi will not obey the above decisions', Declerck told Monsignor Hirth, 'and since it is indispensable to better the peasants' present conditions, I would be grateful if the Reverend Fathers would inform the authorities of any abuses that are committed'.<sup>2</sup> But since the missionaries had no right to involve themselves in litigation beyond marriage cases, and since courts were run by bribed Tutsi, the peasants had no redress for their complaints. The Fathers might broadcast Kigali's directives; they could only enforce them at the cost of falling back into a morass of patron-client relationships.

Declerck realised by August 1917 that he had delivered his administration into the welcoming arms of the White Fathers; a second set of directives was hastily issued. Missionaries were debarred from all litigation and directed not to usurp the position of the Belgian administrators. The situation in the north was also to be patched up: blood

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1. Kabgayi Diary 12 June, 7 July 1917; Hirth to Father Superior Rwaza 7 June 1917 Dossier 112 WFAR; Declerck to Classe 3 July 1917 C.O.

2. Declerck to Classe 3 July 1917 C.O. It took about one month for the Hutu to become aware of the reforms, through contact with the missions, then complaints poured in, see Nyundo Diary 9 August 1917

feuds were banned as was the use of the poison ordeal, any Tutsi taking crops had to pay the offended serf double, and cattle were not allowed to graze in Hutu gardens.<sup>1</sup>

Rewooding, ten Eucalyptus plants per man distributed through the missions, was to begin.<sup>2</sup> On paper at Kigoma the reforms seemed doubtless practicable; in reality they were impossible to implement.<sup>3</sup>

The background to Declerck's sudden change of attitude towards the missionaries was the 'Magini Affair'. As the Ruhigirakurinda affair had exploded into a major issue because it encapsulated all the ingredients of the conflicts of German rule, so the Magini case that began on Shonyi Hill, forty-five minutes walk from Nyundo mission, contained in miniature the erratic history of the first year of Belgian rule.<sup>4</sup>

Patiently and with great political acumen, Lwakadigi had built up his power and entourage, manipulating to his advantage the complex new patronage possibilities afforded by the Germans at Kisenyi and the Fathers at Nyundo.<sup>5</sup> His

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1. Declerck to Classe 21 August 1917 C.O.

2. *ibid.*

3. For example, it was impossible to keep cattle out of gardens that lacked fencing. Even today in the marshes' reclamation schemes cattle stray onto valuable land. The missions were needed for all distribution e.g. seeds, hoes, seedlings, see Nyundo Diary 30 January 1918

4. Soubielle to Kisenyi Resident 26 June 1917 C.O.

5. Bushako probably chose him c.1903 due to Lwakadigi's experience at Save to 'tag' the Nyundo Fathers whom he followed north.



career was typical of the new Banyanduga. By June 1917, with Bugoyi weakened by famine, he had introduced large numbers of his garagu in preparation for a confrontation with his former lord, Bushako; one of these men had moved into the banana grove of Magini, a member of the Hindi sub-clan.<sup>1</sup> Since he belonged to the mission, the offended Hutu appealed for Father Oomen's support at Nyundo and was passed on to the Belgians at Kisenyi. After much prodding of witnesses on all sides, Magini won his case in September and Iwakadigi's garagu had to pay compensation. Nothing happened; the Tutsi huts and their occupants remained firmly planted on Magini's land until new administrators arrived in October. Taking advantage of the change of regime, Iwakadigi's son hauled off Magini as a criminal while his followers, allied with the Kora clan, took the chance to pillage and raid Hindi households. Declerck came and the magistrate confirmed the earlier Belgian decision. Again it was ignored by the Banyanduga.<sup>2</sup>

By now the Belgians were in a panic over the impact of the Bugoyi famine on public opinion amongst the Allies. They wanted at all costs to give the impression of sound rule and to offer some sort of efficient administration when it

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1. Nyundo Diary 28, 30 September, 31 October 1917; Oomen to Hirth 4 November 1917; Soubielle to Classe 6 December 1917; Hirth to Declerck 29 December 1917 C.O.; Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 301
  2. Oomen to Hirth 4 November 1917; Declerck to Classe 30 November 1917 C.O.

came to bargaining over the spoils of war.<sup>1</sup> Caravans from Rulindo to Rwaza were being attacked<sup>2</sup> and Mulera was so dangerous that the Ruhengeri Resident feared to venture far from his camp.<sup>3</sup> The British were muttering about the anarchy left in the Belgians' wake, whilst the Germans were putting out rumours that Musinga had been hanged.<sup>4</sup> Lwakadigi proffered his services to Kisenyi for levying porters and implementing the new decrees, and the Belgians gratefully welcomed the advances.<sup>5</sup> With Nyundo the stumbling block to his complete control of Bugoyi, he did his best to turn the Kisenyi administrators against the Fathers.<sup>6</sup>

Lwakadigi's indictments and innuendos found a willing ear in the person of Mortehan, the new Kisenyi Resident. The latter's main criticism was that money given the Fathers for famine relief had been used on clearing banana groves rather than planting beds of sweet potatoes; as a result, he claimed, everyone was drunk on banana beer and no sweet potatoes were getting onto the market, rather too

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1. Malfeyt to Rwanda Resident 26 June 1918 AE/II No.1847  
3288 AA

2. Schumacher to Declerck 15 December 1917 AA; Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 302

3. Des Forges Rwanda under Musinga 230-231

4. Gorju to Livinhac 2 August 1919 Dossier 112 WFAR; Nord-Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung 20 September 1917, 14 December 1917

5. Soubielle to Classe 6 December 1917; Hirth to Declerck 29 December 1917 C.O.

6. Nyundo Diary 28 September 1917; Bosmand to Classe 5 December 1917 C.O.



much of a Catholic stereotype. In fact, the Fathers had cleared only forty hectares of bananas while planting fifty hectares of sweet potatoes; Lwakadigi had insinuated that the bananas belonged to 'absent landlords' and that the missionaries were trying to get hold of them.<sup>1</sup> Mortehan's other complaint was that only Christians benefited from Belgian aid. This was, of course, true; unless the Fathers hunted for the starving in the forests, they could only serve those who came to the mission door, Christians on the whole. The trouble was that Mortehan saw Father Oomen in the worst possible light after captured German documents revealed a compromising letter from him,<sup>2</sup> probably nothing more than the ingratiating flowery banalities that passed in many priests' minds as 'good relations', but in war time, and with nervous Belgians, enough to thoroughly sour relations.

Problems in Bugoyi were being exacerbated, but by the pillaging and exactions of Lwakadigi's garagu rather than by the weakness of Catholic priests. Yet by the end of November, Lwakadigi had swung the Kisenyi administrators firmly behind him and resistance to his garagu's exploitation cost several Christians a jail sentence.<sup>3</sup> Disgusted by Belgian justice and frightened by the Tutsi who were

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1. Mortehan to Declerck 18 September 1917 AE/II No. 1842  
3287 AA

2. Malfeyt to Renkin 17 January 1918. The German headquarters at Tabora had been taken in 1917.

3. Nyundo Diary 22 November 1917; Bosmand to Classe 5  
December 1917 C.O.

intimidating witnesses<sup>1</sup> so that Christians could not win cases, Magini decamped.<sup>2</sup> The Nyundo Christians were now up in arms and the Kisenyi Resident threatened to take 'the measures provided for punishing the insoumis'.<sup>3</sup> Father Oomen was summoned to town and the cases against his parishoners read out in public on December 6th. 1917; in front of Iwakadigi's triumphant son, the priest was admonished. He was justifiably furious:<sup>4</sup>

We who get around the country a bit more often have seen entire hills, groups of three and four, turned into a wilderness through the rapacity of a chief. The result of the discouragement sown amongst his population is that they do not cultivate, and die of hunger. We have seen magnificent gardens of ripening sweet-potatoes in a chief's Boma while those who planted them die of hunger and are without crops because they have all been pulled up for planting in the chief's gardens.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Nyundo Diary 31 October 1917; Oomen to Hirth 14 November 1917 C.O.
  2. Oomen to Hirth 4 November 1917
  3. Bosmand to Oomen 3 December 1917
  4. Nyundo Diary 6 December 1917
  5. The missionaries calculated that Iwakadigi's refusal to allow the Christians to extend their plantations of bananas beyond the mission limits accounted for several hundred additional deaths; there were about sixty people living on mission grounds at the time, see Soubielle to Classe 6 December 1917; Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 301, 303



After Father Oomen's disgrace, the Hutu did not abandon Catholic 'saviours'; a rumour began to circulate that Bartelemi, Father Barthélemy, a more powerful patron, was going to return, kukiza igihugu, to save the country.<sup>1</sup> On this occasion their faith in the mission was misplaced; it was in reality the pro-Catholic Declerck who saved the situation by moving the Kisenyi administrators to the eastern sector.<sup>2</sup>

The Vicar-General was still very good at colonial officials. He and Declerck treated each other to the delicate attentions that made for a gentlemanly relationship. For five thousand francs of famine relief, after a year in which death by starvation and epidemic disease had not been allowed to deflect the Belgians from chasing the Germans, Classe praised Belgian humanitarianism<sup>3</sup> and told Declerck that, for the first time in seventeen years, Rwanda had a government which took the Natives' interests truly to heart.<sup>4</sup> The Resident referred in reply to 'la Grande et belle oeuvre civilisatrice que vous dirigez avec un dévouement et un désintéressement au dessus de tout éloge'.<sup>5</sup> Subtracting the hyperbole of the French language, relations were cordial.

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1. Nyundo Diary 29 December 1917

2. Stevens to Declerck 7 January 1918 No.1842 AA

3. Classe to Malfeyt 28 October 1917 No.1847 AA

4. Classe to Declerck 22 October 1917 C.O.

5. Declerck to Classe 28 December 1917. Monsignor Hirth responded to this in a similar vein, see Hirth to Declerck 29 December 1917 No.1847 AA

The essence of this cosy relationship was that the Resident felt the blessing of the Church while he himself fed Classe's love of being present at the management of power. Indiscretions were measured out to him like a drug: 'In high circles', Declerck confided, 'they still consider Rwanda as an inexhaustible storehouse and extraordinarily rich'. He was willing to admit in private that, unlike the Fathers, his administrators did not stray far from the beaten track.<sup>1</sup> In turn, the Vicar-General handed over private correspondence from the Nyundo missionaries, while Declerck appears to have been reprimanded for his role in the Magini affair and his too pro-mission line.<sup>2</sup>

The significance of the Magini affair lay in its denouement. After going to Kigoma to see the Commissaire-Royal, Classe wrote the Kisenyi administrator a stiff letter of reproof, something unthinkable in German times.<sup>3</sup> The White Sisters were helping the war effort by working in Goma and Kigali hospitals, and the Belgians were in the Fathers' pockets.<sup>4</sup>

But while Declerck and Classe played at clipping the Tutsi's wings, telling themselves how much more sensible than the Germans they were, and how untrustworthy the ruling class.

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1. Declerck to Classe 18 December 1917 C.O.

2. *ibid.* ; Nyundo Diary 16 January 1918

3. Classe to Bosmand 29 December 1917

4. Tombour to Classe 19 January 1917; Stevens to Classe 13 February 1917; Declerck to Classe 30 November 1917; Bosmand to Classe 2 January 1918; Classe to Malfeyt 10 January 1918 C.O.



could be, their dependence on Musinga and the Banyanduga had grown apace. By the end of 1917, the same pressures that influenced the Germans were pushing the Belgians into support for the Tutsi.<sup>1</sup> Father Oomen wrote mournfully to Monsignor Hirth that the Kisenyi administrators reminded him of one of Kandt's more cynical remarks: 'The Batutsi would not trick me. What would be the point of it? I always decide in their favour and they know it'.<sup>2</sup> Declerck's impressions had been the same: 'From one minute to the next', he wrote to Classe, 'I expect to hear Kandt, the great friend of the Batuzi. That magistrate is out of his stable'.<sup>3</sup>

Nshozamihigo's son, Nyirimbilima, returned to his northern fiefs in October 1917 and was greeted by the Ruhengeri Resident in his beleaguered outpost with great effusions. The appearance of the American cavalry coming over the hill could scarcely have been more welcome than the sight of a noble with his entourage. Nyirimbilima was proclaimed far and wide as 'king of Mulera' by an administrator who had found to his cost that Musinga was only 'king of Nduga'.<sup>4</sup> The young Nyiginya prince was already much detested by the Queen Mother, and this unprecedented Belgian support resulted in the mwami's commissioning of Ruhanga, the

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1. Made more acute by the exigences of running a campaign against the elusive German forces in Tanganyika.

2. Oomen to Hirth 4 November 1917

3. Declerck to Classe 18 December 1917

4. Rwaza Diary 23 December 1917

garagu of the deceased Nshozamihigo, to get rid of him.<sup>1</sup> As the Belgians sallied forth to put down the Sigi who had been raiding at will, Tutsi disturbances broke out with Nyirimbilima and Ruhanga pillaging each other's cattle.<sup>2</sup> Ruhanga who was keeping one hundred cattle levied by the Belgians sent them, like most cautious Banyanduga, to the safety of the south.<sup>3</sup> After pillaging the rest, Nyirimbilima cannily denounced Ruhanga as a cattle thief, and the latter saw in 1918 in jail. The Resident soon realised that he had been duped and released him.<sup>4</sup>

While the Belgians struggled with the mechanics of Tutsi rule, the Fathers were making good use of their brief honeymoon with the top administrators. The Mibirisi Fathers had opened new outstations within weeks of the Belgian invasions, and they later established their first foothold in Busozo.<sup>5</sup> A temporary extension of mission grounds and outstation property was granted for the three

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1. Nyambibi, the mother of Nshozamihigo, was responsible for the removal of the young Musinga to the safety of the Burundi border during the crises of the 1890s, and Kanjogera had nurtured jealous feelings towards the family ever since, see Classe to Van den Eede 6 December 1916; Delmas to Declerck 8 January 1918 Rwaza letters; Rwaza Diary 23, 31 December 1917
  2. Rwaza Diary 16, 31 December 1917
  3. Nyundo Diary 4 January 1918
  4. Rwaza Diary 1, 25 January 1918
  5. Mibirisi Diary May, 28 August 1916. For other outstations going up, see Save Diary April 1917; Kabgayi Diary 19 March 1918



Central Rwanda stations.<sup>1</sup> Musinga, cowed by his imprisonment, threw the insatiable Huntzinger the fine delicacy for Save school of Nyinantabana, Kabare's son; the Save Superior had been giving presents to the fourteen leading nobles in the area, putting pressure on them to send their children to class and to begin a girls' school at the mission.<sup>2</sup>

The mwami tried to increase his support in the provinces by handing over to the Gesera several hills formerly held by the Tsoke Tutsi, a group badly weakened by the Ndungutse rising in Buberuka.<sup>3</sup> Rugambarara was re-instated and Kanuma appeared meekly at the door of Zaza mission bringing the present of a cow.<sup>4</sup> At Christmas 1917 came the first baptisms of important Tutsi nobles at Save and Kabgayi.<sup>5</sup> Chachana, the youngest brother of Charles Naho, a noble with some six hundred Hutu, knew the catechism perfectly and was about to be baptised in 1916 when the mwami sent him to Bukoba with forty porters for the Belgians. Only

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1. Musinga's grants of extensions could not be ratified by the Belgians because of the 'temporary nature' of their administration prior to diplomatic accords, see Declerck to Classe 17 August 1917 C.O.; Malfeyt to Franck 26.

September 1917 No. 1918 AA

2. Save Diary April 1917; Classe to Roussez 18 May 1918 WFA

3. Zaza Diary 13 June 1917

4. *ibid.* 22 June 1917

5. Kabgayi Diary 27 December 1917; Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 262

three men came back to tell the tale that Chachana had baptised everyone before dying a Christian himself; his parents became fervent catechumens. Semutwa, the son of Cyitatre and a Nyiginya prince, was baptised in the same batch,<sup>1</sup> it was Classe's policy to allow nobles to take the medal without passing through the usual period of sixteen months postulancy.<sup>2</sup>

The shock of Belgian rule and the missionaries' success amongst the nobles, jolted the court into a flurry of superficial compromises. The mwami encouraged selected Tutsi to educate their children and the classes for chiefs' sons flourished, but he retained a strict ban on religious instruction at the Nyanza school.<sup>3</sup> The Queen-Mother began appearing in public and the mwami's four children were paraded before Europeans in western dress. Musinga even drank with Whites on important occasions and offered them cigarettes.<sup>4</sup> The Catholics were quite taken in by the transformation.

Order reigns in the country since the Residence, happily breaking with the timorous waverings of the last eighteen years (sic), has been able enough to deal directly with Musinga's mother, the lynch-

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1. Nothomb Church History 41; Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 263
  2. 'Compte Rendu des Séances de Conseil' Rwaza 27 January 1918.
  3. Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 248, 255
  4. *ibid.* 249



pin of all Native Administration; smoothly and without fuss the most serious obstacle to our joint penetration has disappeared.<sup>1</sup>

It was delightful the way the Fathers assumed, on the basis of their own predilections, the universality of the éminence grise, and that a change of clothes was a token of a change of heart.

The natural rider to the enhanced powers of the Fathers within the Pax Belgica was an increase in the power of individual Rwandan Catholics. Many Christians came forward to offer their services as secretaries and interpreters to the Belgians, and, since they were the only large literate group, many were hired. 'Guten Willens', who might more appropriately been named the 'Good Soldier Schweik', went into Belgian service in June 1917.<sup>2</sup> Barthelemy Semigabo from Save became a secretary while Simeon Ndazilamiye and Aloys Kangusa were posted to the Akanyuru river to help supply caravans.

The task of provisioning the extended Belgian lines gave ample opportunity to the unscrupulous for bribery and gain; even the ordinary mission catechists seem to have become more belligerent in competition with the abasemyi, as the Belgian agents and fundi were called.<sup>3</sup> Paul Lungiragugu

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1. Hirth to Declerck 29 December 1917, quoted in Classe to Malfeyt 10 January 1918 C.O.

2. Save Diary June 1917

3. German and Belgian troops lived like locusts on the people despite discipline, see Nyundo Diary July 1915; Save Diary 21 May 1916; Ruhengeri Resident to Rwaza 19 June 1917

made good use of his position to demand eight cows from Cyitature to prevent the chief's second son being forced to attend Save school. Simeon Lutare, another catechist, was infamous for the fearless way he lorded it over chiefs.<sup>1</sup> Father Huntzinger prided himself on being a powerful patron and succeeded in sparing his flock from the dangerous journeys to Tanganyika, but the burden of portage only fell on chiefs loyal to the court and on their pagan Hutu.<sup>2</sup> The Kabgayi missionaries no longer went through the formalities of consulting the court when founding new outstations.<sup>3</sup> The undermining of the mwamship in the first year of Belgian rule enhanced the value of feudal ties, and stations like Save again became burgeoning theocracies.

The Fathers who thought Belgian rule gave them the mandate to behave like Capuchins in Amazonia were badly mistaken.<sup>4</sup> As the Belgians swung round to a policy of supporting Tutsi sub-imperialism, the mwami was again free to give vent to his hatred of the Catholic missions. The priests, behaving like petty despots, infuriated the king; he found worse but the sight of unimportant Hutu lording it over their

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1. Save Diary 14 April 1918; Defawe to Declerck 'Rapport Politique Confidentiel' 24 March 1918 Dossier 111 WFAR, in White Fathers' possession, another example of Classe-Declerck cooperation.

2. Save Diary May 1917

3. Kabgayi Diary 19 March 1918

4. Bonilla V.D. Servants of God or Masters of Men London 1972



chiefs. 'These Christians gather together all the malcontents and layabouts who moan about their Chief and form two parties in the village', he wrote, 'one belonging to the Fathers and the other belonging to the Chief'. The case of his old garagu, 'Guillaume', particularly rankled with him as a personal insult.

In the time of the Germans one named Willens who was a Muhutu, as poor as any Muhutu and not rich like a Mutuzi, worked at the mission of Issavi... I gave him two cows and part of a hill. When the Belgians came, the Fathers recalled him to the mission and changed his name; they called him Guillaume. The Fathers collected porters and provisions for the soldiers and pushed Guillaume forward... the Fathers said that all the region had to obey Guillaume. The greatest of my Watuzis had to bend before this useless Muhutu.<sup>1</sup>

Behind the Christians with their new shops, literacy and insolence, he recognised the malign presence of the priests. 'Why are they given books so that they learn how to become the Fathers' men?' he asked the Belgians angrily. 'Am I the Sultan of Rwanda to work for the Fathers or am I the King of the Blacks who makes them work for me and for Bulamatari?'<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the immense political pull of the Fathers, the new religion had dangerous implications for the mwami's

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1. A translation in Defawe to Declerck: 24 March 1918

2. *ibid.*

ritual authority. Minus the right of life and death over his subjects, with his ngabo defeated, Musinga had little else left to support his rule. Huntzinger sniffed out weakness like a bloodhound: 'Now see how big you are Musinga', he allegedly whispered to the mwami in Kinyarwanda, so a Belgian officer present could not understand. 'I am the chief. German days are over. You are not the big man that you used to be'.<sup>1</sup> Why, he wanted to know, could Huntzinger speak ill of his religion, while Tutsi laughing at Christians' medals were liable to imprisonment? 'I do not want their Mongu', he complained, 'why do they want mine?'<sup>2</sup>

For the distressed Musinga the German period had become a golden age. His own version of Rwanda's colonial history, like that of Leon Classe, was, consciously or unconsciously, tailored to the needs of the moment, but it had its core of truth.

In the Germans' time all the Watuzis and all the Wahutus came to me for their court cases; everybody respected me. When they came from Europe they told me that they had only come for Mongu, that they would do no-one any harm and would not meddle in my affairs. It was only on this condition that I consented, on the request of the Germans, to give them a little land. The Fathers feared me because they knew I was the Chief of Rwanda and that the

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<sup>1</sup>. *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup>. *ibid.*



Germans supported me because they were pleased with me. Everything the Fathers said against me was rubbish. Nonetheless I left the people free to work at the mission and they became Christians, but all the same they listened to me and saw in me their Chief. The day the Belgians came the Fathers changed completely; they interfered in my affairs and did me all the ill that can befall a man; although they say that a man should not lie they tricked the Whites of Bulamatari.<sup>1</sup>

The mwami was now in a position to strike back at his persecutors through their garagu. The first casualty was Guillaume, dismissed by the Belgians and replaced by a favourite of the Queen-Mother.<sup>2</sup> Several of the Christian abasemyi were imprisoned for refusing to return extorted cattle; Simeon Ndazilamiye was attacked by askari when he tried to retain part of an illicitly collected herd.<sup>3</sup> On pressure from the Queen-Mother, Nyirimbilima, on the verge of taking instruction from the Rwaza Fathers, was dispossessed, but the Belgians reversed this decision.<sup>4</sup> Father Classe was able to spirit the young chief's mother out of Nyanza before she was killed.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, when

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1. *ibid.* The use of 'Bulamatarari', breaker of rocks, dates from the 1870s when Stanley was called the name.

2. Captain Dupuis, the military attaché at Nyanza, pressed Musinga to give Guillaume a hill as compensation. The military authorities shared the White Fathers' world-view more than the civilian administrators, and also needed efficient bully-boys for quick results.

3. *Save Diary* 14 April 1918 4. *Rwaza Diary* 4 March 1918

when one of the mwami's garagu tried to confiscate Christians' plots near Save, Huntzinger was able to put in one of his own men as a sub-chiefs.<sup>1</sup> It was at this point, in March 1918, that Father Huntzinger fatally overreached himself.

Paul Lungiragugu, one of Huntzinger's favourites, had tried to make a Tutsi called Lussesabagina give him cows to spare him from a levy of porters. When Lussesabagina complained at the mission, Huntzinger ignored his plea on the dubious grounds that if Paul was saving him from Bulamatari, he naturally would expect recompense; the Father-Superior had adapted well. He then rubbed salt into the wound by forcing the sub-chief to accept a Christian on a valuable piece of land containing a water-source. When Lussesabagina tried to water goats there, the Christian killed them claiming the land belonged to him; this was the last straw.<sup>2</sup> Lussesabagina was now willing to testify in court. Even had the plaintiff been bribed in this case, the Belgians had a fat dossier on Huntzinger and wanted a pretext for dealing with him. Major Declerck wrote off 'a state within a state' and he was the Catholics' ally.<sup>3</sup>

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5) Rwaza Diary 7 March 1918

1. A certain Sebangali was ousted in favour of Iwassamanzi, see Save Diary February 1918

2. Declaration of Lussesabagina in Defawe to Declerck 24 March 1918

3. Save Diary 5 April 1918



After sending a warning letter, Major Declerck summoned Huntzinger to Nyanza in an attempt to effect a reconciliation with the mwami. The Father-Superior, typically bull-headed, complained that Musinga had been set up as judge, prosecutor and jury. In a tense scene, the king questioned the Christian witnesses in Kinyarwanda, addressed himself to the Belgians' interpreter in Swahili, who in turn translated into French for the Major. The final version was enough to enrage the Belgians. Father Huntzinger made a formal apology.<sup>1</sup> It was too late. Musinga loathed him, Declerck needed to live down his pro-Catholic image, and Classe had been waiting for an opportunity to get him out of the vicariate since 1913.<sup>2</sup> A week later, he was in Tanganyika and Father Ecomard was on the hot seat at Save.<sup>3</sup>

The fall of the atavistic Huntzinger brought to a close two years in which the Catholic missionaries had seen the scales swing wildly in their favour against the court. By May 1918 politics had come back full circle to the old

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1. Save Diary 16 April 1918

2. Classe to Hirth 28 September 1913 Dossier 111 WFAR.

Rumours were reaching Nyundo as early as September 1917 that priests had been killed in Central Rwanda and that the mwami had put Huntzinger in chains, see Nyundo Diary 28 September 1917. Huntzinger asserted that Musinga was wreaking vengeance on Save for the Belgians' mistakes, and, since Save was behind some of them, this was partly true.

3. Save Diary 25 April 1918

alliance between the mwami, colonial and ecclesiastical administrators. Musinga was given full military honours and a message from King Albert read out at Nyanza.<sup>1</sup> The mwami sent off a telegram of greeting to the Commissaire-Royal which was quickly splashed in the Belgian papers to scotch rumours of Musinga's death.<sup>2</sup>

Important chiefs around Save withdrew their press-ganged children from the mission school and sent them to the government school in Nyanza; the Fathers retaliated by withdrawing their Catholic teacher from court.<sup>3</sup> At Zaza, the old Kanuma, a regular weather-vane for the winds of change, began confiscating Christians' banana groves and publicly denouncing them as rebels.<sup>4</sup> But, although the old structures of Rwandan colonial politics had been pieced together again as in German times, enough changes had taken place for the similarities to be deceptive.

The White Fathers' internal troubles had also moved on a stage. When Father Classe drafted Father Soubielle from Save to Nyundo, there was much protest from the missionaries;<sup>5</sup> Monsignor Hirth, who had roused himself on the Belgians' arrival, had taken the unpalatable measures of moving priests from station to station to solve problems.

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1. Malfeyt to Minister for the Colonies: 27 September 1918  
No. 1842 3287 AA

2. Malfeyt to Minister for the Colonies: 23 July 1918

3. Save Diary 26 May 1918; Defawe to Father-Superior Kabgayi  
28 May 1918 C.O.

4. Zaza Diary 10 May, 2-5 July, 13 July 1918

5. Save Diary February 1917



Added to these were the dislocations caused by the needs of wartime security; all the German priests were sent to Rwaza where they were supposed to be under a French Superior.<sup>1</sup> Pro-German missionaries like Fathers Zuure and Van der Wee were sent from Burundi to Rwanda.<sup>2</sup> As deported dissidents returned and as the constant shuttling between stations increased communication between missionaries,<sup>3</sup> a consensus began to arise that conditions in the vicariate had become intolerable.

The chronic wartime lack of funds only compounded the tensions. The mission had once been reduced to borrowing money from an Austrian trader in Kigali<sup>4</sup> and it was only in November 1917 that the first caravan destined for the Fathers got through from Bukoba;<sup>5</sup> at a meeting of the priests' council at Rwaza in 1917 the decision that 'the average budget per missionary will be about 0.5 francs per day' was recorded. The spirit of the times is:

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1. Tombeur to Hirth 11 June 1916 C.O.

2. Olsen to Father-Superior Mugeru 14 July 1916; Stevens to Hirth 17 August 1916 C.O.

3. Father Cunrath and Brother Hermengilde were allowed to return after swearing an oath of allegiance. Dufays and Pouget came back from Europe in 1917. 'Dissidence' could be a telegram of congratulations on the Kaiser's birthday, see Tombeur to Roelens 22 January 1917; Classe to Stevens 11 February 1917

4. They did not pay it back either, see Classe to Livinhac 3 November 1921 Dossier 111 W.F.A.R.

5. Lignon to Delmas 14 November 1917 C.O.

indicated by a thick pencil line through 'will be' and the addition of 'would not be too high if it were'.<sup>1</sup> The Fathers' annoyance was heightened by the knowledge that while they were shirtless at Rwaza, the shop at Kabgayi held a supply of shirts for the seminarians, and while they were plunged into darkness at nightfall, the seminary alone had an adequate supply of lamps and petrol.<sup>2</sup> Pressure had built up enough for Classe to complain in November 1917 that he was being made the scapegoat for Monsignor Hirth's policies.<sup>3</sup>

The problem confronting Classe was not only that Hirth failed to lend him any authority, but that the fragmented character of the Belgian administration had increased the autonomy of the Fathers-Superior. The vacillating rule that had nearly handed the north back to the Hutu had also returned much influence to the northern Fathers. Huntzinger was, of course, a displaced northerner, and the first serious attack on Father Classe was led in early 1918 by Father Dufays, the veteran of Nyundo; sheaves of complaints about the Vicar-General were sent to Maison-Carrée.<sup>4</sup>

When Father Lecoindre returned after enlisting for war service,<sup>5</sup> he found a familiar scene in the north. Things were not much better; they were much the same.

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1. 'Compte rendu des séances de Conseil' Rwaza 26 February 1917.

2. Bonneau H. 'Rapport sur le Kivu' c.1920 Dossier 111 W.F.A.R.

3. Classe to Livinhac 15 November 1917 W.F.A.R.

4. Hirth to Livinhac 10 June 1918 W.F.A.R.

5. Classe to confrères 15 November 1916 CR



Missionaries judged cases, catechists policed chiefs, and Christians dominated the life of the region around the stations. 'There are many catechumens amongst the bahutus of course who are of a "Bolshevik" mentality', Lecoindre wrote; 'and there we have it, all the revolutionaries in the country enrolled in the Catholic Church'.<sup>1</sup> The period in Europe had made a considerable impact; the Tutsi 'class' was to be the goal of missionary endeavour and, negatively, they had 'to refrain from appointing Superiors over the missionaries who are too democratic, and care to watch out for the anarchy and Bolshevism which can result'.<sup>2</sup> The society of the north was shaping the consciousness and practice of the northern missionaries, but Lecoindre only saw the Brard-Huntzinger school producing violent Rwandan graduates.

It was remarkable how quickly local conditions in the north turned new arrivals into advocates of a decentralised regionalism. Father Omem had only been at Nyundo a short while when the new Kisenyi Resident came humbly to ask his advice.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Marie-François Lecoindre came from the Montfaucon family in Moine, Maine-et-Loire, France. He was forty, four years younger than Classe and, coming from minor aristocracy was a churchman and a Frenchman in the Vicar-General's mould. The Regional-Superior, Roussez, probably pushed Lecoindre further into Classe's camp by denouncing Fathers who rushed to join the war-effort, see Roussez to confrères 13 January 1917 CR. Roussez was siding with the Fathers against Classe, see Hirth to Livinhac 10 June 1918; Roussez to confrères 5 June 1918.

After having told him that I only permitted myself the liberty since this was his wish, I attempted to demonstrate that to want to apply the system in Nduga to these provinces so that the Mututsi would become the absolute ruler of all the land and cattle, would destroy the country altogether. It could work there in Nduga, the land of the Mututsi's own making; here there are families and clans who own their holdings; if the Mututsi can pillage at will it means that they are dispossessing the real owners, denying the past history of Rwanda which the Government seems to recognise in Bushiru.<sup>1</sup>

This was written in a diary that would be checked by the Vicar-General or Father-Visitor.

It was in vain that Classe criticised the Fathers' tendency 'no less fatal of posing as chiefs'.<sup>2</sup> They were as rebellious as their parishoners and Classe was powerless until the Belgians imposed a uniform policy with the ferocity of the Germans. But either there were no

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2) Lecoindre 'Raisons qui ont nui'

1. Nyundo Diary 17 February 1918. Oomen replaced Parmentier in February 1917, see Malfeyt to Minister for the Colonies 10 June 1918. Oomen's identification with the northern Hutu could easily be detected in letters: 'Il nous semble ridicule, pour ne pas dire un autre mot, d'aider d'un côté en dépensant l'argent du Gouvernement, et de l'autre côté, laisser les Batutsi tuer le pays', see Oomen to Hirth 4 November 1917 C.O. 'To kill the country', the term he liked to use, was the local Hutu expression

2. Classe to confrères 2 April 1918 Dossier 111 W.F.A.R.



administrators available, or there were no Tutsi, or, as at Rwaza from 1917-1918, there were neither.<sup>1</sup> The northern stations needed at times to be self-sufficient both economically and juridically, owing to their relative isolation.

In April 1917, the northern stations began a system of forming Christian groups on the hills for mutual support during the famine. The Rwaza Fathers introduced a new type of Christian tribunal to enable court cases involving Christians to be dealt with before vendettas grew up. Each hill was headed by a Christian mukuru<sup>1</sup> who introduced litigants to the weekly tribunal held on Wednesdays at the mission. Although there was a panel of three magistrates elected by the laity, and no outside representation, even pagan defendants could find themselves before the court. Anyone trying to plead without his mukuru, or trying to contact a magistrate before the court sat, automatically had his case thrown out. The mission had substituted itself, of necessity, for the courts of the absent Tutsi and hard-pressed Belgians. The Christian hill groups, inama, were democratic institutions that elected their leader, the antithesis of Nyanza's dictatorship. And since the manipulation of disputes between clans and families was the principal means other than force by which the Tutsi wormed their way into positions of power, this tended to block the expansion of the Banyanduga into the Rwaza area.<sup>2</sup>

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1. pl. bakuru 2. Rwaza Diary 18 April 1917

The pattern obeyed the first law of ecclesiastical dynamics: Nature abhors a political vacuum, and its corollary: unless checked, clerical power expands exponentially to form a theocracy.<sup>1</sup> Internecine feuds between the Tutsi prevented their being more than an intermittent check on the northern missionaries. Bushako's and Lwakadigi's sons were fighting it out for control of Bugoyi throughout 1918.<sup>2</sup> Nyirimbilima, Nshozamihigo's son, under increasing pressure from Musinga, finally fled from the Rwaza region to British territory in November 1918, to be replaced by one of the mwami's men.<sup>3</sup> The Hutu, weakened by famine and war, suffered another of their recurrent bouts of Nyabingi mediumship.<sup>4</sup>

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1. The checks are, of course, partly internal, ideological and historical. The way a mission like Rwaza formed a little 'state' from the segmentary lineage society around has interesting parallels in West African Islam, where the 'outsider' with religious legitimation, serving a legal function in such societies, can produce this effect of 'nucleation'. The absence of a Christian Shari'a or the precedent of Caliphate government are obvious internal checks on theocratic growth, as is the ethnic barrier between missionaries and their flock. I am grateful to Dr. Charles Stewart for some useful discussions on this topic.

2. Rwaza Diary 11 May 1918

3. Nyundo Diary 6 November 1918, May 1919; Rwaza Diary November 1918; Defawe to Hirth 10 December 1918 C.O.

4. These outbreaks came at roughly four year intervals as mediums moved from primarily thaumaturgical activity to more revolutionary attacks on Europeans and missions.



The Fathers were now fully alerted to the dangers of the Nyabingi mediums and shunned their advances much to Musinga's delight.<sup>1</sup> Against this turbulent background the mission station, however autocratic, was a haven of law and order. The Banyanduga found the greatest difficulty in imposing themselves, however, and relied on the Belgians to ease them into their new positions.

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1. A Biheko medium began preaching against the Europeans in 1917, forming blood pacts with many important heads of imiryango. In April 1919, Ntokibiri established himself on Muhavura volcano with a white sheep and attacked road workers near Chahafi. Ganda agents of the British captured and tortured him to death two months later, but not before a number of subsidiary mediums had budded off into Rwanda. By August, a Biheko medium from Bugoyi with a group of forty clients was claiming to cure sickness and to be about to inaugurate the reign of Biheko around Mibirisi. Another medium, Mburanwumwa, was defying Tutsi attempts to dislodge him from Buberuka; troops were sent from Nyanza and pushed him back into Bukamba after rumours had grown that an attack on Murunda mission and Ruhengeri was imminent. He tried to gain Rwaza mission's support but with anti-mission Hutu like Kadiho in his following the missionaries were not impressed. Musinga was kept informed by Chief Kalinda, Kadiho's enemy, and Kajyambare, Rutalindwa's son, who acted later as an informant for Derscheid. See Mibirisi Diary 13 August 1919; Rwaza Diary 1 October 1918, 5-7 January, 5-8 September, 4 November 1919; Rapports annuels 1919-1920, 389; Karwemera F. 'Some Incidents in Kigezi History' & Ssebalijja 'Memories of Rukiga' in A History of Kigezi 194-195, 161-162; Philipps The Nabingi 319; Hopkins The Nyabingi Cult 295, 302-304



And, on occasions, the Belgians relied on the White Fathers to calm down the Hutu clans who resented the new arrivals.<sup>1</sup> Difficulties were great enough for the Banyanduga to be talking of leaving even the good grazing land of the Mulera plain.<sup>2</sup>

However glorious the Huntzinger affair, the mwami must have found it a hollow victory.<sup>3</sup> The Commissaire-Royal gave Monsignor Hirth carte blanche to open new stations provided they avoided Rwabugiri's old residences, considered as sacred by the court.<sup>3</sup> The Catholics went ahead and founded Rwamagana mission by Lake Mohasi in Buganza province where Musinga grazed the celebrated nyambo, prize royal cattle,<sup>4</sup> an equally provocative step. Despite his success against Save, the mwami confronted the rising power of Kabgayi with its two seminaries, now a rival to Nyanza as a centre. 'The most frequented place in Marangara', the Belgians described it; 'it is the place where Natives coming from all parts of the region meet up, with the result that anyone looking for someone goes first to Kabgayi where they draw their information'.<sup>5</sup> More

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1<sup>st</sup> For example, Rwaza Christians were used as intermediaries between Kalinda and Kadiho's son; the latter refused to pay ikoro and had attacked the chief's garagu, see Rwaza Diary 26, 31 December 1919; 3, 5 January, 26 February, 5 April 1920

2<sup>nd</sup> Rwaza Diary 18 February 1918

3<sup>rd</sup> Rapports annuels 1919-1920, 380

4<sup>th</sup> ibid. 379

5<sup>th</sup> Defawe to Hirth 10 December 1918 C.O.



insidiously, the trickle of young Tutsi into the catechuminate continued.<sup>1</sup>

The seminaries in Kabgayi, however, were in a parlous state; the extensive use of dried vegetables during the famine had resulted in several pupils suffering from vitamin deficiency diseases like night blindness. The roof of the newly built minor seminary started to fall in and the buildings were infested with ants. Some felt that the Brothers' hearts had not been in it when they built.<sup>2</sup> Apart from a diet which included meat only once a month, the seminarians followed the same regime as in Europe with an additional half-hour of manual labour daily. Until the refectory was constructed, the pupils simply ate their frugal meals outside.<sup>3</sup> Their Swahili was improved in special introductory classes, then Latin, orientated towards the Breviary, was taught. Within a month of the Belgians' arrival teaching switched over from German to French. The State language was used even for meditation and Swahili was reserved for recreation in the evenings.<sup>4</sup> Since there were no French books until after the War, teaching in the Minor Seminary was entirely oral, the older pupils, 17-20 years, learning the fables of La Fontaine,

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1. Rapports annuels; 1919-1920, 363

2. Kabgayi Diary 15 August 1918; Classe to Liwinhac 31 July 1918 Dossier 111 WFA; Rapports annuels; 1917-1918, 270

3. Rapports annuels; 1917-1918, 266

4. ibid. 272

Grammar, Legends of the Saints, psalms and hymns. Theology students in the Major Seminary shared copies of Noldim and Tanqueray, their teachers' textbooks in another century.<sup>1</sup>

The Catholic priesthood being universal, the seminarians had to reach, at least in theory, the same standards as their equals in Europe. As the two seminary teachers admitted, though, their teaching was too stale and antiquated, and books too inadequate, for the seminarians to reach this standard.<sup>2</sup> Despite the arcane discipline, the linguistic difficulties and understaffing, Monsignor Hirth's expensive act of faith was made to succeed. After spending two years on probation at a mission under White Fathers' supervision, Donat Leberaho and Balthazar Gafuku were ordained at Kabgayi on October 17th. 1917, and began work in the Minor Seminary as teachers. The number of Rwandan Sisters, Benebikira, in training rose to nine postulants who were taught by the White Sisters at Rwaza.<sup>3</sup> Four pupils who had dropped out of the Minor Seminary were training as Brothers, Bayozefiti.<sup>4</sup>

Monsignor Hirth's commitment<sup>5</sup> to a Rwandan Church received a second boost on June 29th. 1919 when three new

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1. Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 272

2. ibid.

3. De Lacger Ruanda 455-456

4. ibid. 456

5. This had a strong emotional, as well as an intellectual, element; he was almost in tears when the first sub-deacons were ordained, see Kabgayi Diary 25 December 1915



Hutu priests, Jovite Matabaro, Isidore Semigabo and Joseph Bugondo, started work in the parishes, and the previous year Mama Maria Yohanna had taken her solemn vows at Rwaza to become a nun.<sup>1</sup> The ordination of the first five Rwandan priests is remembered as having made a great impact on Central Rwanda; it was a tangible and startling emancipation of Hutu to the ranks of the nobility.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it demonstrated to the Tutsi just how close a bond the missionaries were willing to make with the peasantry, and posed with a new urgency the problem of their tactics towards the intrusive religious system.

Musinga's attitudes had been hardened by bitterness and humiliation. He saw the need to counter the growth of a class of emancipated Hutu and he saw the way the new religion threatened his 'Imana-power'. To maintain their ground the Tutsi needed to assimilate European education, but books 'made them the men of the Fathers' if they read at the mission schools. There was only one solution; he told Malfeyt: 'Bulamataru builds schools everywhere. I hope he will build schools here. The Germans did nothing while the Sultans of Buganda and Bukoba got education'.<sup>3</sup> But no Catholic schools: 'I do not want the Fathers' education for my children; they teach people to scorn the law of our fathers'.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Rapports annuels 1919-1920, 364-365; Nothomb Church History 42
  2. Interview with the ex-rector of Nyakibanda Seminary, Monsignor Matthieu, Rwaza Mission June 1973
  3. Malfeyt to Minister for the Colonies 23 July 1918 4. ibid.

When Van dem Eede took over from Declerck as Resident in May 1919, Classe lost and Musinga gained a useful ally. Belgium was struggling for her share of the colonial cake at the Paris Peace Conference and Mandates Commission of the League of Nations. With the British and Americans sneering at Belgium's poor performance in the Congo, and Pierre Orts negotiating with the British Colonial Secretary, Milner, the new Resident would brook no interference from French, Dutch and German missionaries.<sup>1</sup> He was determined to have at least one showpiece in the chiefs' school at Nyanza and was happy to satisfy Musinga by sending pupils to the Belgian teacher there, rather than to the Fathers at Kabgayi. Before he left, Malfeyt remarked how much the White Fathers seemed to like dealing with his administration,<sup>2</sup> but the atmosphere under the new Resident did not allow the same to be said. Father Classe archly told Van dem Eede that he hoped 'it will soon be possible to arrive at the necessary liberty of conscience that formerly existed before the war'.<sup>3</sup> Van dem Eede retaliated with Flemish bluntness by directing the Vicar-General to send his complaints to the Belgian headquarters at Kigoma.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Louis Ruanda-Urundi 232-254

2. Malfeyt to Minister for the Colonies 27 September 1918

3. Classe to Van dem Eede 8 August 1919 C.O.

4. Van dem Eede to Hirth 9 August 1919 C.O. The days of a quiet word between Waloom and Frenchman were over.



The Nyiginya chiefs favourable to the mission were in an awkward position owing to the strong opposition to the Fathers again emanating from the court. The fate of Nyirimbilima must have been uppermost in their minds. Sharangabo, a brother of the king and past mwami w'imandwa,<sup>1</sup> who had kept quietly away from court from 1906-1912 to avoid the purges,<sup>2</sup> faced a number of difficult decisions with the opening of Rwamagana mission in the middle of his fiefs. Like some of the more wily English nobles who managed to have a Roundhead and a Royalist in the family to see the estates safely through the Civil War, so the Tutsi notables were looking to the future in 1919. Sharangabo's sons, Indwaza, Senyamisangi and Gatara were sent to the Government school in Nyanza, while Kalisa and Bitukwihene went to the Fathers' school for chiefs' sons at Rwamagana.<sup>3</sup> Fathen Classe was not satisfied and pointed out to the Belgians that Indwaza and Senyamisangi were over sixteen and legally capable of deciding for themselves which school to attend. Since Indwaza wanted to go to Rwamagana, Sharangabo switched Bitukwihene to Nyanza, maintaining in this way a ratio of three for Musinga or the Belgians and two for the Fathers.

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1. p. 28-29

2. Classe 'Relations' 27; Arnoux Le Culte de la Société Secrète 291

3. Van den Eede to Hirth 28 July 1919 C.O.

This was not a bad indication of the odds given by the wavering nobles on the contending parties.<sup>1</sup>

As the mwami learnt that the leading nobles were beginning to divide their allegiance, he moved to concentrate power as much as possible in his own hands. Classe detected this change after the 1919 ordinations: 'Musinga is becoming more and more autocratic, and the people's rights get less and less; the country has taken a real step backwards these last few months', he wrote.<sup>2</sup> As Ntulo, Cyitature, Kayondo and even Rwidegembya and Iwabusisi, moved closer to the missionaries,<sup>3</sup> the king began to circumvent the nobles in order to control their garagu and sub-chiefs. As the notables were bypassed, the conditions around Kabgayi became very complex and the Hutu no longer knew to whom they should refer.<sup>4</sup> The king was desperate for allies and Iwakadigi, held at court since June 1918, suddenly returned to favour in May 1919 and his son was appointed over Bugoyi.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Vam dem Eede to Hirth 14 October 1919 C.O. Most of the notables had at least one son in the government school at Nyanza which Musinga now favoured, see Nyanza schoolchildren to Commissaire-Royal 10 July 1919 No. 1859 AA

2. Classe to Livinhac 7 September 1919 Dossier 111 W.F.A.R.

3. Kabgayi Diary 10 April 1920

4. *ibid.* 13 February 1920

5. Nyundo Diary May 1919, 15 January 1920



By the time Rwanda was formally handed over to the Belgians on May 30th. 1919, the administration had been buffeted onto a course little different to that charted by the Germans. Malfeyt had done the necessary to rehabilitate the Tutsi for a place in Belgian Rwanda; they were rather 'the stakes of the game', he felt, 'than the responsible perpetrators',<sup>1</sup> a most colonial absolutism. The Minister for the Colonies, Louis Franck, had decided that Rwanda's political organisation was 'strongly constructed and with authority on a firm foundation'.<sup>2</sup> It was to be Indirect Rule with the Belgians as the councillors and tutors at the elbow of the chiefs. The emphasis was on continuity, keeping the system intact, rather than instituting potentially disruptive reforms.<sup>3</sup>

Louis Franck's visit to Rwanda in 1920 developed Belgian thinking on social policy only slightly. 'Ayant reçu une certaine formation', as the Minister put it, the Hutu were destined to be nothing more than assistants for

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1. To: 'Messieurs les Chefs de circonscription dans les territoires occupés par la Belgique' undated memorandum from Franck c. 1917 No. 1847 AA: 'Leur nationalité est encore trop jeune pour qu'elles puissent être identifiées pleinement avec l'ennemi'.

2. Franck to Governor-General Boma 6 January 1920 No. 1849 AA: 'une organisation indigène, fortement échafaudée avec une autorité puissamment assise'.

3. Franck memorandum of 17 June 1920 No. 1849 AA

the Tutsi. As Belgian proteges, they were to be protected from arbitrary exactions and supplied with peace, justice and security...in which to perform their humble tasks.<sup>1</sup> 'But we will not go further', he warned, 'there should be no question of affecting the very foundations of the political institutions on the pretext of equality; we find the Watuzis established of long standing, intelligent and capable; we will respect this situation'.<sup>2</sup> On the question of reforms, the Minister fell back on the hallowed formulae of colonialism.

Mais cette méthode ne se borne pas à respecter les institutions indigènes et à les utiliser; elle tend à les développer sur leur propre fond pour les adapter graduellement aux besoins de la colonisation et au progrès économique du pays.<sup>3</sup>

Carefully selected planters might be introduced in the future.<sup>4</sup> 'This gentleman belonging to the Liberal-Socialist party', as Hirth called Franck, might be suspected of curing his socialism with liberalism.

The golden rule of the new administration was to be - never do what a Tutsi could do in a Belgian's place.<sup>5</sup> Great lip service was paid to African institutions with the

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1. Franck memorandum of 17 June 1920

2. *ibid.* underlining in the original

3. *ibid.*

4. Hirth to his brother 9 May 1920 Dossier 111 WFA

5. Franck memorandum of 17 June 1920



Minister going to the point of describing Musinga's disruptive proliferation of ibikingi as a 'sage et traditionnelle politique'.<sup>1</sup> Liberal thinking on the slow economic transformation of indigenous cultures, that had already begun to influence missiological writing on adaptation,<sup>2</sup> was paramount. Nonetheless the Fathers were somewhat behind the times and were disappointed to find that the German emphasis on commerce and economic development was to be continued.

The Minister seems to have been both brusque and unfair to the White Fathers; he 'did not hesitate to let us know that in his opinion the negroes need to be introduced to "economic development" alone', wrote Hirth.<sup>3</sup> Yet the only vocational work going on in Rwanda, the training advocated by Franck, was being carried out informally by Brothers. Classe had even in the past deplored the effect of the shortage of Brothers on this type of training.<sup>4</sup> 'He seems to us in no way a partisan of elementary education for the people, for the bulk of the population', the Vicar-General concluded. 'We ourselves want this education to preserve the Faith and piety of our Christians', Classe admitted so Franck's reservations were understandable.<sup>5</sup>

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1<sup>st</sup>. Franck memorandum of 17 June 1920

2<sup>nd</sup>. For example Huonder A. Der Europaismus im Missionsbetrieb  
Aix-la-Chapelle 1921

3<sup>rd</sup>. Hirth to his brother 9 May 1920

4<sup>th</sup>. Rapports annuels 1912-1913, 415

5<sup>th</sup>. ibid. 1919-1920, 362

Although literacy for most Fathers was seen as a means to an other-worldly holiness and they, like Franck, would have viewed the learning of crafts in the context of Hutu workers staffing a Tutsi State, the Banyanduga's oppression of the north had produced an upsurge of social concern. 'Our Christians need peace to develop; to avoid oppression we must make the chiefs favourable to us', Classe had written after the 1912 rising.<sup>1</sup> He now realised that some substantial reforms were necessary to bring about this tranquillitas ordinis in which Christianity could thrive. So it was that in the invigorating freedom of Belgian rule, Father Classe could sound both more liberal and more socialist than Louis Franck.

To progress and develop and from our point of view to undergo a real conversion, the country needs a transformation of its social conditions; above all the situation of the people must be improved and they should be given real rights over private property.<sup>2</sup>

This new advocacy of reform was opportunistic, only in the limited sense that the tiny German administration never contemplated it, nor could have carried it out. For a while under the Belgians everything seemed possible,

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1. Classe to confrères 17 April 1913 CR

2. Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 249.



a new era in which the Church would direct and guide the evolution of society. The disappointment of the Franck visit came partly from the missionaries' realisation that, far from having escaped secular Europe, what Classe called 'the Liberal strata' in Belgium were going to put up strong opposition to a clerical Rwanda.<sup>1</sup> The Minister's favourable response to Musinga's plea to be allowed to continue the ancestral cult at court was much commented on.<sup>2</sup> It was the profoundest irony that Classe, ready and willing with his hardy confreres to carry out a thorough demolition job on feudal society, was restrained by a Liberalism that branded him as a reactionary and his Church a feudal hangover.<sup>3</sup>

The Fathers might indeed have scored high marks before more discerning Liberal judges; their only frontal attack on Rwandan culture had been on institutions marking engagement and marriage from which they attempted to remove

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1. The Report by the Administration of the Occupied Territories of German East Africa was debated in the Chambre de Députés on 27 September 1921. In Classe to Livinhac 29 October 1921 Dossier 111 WFAR, there are complaints about a concerted Liberal attack on the priests and an exaggerated respect for native culture.
  2. Cunrath to Livinhac 13 June 1920 Dossier 112; Classe to Livinhac 16 July 1920 Dossier 111 WFAR. The mwami had just lost two of his sons and clearly needed religious solace; see Defawe to Médecin-Chef Lejeune 12 November 1919; Defawe to Classe 2, 20 March 1920 C.O.
  3. p.370 n.2

most traditional forms: like night celebrations and even the practice of newly-weds wearing veils in church.<sup>1</sup> Their aim was to insert the full gamut of canonical restrictions in order to exert the fullest possible clerical control.<sup>2</sup> The stereotype of the black-booted marauder in the Garden of Eden did not apply for a number of reasons: firstly the intellectual calibre of the White Fathers in Rwanda was high; Arnoux, Hurel, Pagès and Schumacher were la crème de la crème of the Society. They analysed, scrutinised as their Society prescribed, but were in print or preparing anthropological treatises with the avidity more of a career academic than a humble missionary, and with a degree of sophistication seldom equalled in other vicariates. Secondly, Rwandan society confronted them with a virile - for them virulent - feudalism in whose maze of exchanges and relationships the ignorant got hopelessly lost; it was strong enough to demand the missionaries' respect and forced them to come to terms with its complexities.

For example, cows were loaned out, kubitsa, from the mission herds at Rwaza and Zaza according to customary practice; the first heifer belonged to the mission and the

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1. Mibirisi Diary 24 September 1909; Rapports annuels 1911-1912, 404.

2. Or from the viewpoint of the Canon Lawyer: 'La prépondérance des interventions des parents et de la famille a fait place à une simple mais sereine déclaration des deux fiancés au curé de la paroisse', see Bushayija S. Le Mariage Coutumier au Rwanda. Gregorian Doctoral Thesis in Canon Law, Brussels 1966, 186.



recipient was required to bring a calabash of fresh milk to the station for every two cows loaned.<sup>1</sup> The loan-cow, inka y'inkwate, was common in the north. Mission tactics towards the vendetta were similarly informed by a full understanding of customary law; when a Christian was killed in fulfillment of a vendetta, Classe advocated that the normal compensation of eight goats be paid to the offended umuryango. If a Christian did the killing, he was required in addition to do two weeks work at the station for 'the moral damage incurred by the mission'.<sup>2</sup> Provided the man went to confession fully repenting his act, he could then return to full Church life. If two Christian imiryango were involved, the Father-Superior was advised to handle the compensation himself to avoid making public the identity of the killer. On the other hand, the Fathers would try to marry off the widow rather than allow her to be taken in the levirate by the deceased's brother.<sup>3</sup>

The Liberal and Socialist deputies in the Belgian Chamber might come baying after missionaries as the fox in the hen roost, but they, no more than the White Fathers, could harmonise the idea of slow transformation and respect for African societies with the demand for private property,

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1. Zaza Diary 22 June 1917; 'Compte Rendu des Séances de Conseil' Rwaza 13 November 1917; Pages 'Notes sur le régime des biens dans la province du Bugoyi', 10-11

2. Classe to Father-Superior Rwaza 20 August 1913 Dossier 112

3. Rwaza Diary 22 October 1915; 'Compte Rendu des Séances de Conseil' Rwaza 14 October 1917

in cultures in which the concept was alien. However often the mwami might be wheeled out in plumes surrounded by his ntore to illustrate the books and fantasies of European Liberalism, the destruction of his kingdom and way of life was ultimately guaranteed the moment the idea of reform was born. It smacked particularly of hypocrisy when the Belgian Government handed over Gisaka to the British for the Cape to Cairo railway, after having carried out an elaborate plebiscite in which over fifty Tutsi nobles, several from Gisaka, declared they wished to be ruled by Belgium.<sup>1</sup> Gradual change in Rwanda required a long

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1. The first reference to the coming cession in mission sources is Van dem Eede to Hirth 9 December 1919 C.O. The declarations of the chiefs to the plebiscite commission were not without their funny side; some said they wished only the opposite of Musinga, see Zaza Diary 29 December 1918. Chief Katche in Gisaka stated: 'We like the Belgians as well because they have left all the old chiefs in the country and not chased out chiefs like the English did in their territory' No. 1846 AA Musinga's declaration was as follows: 'I leave everyone free to choose their religion for now. I see that the missions respect me and respect my religious customs. I wish and I order all the Watutsis and Wahutus to learn and, to give the example, I have first put my sons to school'. Father Classe's description of the process is worth recording: 'L'administrateur lui disait, "N'est-ce pas que tu veux écrire ceci au Roi Albert" "Oui" "Puis ceci?" "Oui"....Et chaque fois la rédaction se faisait'; see Classe to Livinhac 25 March 1920 Dossier 111 W.F.A.R.



bourgeois revolution, and that in a country lacking a bourgeoisie. It was necessary because the basis of the admirable Tutsi cultural institutions was brutality and oppression.<sup>1</sup>

The cession of Gisaka was opposed by several Belgians and Monsignor Hirth was approached to itemise the damage likely to be caused by partition.<sup>2</sup> The mwami protested formally to the British but secretly believed that the White Fathers were behind it; he now attributed all his ills to their evil machinations.<sup>3</sup> A notable receiving instruction was beaten to death at Nyanza so intense was the king's fury.<sup>4</sup>

Beset by critics on all sides, the mission was not spared internal conflict. Just as the White Fathers' too close an adaptation to Rwandan values caused trouble with the Belgians, so the almost Protestant array of primadonnas stirred up the less well-endowed to a contempt for central authority. Since the formation of Kivu vicariate on December 12th, 1912, Monsignor Hirth also had jurisdiction over all Burundi and Unyanyembe,<sup>5</sup> so Maison-Carrée viewed the situation with the gravest concern. By the end of the

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1. Tutsi culture was an 'achievement' in the same sense as the Abomey kings' spirit-house whose walls were cemented with human blood.

2. Van dem Eede to Hirth 7 January 1920 C.O.

3. Van dem Eede to Hirth 18 January 1920 C.O.; Classe to Livinhac 24 June 1920 Dossier 111 W.F.A.R.

4. Des Forges Rwanda under Musiinga 246.

5. De Lagere Ruanda 436.

War, Mugeru mission in Burundi was left with two Fathers for a parish of six thousand.<sup>1</sup> Hirth's waning interests were directed entirely to Rwanda with the result that it had twice as many missionaries and Christians as Burundi. Father Gorju, the Vicar-General for the south, pleaded in vain for more funds and personnel. 'The Bishop has practically abdicated', he wrote after visiting Hirth in 1919, adding a catalogue of complaints about the vicariate.<sup>2</sup>

The discontent amongst the Rwanda missionaries finally focussed on two issues, Classe's authoritarianism and Hirth's missiology. A council of priests had met at Kabgayi to decide which seminarians should be allowed to become sub-deacons; eleven out of twelve voted against Abbé Jovite Matabaro on grounds of low intelligence; they were simply overruled.<sup>3</sup> Another seminarian, probably Isidore Semigabo, spent six days paying court to the mwami for cows; the missionaries were scandalised when Monsignor Hirth pushed him through to the sub-diaconate.<sup>4</sup> 'The seminarians are spoilt; nothing is refused them', reported the Regional-Superior, Father Bonneau.<sup>5</sup> After several missionaries complained that they did not think it proper to ordain a man barely 14-15 years after his baptism, Monsignor

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1. Rapports annuels: 1917-1918, 324

2. Gorju to Livinhac 2 August 1919

3. Bonneau Report

4. *ibid.*

5. *ibid.*



Hirth not only brushed their reservations aside, but created the first all-African parish at Murunda, only loosely supervised from Nyundo by Father Oomen.<sup>1</sup>

Some missionaries' sense of powerlessness in the face of high-handedness and obstinacy became translated into a racist critique of the rapid development of an indigenous clergy. Deep down they did not feel Rwandans were capable of it. Yet before them was the spectacle of Murunda mission flourishing under Abbé Donat Leberaho; hundreds used to come to his sermons, and his emphasis on penance so stirred his listeners that they flocked to the confessional.<sup>2</sup> His manner of speaking in flowing Kinyarwanda, circling round the main point of the sermon, and employing the rich proverbs of the country, held congregations more than the faltering phrases of new White Fathers. He became famous for his repeated use of the saying, Imana iruta ingabo, God is greater than the regiments.<sup>3</sup> The European clergy could find nothing to reproach him with except his superior ability to adapt the westernised Christianity of the seminaries to his local parish. While as sub-deacons the Rwandan clergy had been

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1. Rapports annuels 1919-1920, 357

2. Paas J. Unter der Äquatorsonne: Pater Donatus Leberaho Trier 1927 W.F.A.R. The equation sin/calamity was clear in the smallpox epidemic when thousands went to confession, see Rapports annuels 1917-1918, 326; 1919-1920, 391.

Leberaho emphasised the need for 'pure souls' v. impurity, see Missions d'Afrique 1922, 31; Grands Lacs 1952, 18-20

3. ibid.

well received in the stations as subordinates who were able to join in all parts of mission life, as priests they were more threatening, and not always welcomed by the Fathers at table.<sup>1</sup> Belgian administrators treated them to curt, offensive letters.<sup>2</sup>

When the first complaints about Classe arrived in Algiers in 1918, Monsignor Hirth was able to save him by telling Livinhac that the criticism directed against his Vicar-General was identical to that directed against himself from 1909-1910.<sup>3</sup> Father Gorju, on the other hand, loyally defended Classe on the grounds that he was being used as a scapegoat for Hirth's incompetence.<sup>4</sup> Father Classe's position as front man for the Bishop finally caught up with him in May 1920; Livinhac and the White Fathers' Council in Algiers decided that the vicariate's drift into anarchy had to be stopped. 'The cause of peace', Livinhac gravely told Hirth, 'demands that Father Classe disappear from Kivu'.<sup>5</sup> The Vicar-General was recalled,<sup>6</sup> Father Écomard was designated as Classe's successor but

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1. Colle to Livinhac 21 October 1920 Dossier 112 W.F.A.R.; Rapports annuels 1919-1920, 367

2. Philippin to Abbé Donat 8 February 1922 C.O.

3. The time of the first criticism of the seminary policy.

4. Hirth to Livinhac 10 June 1918 Dossier 111; Gorju to Livinhac 2 August 1919

5. Hirth to Livinhac 29 July 1920 quoting from Livinhac

6. Marchal to Classe 4 May 1920



sensibly declined.<sup>1</sup> A deafening silence from Hirth brought a panic-stricken letter from Livinhac reminding the Bishop of his past triumphs and delicately enquiring if he had resigned.<sup>2</sup>

He had. On July 28th. 1920, Monsignor Hirth wrote to the Prefect of the Propaganda relinquishing his position as Vicar-Apostolic on grounds of failing health and eyesight.<sup>3</sup> He lived on many years and for a partially blind man managed to have a suprisingly voluminous correspondence with his family...at times when Maison-Carrée heard not a word!<sup>4</sup>

When the Regional-Superior rushed in to look at the debacle, the report he sent back was devastating:

Overall morale - it is execrable...

A great number of missionaries are completely discouraged, annihilated; about ten missionaries who would have been very good had they been given support (I do not speak of the others) are not doing a thing; about half a dozen still go on working but solely from virtue.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Hirth to Livinhac 29 July 1920

2. Livinhac to Hirth 18 August 1920

3. Bonneau Report

4. After August 1914 the first letters to reach Rwanda were in November 1916, see Classe to confreres 7 November 1916 CR. Livinhac to Hirth 28 February 1918 contains the complaint that nothing had been received from the Vicar-Apostolic; he had not written throughout 1917.

5. Bonneau Report

Missionaries had been tampering with correspondence, and the Vicar-General had been trying to force dissident clergy out of the country.<sup>1</sup> Authority added up to Hirth and Classe passing 'the buck one to the other'. 'The poor missionaries do not know which Saint to invoke', the Regional wrote.<sup>2</sup> Classe's hobnobbing with the Belgians had made him particularly vulnerable to attack.<sup>3</sup> The 'admirable machine' had fallen to pieces in the hills of northern Rwanda.

It was unlikely that a priest with such a natural apostolate to the ruling classes should be allowed to fall permanently from grace as the result of a movement from below in the White Fathers' Society. It was a denial of religious order. By November 1920, the Superior-General

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1. Apart from Huntzinger, Classe had been trying to force out Father De Bekker, see Classe to Livinhac 24 March 1917 Dossier 111.

2. The Regional would have felt obliged to put the Fathers' case, but there were some true converts to Classe's line, like the Superior of Kansi: 'Un peu partout, en effet, dans le Ruanda la gent muhutu a longtemps caressé l'illusion que les missionnaires allaient la délivrer de l'état mututsi'. Aujourd'hui il semble qu'ils sont bien "revenus" de cet espoir et qu'ils commencent enfin à nous voir sous notre vrai jour; oportet evangelizare et baptizare. En tout cas, nous ne manquons aucune occasion de les éclairer prudemment à ce sujet: la religion ne peut qu'y gagner' in Rapports annuels 1916-1917, 277

3. See Diary February 1918; Classe to Roussez 8 November 1917 Dossier 111 WFA



felt obliged to reassure the Rwanda missionaries that Classe's recall did not imply that he was in disgrace.<sup>1</sup>

The Gisaka issue was looming large in colonial politics, and this gave Classe a ticket into the salons of Antwerp and Brussels. Before long he was appearing to everyone as absolutely indispensable, like all born rulers of men. With a five page brief on why it was necessary to return Gisaka to Belgium, his fortunes began to rise,<sup>2</sup> and by April 1921 Livinhac had no further doubts about his innocence in the disintegration of his vicariate. The Rwanda Fathers received a stiff letter from the Superior-General who, gathering together the weight of three hundred years Church History, knocked them back into respectful submission with the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda's famous 1659 directives on mission practice.<sup>3</sup>

Father Classe was back at the top table again on September 21st 1921 to dine with the Franck family; 'dîner entièrement en maigre... assez symptomatique chez un libéral doctrinaire', as he churlishly remarked to Livinhac.<sup>4</sup> Present were Van den Eede, the British Resident

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1. Livinhac to Rwanda missionaries 17 November 1920

2. Van den Eede to Classe 15 October 1921 C.O.; de Lager Ruanda 478

3. Livinhac to Rwanda missionaries 1 April 1921 quoting Instructions to Vicars-Apostolic of missions ad exteros: 'hoc vobis certissime persuasum sit rem S.C. molestestissimam facturum eum quicumque hujusmodi, aut etiam immisceri ...' 1659

4. Classe to Livinhac 26 September 1921

destined for Gisaka, Captain Philipps, and another Liberal Senator. Classe's presence amongst this unlikely gathering is explained by the Belgians' hope that Philipps would write to Winston Churchill denouncing the idea of a British take-over of Gisaka. The Vicar-General was there as expert witness on Tutsi rule, to oppose the division of Musinga's kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

Father Classe's comment on the Franck menu was provoked by the Colonial Minister's reluctance to give a quid pro quo for Catholic assistance over Gisaka. There was talk of employing a White Father to teach Kinyarwanda in the École Coloniale in Brussels, but the Minister, 'frankly hostile to Catholicism', was holding out where it mattered, over the issue of subsidies for the impoverished missions.<sup>2</sup> The new Resident in Kigoma, Ryckmans, was honest enough to stress the anomaly of fifty pro-Belgian missionaries with eight thousand children in their schools; denied even a few thousand francs by the Government.<sup>3</sup> Ryckmans, though, was a Catholic and the Colonial Minister was looking to the liberal-socialist benches and treated the issue with great caution.

Classe's removal brought little new freedom to the vicariate; Monsignor Hirth continued to overrule the

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1. Van den Eede to Classe 27 September 1921 C.O.; Classe to Livinhac 26 September 1921

2. Classe to Livinhac 2 June, 14 December 1921

3. Ryckmans to Minister for the Colonies 21 October 1921



the rector of the seminary and finally took over the job himself.<sup>1</sup> It was apparent that a new Vicar-Apostolic ought to be appointed as soon as possible, and that the vicariate should be divided to give the Burundi mission a chance to develop.

For Rwanda there was but one serious candidate; the Superior-Provincial of the White Fathers in Belgium<sup>2</sup> was fully behind Classe and wanted pressure put on the Vatican to ensure his candidate's success.<sup>3</sup> Ryckmans agreed but to 'write in such a way as the Holy See might detect Government interference' he felt inadvisable.<sup>4</sup> Franck informed the Foreign Minister, Henri Jaspar, in December 1921 that a quiet word from the Belgian ambassador to the Holy See would not be out of place when Livinhac presented the Terma.<sup>5</sup> Classe's candidature was 'warmly pressed' in Rome and accepted.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Donders to Livinhac 10 October 1921 Dossier 112 WFAR
  2. Fathen Ulrix's verdict would carry great weight as, in theory, the Belgians would have hoped to see the bulk of Rwanda missionaries drawn from his province; in practice there were never very many.
  3. Ulrix to Minister for the Colonies 7 December 1921; Note for Minister for the Colonies 8 November 1921 M.634 AA.
  4. Ryckmans to Minister for the Colonies 21 November 1921
  5. Franck to Jaspar 16 December 1921
  6. Baron Beyens to Jaspar 2 June 1922; Jaspar to Franck 19 June 1922. The Terma was the short-list of names presented for Papal selection; previous lobbying would usually make the selection a foregone conclusion however and this was very much a formality.

On May 28th. 1922, two years after a missionary revolt had forced him out of the country, Classe was consecrated Vicar-Apostolic of Rwanda at the hands of Cardinal Mercier before a distinguished congregation in Antwerp.<sup>1</sup> Rwanda became a separate vicariate when Burundi was placed under Monsignor Gorju on February 17th. 1923.<sup>2</sup> The apparatchiki had triumphed; it now remained to pick up the pieces.

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1. Nothomb Church History 46. To be ordained by Cardinal Mercier, a Catholic Allied hero of the First World War, after Classe's entente cordiale, was a nice, perhaps necessary touch. Several members of the Colonial Service were present.

2. Rapports annuels 1921-1922, 523.



CHAPTER SEVEN

The Conversion of the Tutsi

1922-1932:

The conversion of the Rwandan ruling class to Christianity was a slow process in the 1920s that accelerated dramatically at the beginning of the 1930s. There had been two earlier stages discernible; a decade of outright opposition and a second decade of cautious accommodation. The Tutsi had stayed outside the Church, trying to gauge and check its power. The Hutu had exchanged their Tutsi overlords for a missionary when expedient, and experimented with the new religion. Many found it to their liking. The process in the 1920s was essentially a Tutsi conquest of a Hutu Church whose power was manifest and whose viability proven.

But Musinga's development was in the opposite direction. The loss of Eastern Rwanda and Gisaka to the British only deepened his mistrust of Europeans.<sup>1</sup> A vast region, dotted with royal ibikingi, that included the valuable pasture lands of Buganza, was handed over in 1920. The record of the British and their Ganda agents in Bufumbiro was not such as to reassure the abatware w'intebe in Gisaka, and the Rwandan Tutsi had the additional fear of attempts to restore the Gisaka royal house.<sup>2</sup> Few of the chiefs actually resided in Gisaka and the Belgians warned their

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1. Van dem Eede to Hirth 18 January 1920 C.O.

2. For example, a certain Makato appeared at Rukira claiming to be a son of the Gisaka pretender, Lukara, see Zaza Diary 13 March 1922



garagu to return to Belgian Rwanda as fast as possible.<sup>1</sup>

The partition slowly became reality. By April 1922, those wishing to travel to and from Nyanza required a note from the British Resident at Rukira which had to be countersigned by the Belgians across the 'border'. Gifts could still be taken to the mwami, but too prolonged a visit might result in deposition by the British.<sup>2</sup> Nor was there much incentive to return; with traditional concern for the underdog, the British Resident insisted on the Tutsi returning cattle confiscated from their Hutu.<sup>3</sup> He was equally democratic in his appointments, passing over two powerful Ega chiefs and giving thirty-five hills in Buganza to a minor Nyiginya; the missionaries were amazed, the mwami said to be furious, since Buganza was reserved for a son of the faithful Nyiginya, Kanuma.<sup>4</sup> On top of this the Resident threatened to put a literate appointee over the multitude of ibikingi holders.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Zaza Diary 7 February 1922

2. *ibid.* 5, 16 April 1922

3. The most provocative case was that of a peasant who refused to cook for Rwamuhama's son; the Resident, Mr. Allsop, upheld the Hutu's complaint on the grounds that a married man should not have to perform humiliating work. To put it mildly, Mr. Allsop had missed the point, see Zaza Diary 29 April 1922

4. Mulindahabi was going to take the place of the king and destroy the 'sage et traditionnelle politique', see Zaza Diary 21 April 1922

5. *ibid.*

The Resident and Isaac Kyakawambara, his Ganda agent, found themselves in a short time leaders of a Hutu-inspired movement for reform.<sup>1</sup> The Christians were the first to take advantage of the possibilities of the new regime.

Petro Muhanika, an ex-seminarian who had turned his hand to skin-trading and extortion in the past, was taken on as the Resident's karani.<sup>2</sup> Joseph Lukamba who belonged to the Gisaka royal house<sup>3</sup> and served as a catechist at Zaza went off to Rukira to train as an administrative assistant. He was appointed sub-chief and at least one notable thought him enough of a rising light to ask for a blood pact.<sup>4</sup> Another of the mission employees, Simom Nyiringondo, came forward as an interpreter.<sup>5</sup>

The contrast with Belgian rule was striking; it was announced that ubuletwa and crop dues were abolished unless they were the result of specific land grants to tenant farmers.<sup>6</sup> When freedom of worship was proclaimed, complaints

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1. 'During this first fortnight of May court cases have flooded into Lukira. Guided by a secret hope, encouraged above all by the new way of carrying out justice, litigants are coming in from everywhere. But in face of the number and above all the age of some complaints, it has been made known to litigants as a general rule that cases going back more than three or four years would not be handled'; see Zaza Diary 15 May 1922

2. Zaza Diary 18 May 1922

3. Pages Un Royaume Hamite 613

4. Zaza Diary 25 April, 10 May 1922

5. *ibid.* 25 April 1922.

6. *ibid.* 19 April 1922



about the missionaries poured in.<sup>1</sup> Tsohe Tutsi were brought into Rukira and their diviner's 'potions' publicly burnt.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps because of past Nyabingi disturbances in Kigezi, female chiefs were banned, with the result that a wife of the important Ega chief, Kayondo, left the region altogether.<sup>3</sup> A new and more powerful patron had come into the land to make lowly both Tutsi and Fathers alike. In October 1922, Joseph Lukamba was made provisional chief of Mirenge province thus fulfilling the Rwandan Tutsi's worst fears, the Gisaka kings had been resurrected.<sup>4</sup>

The British were cordial in their relations with the White Fathers. Although they took the precaution of asking the missionaries to sign a declaration pledging to refrain from political activity, the Rukira Resident kindly sent tax defaulters to Zaza to work for the Fathers at one third normal rates.<sup>5</sup> Behind the scenes the Catholic mission was working for the return of British Rwanda to Belgium. After speaking to this effect at the Union Coloniale in Brussels, Bishop Classe returned to Rwanda in September 1922 the renowned defender of Musinga's kingdom.<sup>6</sup> Both mwami and Belgians appreciated his efforts; Musinga deigned to attend

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1. Zaza Diary 18 April 1922

2. *ibid.* 19 April 1922

3. *ibid.*

4. *ibid.* 11 October 1922

5. *ibid.* 7 May 1922

6. Rapports annuels 1922-1923, 500; de Lacger Ruanda 497

the consecration of Kabgayi cathedral, while King Albert presented the Vicar-Apostolic with the Order of the Lion.<sup>1</sup> Pastor Anett of the Société Belge des Missions Protestantes also put a strong case before the Mandates Commission for the return of Gisaka, but it was ultimately the British loss of interest in the famous Cape to Cairo railway that resulted in the League of Nations' ruling of September 8th. 1923 which gave Musinga back a sizeable portion of his kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

The Protestants had been an unwelcome little cloud on the White Fathers' horizon for four years. A Belgian Seventh-Day Adventist missionary, Pastor Monnier, temporarily occupied the abandoned stations of Kirinda and Iremera in late 1919 before moving on to Gitwe which became the Adventist headquarters.<sup>3</sup> An American colleague who slipped in from Uganda was expelled but Monnier was later joined by a Swiss Pastor, Delhove.<sup>4</sup> The Société Belge tactlessly sent as its first representative, Pastor Vom der Heyden, a Frenchman from Metz, who had formerly been a member of the Evangelische Missionsgesellschaft in

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1. Rapports annuels 1922-1923, 501; de Lager Ruanda 497

2. Anett to Franck 20 April 1921; Le Chrétien Belge 16 September 1922 No. 18, 287; Bulletin Missionnaire September 1923, 61. Attached marginal notes in M.639 suggest that Anett's letters made a big impact at the League of Nations; Louis Ruanda-Urundi 257.

3. Education Report for Ruanda-Urundi 1921 M.634 AA

4. Zaza Diary 29 April 1922; Report on Missions in Ruanda-Urundi 12 May 1921 M.639 AA



Rwanda, so was tarred with the German brush. He re-occupied Kirinda and re-opened the school; in July 1922 Pastors Josué Honoré and Arthur Lestrade joined him with a trained Belgian nurse.<sup>1</sup> Five Christians baptised in German times came forward at Rubengera where Madame Vom der Heyden was able to start a girls' school.<sup>2</sup> By September 1922, they were beginning to baptise new converts.<sup>3</sup>

The Church Missionary Society, which had been hovering for several years on the Uganda border, had blotted their copybook in 1917 when a group of missionaries wandered through Rwanda.<sup>4</sup> The Belgians, acutely embarrassed by the Bugoyi famine, discovered that they were asking people about the treatment of porters. Enough consternation was caused for the Belgian Colonial Ministry to instruct Pastor Anet not, on any account, to send British Protestants.<sup>5</sup> Governor Ryckmans perceptively warned the Minister that C.M.S. missionaries coming from upper-class backgrounds and with Cambridge and medical degrees might easily overawe the less endowed Belgian Protestants. Moreover,

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1. Ryckmans to Minister for the Colonies 26 October 1920 M.639; La Libre Belgique 20 January 1923; Bulletin Missionnaire July 1922 No.1, 2

2. Bulletin Missionnaire December 1922 No.3, 22

3. *ibid.* September 1922 No.2, 10

4. These were Revs. Lewin, Stanley-Smith and Leonard Sharp, see Memorandum for Minister for the Colonies 10 November 1920 M.639 AA

5. *ibid.*

they might contrast the Belgian administration unfavourably with the British.<sup>1</sup>

The cession of Gisaka allowed the C.M.S. to gain a foothold south of Kigezi and they baptised their first group of Rwandan Christians in September 1922.<sup>2</sup> When the region was returned to Belgium, nationalist sensibilities were less strained and they were allowed to stay.<sup>3</sup> Many of their former adherents left, though, presumably equating the mission with the British and hopes of emancipation for the Banyagisaka.<sup>4</sup> A Toro Christian, Ezekiel Kaharu, visited the mwami in April 1924 to obtain permission for a station on Lake Mohasi, later to be Gahini mission. 'In the eyes of the natives', Stanley-Smith told C.M.S. readers, 'such sanction is almost of more value than the dictates of European rulers'.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ryckmans to Minister for the Colonies: 26 October 1920  
M:639 AA
  2. Zaza Diary 19 April 1922; Ruanda Notes No.6 16 February 1923. A collection of the magazine may be found at the Ruanda Mission section of the C.M.S. headquarters, London.
  3. Anet to Franck 5 September 1923 AE/II No.1918 AA
  4. 'With the change of administration, the position of the Protestant and English Mission had become, in the eyes of the natives, dubious; so I found that in nearly every place the work had gone back, and our teachers were no longer being supported by the chiefs. But our worst enemies were the R.C.'s', see Ruanda Notes No.9 28 March 1924
  5. Ruanda Notes No.9 28 March 1924



This irreverent observation had little evidence to support it. The Belgians saw the return of Gisaka as an opportunity for exerting more pressure on the king; 'I hope it will allow us to change our tactics with Muzinga', Mortehan told Classe, 'it is a unique chance to obtain from him what must become the basis of his country's development i.e. stabilisation of property rights'.<sup>1</sup> With the League of Nations Mandate to supervise Rwanda given to Belgium on August 31st. 1923, there was now a determination to rule through the Tutsi and to push ahead with reforms.

The Belgians had recognised Rwandan courts in an Ordinance of April 28th. 1917, but this left the Hutu at the mercy of their chiefs; they now tried to have an administrator present at all important cases. Ubuletwa was reduced from two out of five to two out of seven days in 1924, and, later, to one out of seven. The Tutsi practice of marking and claiming Hutu banana trees and the enforced donation of cattle when a lord's cows died, were abolished. Head and cattle taxes were instituted. Most important politically, the mwami was obliged to consult the Belgians before making any appointments.<sup>2</sup> These decrees, designed to alleviate the lot of the peasantry, remained largely a paper exercise; the Belgians could only curb the mwami and collect the taxes.

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1. Mortehan to Classe 10 September 1923 C.O.

2. Bourgeois R. Banyarwanda et Barundi Vol. I 1957, 181-182; Paternostre de la Mairie B. Le Rwanda son effort de développement Brussels 1972, 109, 112-114

Bishop Classe himself was quoted in Le Soir from a booklet he had written, Le Royaume de Musinga.

Above all, while refraining from bringing up the most serious question of private property, I would say that progressive reform is needed. More security for goods, possessions, fields, harvests and even herds is required.<sup>1</sup>

In private he conspired to sound more radical than his pre-occupation with private property indicated, complaining that 'since there is a fear of attacking the basis of the social organisation, we are exposed to half-measures'.<sup>2</sup>

This was a low water mark in his feelings about the Tutsi; when the tide turned such outre thoughts were to disappear.

The Belgians' dependence on the White Fathers extended to many aspects of colonial life. The missions were expected to supply domestic servants for the administrators and to look after their coloured offspring.<sup>3</sup> Father Hurel's grammar was a standard text for the keen new official, and he produced a herbal remedy against the cattle-pest that decimated Tutsi herds in 1921.<sup>4</sup> The Commissaire-Royal once wrote shamefacedly for that staple of colonial rule, 2,000 sheets of paper to complete the year's Bulletin.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Le Soir 29 March 1923, a cutting in AE/II No. 1847 AA

2. Classe to Marchal 23 September 1923 W.F.A.R.

3. Ryckmans to Hirth 16 November 1921; Marzorati to Kigali Resident 22 July 1927 C.O.

4. Van den Eede to Classe 11 January 1920; Morteihan to Classe 18 November 1922; Classe to Morteihan 9 December 1922 C.O.

5. Marzorati to Classe 14 February 1925 C.O.



Almost all the implementation of agricultural policy relied initially on the co-operation of the Catholics missions. The period of reforms after 1924 only increased the dependance.

More essential to the administration than any other aspect of mission work was the Catholics' extensive infrastructure of Minor seminaries and schools. Belgian philosophy of education in Africa was essentially that of the 1924 Phelps-Stokes Commission, an emphasis on vocational training and vernacular teaching, adumbrated by Franck during his visit.<sup>1</sup> The missionaries were suited to this type of formation, but Liberal pressures from Belgium dictated some commitment to secular schools. Church control of education was being hotly debated in Belgium,<sup>2</sup> and some of the political sound and fury reached Rwanda. The Kigali Resident removed children from the town's Catholic school in a peremptory fashion, and even appears to have claimed fixtures and fittings.<sup>3</sup> The resultant of the parallelogram of political forces in Belgium was an education system left almost entirely in missionary hands with a few showpiece secular institutions. The Government school in Nyanza had 106 pupils in 1920 and equipment described by an impartial observer as 'perhaps

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1. Lemarchand R. Political Awakening in the Congo <sup>Belgian</sup> Los Angeles 1964, 134

2. See Mallinson V. Power and Politics in Belgian Education London 1963

3. Mortehan to Kigali Resident 16 April 1921 C.O.

the finest in all Africa'.<sup>1</sup>

Despite debates in Brussels about whether Catholics in Ruanda-Urundi should be subsidised, the White Fathers in Rwanda were the fortunate recipients of 56,675 francs annually from 1921, money sent by mistake from subsidies for the Congo missions.<sup>2</sup> They badly needed it; every seminarian cost five hundred francs per annum, and it was often difficult to provision them. Bishop Classe did his utmost to 'sell' his seminaries. 'Pupils destined for the ecclesiastical state will never be more than a feeble minority', he told Van den Eede; 'our goal is to form school teachers as well as employees of all sorts'.<sup>3</sup> But standards were too low and the curriculum too 'religious' for the Belgians to want to buy.<sup>4</sup> The five or six Protestant missionaries in Rwanda were getting 25,000 francs - intentionally - as nationals, so it was difficult to make a case for denying the more numerous Catholics equal treatment.<sup>5</sup> The first funds deliberately budgeted for the Rwanda Fathers, 25,000 francs, were sent in 1924 and the sum raised to 55,000 francs in 1925.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Ruanda Notes No. 18 November 1926

2. Report of Senate Session of 29 July 1921; Memorandum by Kervyn for Minister for the Colonies 9 April 1923 M.634 AA

3. Classe to Van den Eede 25 January 1920 C.O.

4. Van den Eede to Classe 9 June 1920; Classe to Van den Eede 12 June 1920; Marzorati to Minister for the Colonies 4 July 1923 M.634 AA

5. Memorandum by Kervyn to Minister for the Colonies 11 March 1921 M.634 AA

6. Marzorati to Classe 2 October, 13 November 1924, 29 April 1925 C.O.



Thus the result was much the same in Rwanda as in British territories, an identity of interest between Church and colonial regime, and a mission dominated education system; the difference was that the Belgians were more ideologically motivated in their drive for secular schools.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the growth of Protestant missions, the Catholic Church was undeniably the official religion of the country; the presence of C.M.S. missionaries was treated with 'unwilling toleration',<sup>2</sup> but German Protestants were beyond the pale.<sup>3</sup> The experience of the Congo had not endeared 'Anglo-Saxon' missionaries to the Belgians.<sup>4</sup> 'As for the White Fathers', thought the Chef de Service in the Brussels Colonial Ministry, 'had they not been in the country, it would have been sound policy to call them'.<sup>5</sup> Monsignor Hirth and Father Lecoindre both received the Order of the Lion and the airs of La Brabançonne could be heard from the Rwandan seminaries. In hard times, the administrators rallied round to supply the seminarians with grain.<sup>6</sup>

At the other end of the spectrum from the anti-clericals and merging with the main body of Belgians who saw the need for the White Fathers, were men who saw more than a

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1. Scanlon D.G. ed. Church, State and Education in Africa  
New York 1966

2. Ruanda Notes No. 19 January 1927, 21

3. Ryckmans to Franck 2 December 1922 M.639 AA

4. Slade English Speaking Missions 298 et seq.

5. Memorandum for Minister for the Colonies 18 March 1921  
M.634 AA

6. Kabgayi Diary 6 November 1925

marriage of convenience in the cordial relations between Church and colonial government. Protestantism had been bothersome in a number of colonies and the Kimbangu movement that began in 1921 in the Congo was far from dead. All over Africa anxious colonial officers opened dossiers on innocuous pastors. One fanatical Catholic unburdened himself thus to the Bishop:

Mais en double titre de catholique et de colonial je méconnais à l'enseignement protestant toute valeur éducative - parce qu'il ne se préoccupe aucunement du génie propre de nos races primitives et leur distribue une nourriture spirituelle révolutionnent (sic) leurs concepts mentales et génératrice d'anarchie. Par la diffusion d'un dogmatisme spécieuse... déterminant un individualisme outrancier - le protestantisme tend nécessairement à détruire le précieux esprit grégoire de nos Noirs qui seul peut réaliser et maintenir l'état de soumission latente, volontaire et collective indispensable à toute oeuvre de civilisation.<sup>1</sup>

It is surely against such Catholic 'fascism' and movements like 'Action Française'<sup>2</sup> that Classe should be judged rather than the modern Catholic Left.

The first graduates came out of the Government school at Nyanza in 1923 and the Belgians now had the raw materials

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1. Kupens to Classe 20 June 1925 C.O.

2. See Weber E. Action Française Stanford 1962



with which to build their social policy.<sup>1</sup> The thirty or so ambitious Tutsi leaving annually permitted the administration to dismiss old chiefs and replace them by their trained sons, to eliminate anti-European Tutsi from public office and amalgamate jurisdictions under selected new men. Iwakadigi gave way for his son in 1925 and new chiefs began appearing around Rwaza.<sup>2</sup> The process of imposing Banyanduga in the north was given a new impetus, and the abahinza ruled kingdoms of Bukunzi and Busozo were occupied militarily and incorporated into Tutsi-ruled provinces.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Rapport sur l'Administration Belge du Ruanda-Urundi 1923, 6

2. Rwaza Diary January 1925; Nyundo Diary 22 September 1924; Rapports annuels 1924-1925, 460

3. The subjugation of Bukunzi was occasioned by the death of its umuhinza, Ndagano, in April 1923. On the pretext of averting ritual killings at the funeral, Belgian troops occupied the kingdom. Bigirumwera, Ndagano's older brother, then ruled with the Queen-Mother until the Belgians wanted him for tax-defaulting and he appealed to the Mibirisi Fathers for help in March 1924. He met Rwagataraka at the mission and agreed to pay a fine of twenty cows and submit peacefully to the Belgians. No cows were paid. Despite pleas from the Fathers and the efforts of the Tutsi, who feared the loss of an important rainmaker, the Belgians eventually tracked down the Bukunzi royal family in March 1925 and shot the Queen-Mother dead. Five months later, Rutasumbga, Queen-Mother of Busozo, surrendered and both kingdoms fell under Rwagataraka's jurisdiction. Few Tutsi wanted to live in either and the conquest did not have Nyanza's support. See Mibirisi Diary 30 March 1923, 7-31 April 1924, 25 May 1927; Rapports annuels 1923-1924, 378; Pauwels: Le Bushiru 215; Bourgeois: Banyarwanda Vol. I, 182



While the Belgians extended Nyanza's rule to regions untouched in German times, nothing comparable was done to strengthen Musinga's personal power. As a result, the struggle at the heart of Rwanda's court politics, between king and nobility, was swung in favour of the aristocrats; since the Belgians provided their appointees with land, clients and cattle, or they got them for themselves, the system amounted to a feudal bureaucracy in which the king increasingly found no place. Major Tutsi lineages courted the new focus of power within the State, the Belgian administrators, and handed over to their sons if they politically overreached themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Bishop Classe may be accused of being premature in his identification of a 'pro-European faction' at court in 1916; five years later the Belgians had transformed wishful thinking into reality. The court began to split into a group that looked to the Belgians for patronage, the Inshongore - or complainers<sup>2</sup> - and one that still courted the mwami; these traditionalists were called by the Nyiginya leader Ntulo, 'Abayoboke' - those who know only a single way.<sup>3</sup> The Inshongore wished to take the process of accommodation further than Musinga would contemplate; there were more ways than one of staying in power.

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1. See Des Forges Rwanda under Musiinga 252, 293 for examples

2. *ibid.* 252-323 provides an exhaustive account of the

lineage politics of the court. Inshongore was the name



As the old tension between king and nobles was transformed by Belgian patronage into separate chains of clientship, the mwami struggled to keep control of the provinces by multiplying the number of his garagu and providing them with ibikingi. 'The king is actively working to dispossess all the province chiefs', wrote Classe in 1923, 'and to increase his personal power which once had been so great'.<sup>1</sup> But Musinga no longer held the top of the chain; his fury mounted as nobles denounced him to the Belgians, and the Marangara chiefs proudly boasted their independence from Nyanza.<sup>2</sup>

With the Ega chiefs Kayondo and Ntulo ranged against him, the king had no alternative but to look to his enemies, the White Fathers, for support. To ingratiate himself with the missionaries and tighten his hold on the newly returned Gisaka, Musinga took the unusual step of warning the Gisaka nobles against rival missions.<sup>3</sup>

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giveness to a pack of Ntulo's hunting dogs and was a well-chosen insult.

3) M. Lenaerts 'Territoire de Nyanza. Rapport établi en réponse au questionnaire adressé en 1929 par M. le Gouverneur du Ruanda-Urundi à l'Administrateur du territoire du Nyanza'. Henceforth abbreviated to Nyanza Report 1929.

1. Classe to Marchal 10 March 1923 WFA

2. Kabgayi Diary 17, 23 October 1923; 28 November 1924

3. Rapports annuels 1923-1924, 370

To my chiefs: much greetings.

Through this present letter I announce to you that the Bapadri are my friends as they have always been. So if they wish to build schools to teach the people of Rwanda, give them land and help them. I am happy under the rule of Bulamatari and for that reason I want there to be Europeans of no other nationality in my kingdom. And you will tell your sub-chiefs what I have told you.

It is I the king of Rwanda.

Yuhi Musinga

There were to be no reformist British nor their C.M.S. missionaries. Protestants were now refused audience at court and the Fathers reciprocated by intervening with the Belgians on the mwami's behalf.<sup>1</sup> But the drift away from Musinga was irrevocable; when he tried to set an example and attended the Government school, several pupils left to join the Fathers. 'How things have changed', remarked the Kabgayi diarist.<sup>2</sup>

Signs of the mwami's softer attitude seem to have made a great impact on the ordinary Hutu; after Musinga attended the blessing of Kabgayi cathedral, catechists on nearby hills were overwhelmed with postulants. The Catholic missions continued making gains throughout 1924.<sup>3</sup> Lwabusisi, a nephew of the Queen-Mother, was now openly recruiting

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1. Classe to Marchal 18 March 1924 W.F.A.R.; Kabgayi Diary 20 August 1924

2. Kabgayi Diary 15 February 1924

3. Rapports annuels 1923-1924, 350, 360, 370, 375



for Catholic schools amongst chiefs and sub-chiefs.<sup>1</sup>

'All the youth of the ruling class want to learn how to read and write', the Fathers observed.<sup>2</sup> Several years of education were now the condition for retaining or augmenting Tutsi power. Nobles came en masse with their garagu to sign on as postulants in the catechists' registers, and soon the catechism classes included young married men amongst the children.<sup>3</sup> One of Kabare's sons, Lwabutogo, became a fervent evangelist at court,<sup>4</sup> but for many the important part came after the formal catechism when the lessons in reading, writing and arithmetic began in the bush schools.

By the beginning of 1925, the Catholics had 17,475 pupils crammed into their classrooms, or being taught in the open air by teachers barely one step ahead of their class. With a 12,000 increase since 1922, the Catholic school system was swamped and sustained only by the eagerness of its long-suffering clients. In contrast there were about 300 young Tutsi in the Government school at Nyanza, and sixty of these were catechumens. They followed a four to five year course then spent a year at an administrative post learning European tax and court procedures. Until the secular school system was phased out

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1. See also p. 290 n. 1

2. Rapports annuels 1923-1924, 370

3. ibid. 349; de Lacger Ruanda 520

4. Des Forges Rwanda under Musiinga 259-260

in 1929, approximately four hundred secretaries, chiefs' sons and a few veterinary students passed through Nyanza where they received two years French and a final year Swahili. After 1925 the Catholics ran their own Swahili classes at Kabgayi under Father Weymeersch, but teaching in the bush schools remained in Kinyarwanda, rote learning.<sup>1</sup>

The change in the balance of power between mwami and nobles, coupled with the new educational definition of eligibility for political office, combined to make mission patronage highly desirable for ambitious Tutsi. It cost little now to please the Fathers, and sophisticated nobles soon learnt Musinga's trick of using rival Protestant missions to effect. When Protestants in Kinyaga requested Rwagataraka's permission to build, the chief got considerable mileage out of it. 'Ni wowe mukuru - (you are my superior) - njewe inshuti yanyu itabafatanya na Abaportesitani nkabandi bese - (I am your friend who will not be snatched by the Protestants)', Rwagataraka told Father Lecoindre.<sup>2</sup> As this shrewdest of the Ega remarked:

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1. Statistics taken from Rapports annuels and see Marzorati to Classe 13 November 1924 C.O.

2. Father Lecoindre had been Superior at Save and Kabgayi, positions liable to 'make or break' a missionary. He was made Monsignor Classe's Économe Générale in charge of provisions and the vicariate's budget in 1922. He was a powerful patron equal to Classe to whom even Musinga wrote begging letters, see Musinga to Lecoindre 7 December, 12 December 1922, 29 January 1923 C.O.



'If a man serves two masters he will hate one and love the other'.<sup>1</sup> Whether feudal or biblical in inspiration, his words summed up the mood of the times; increasingly the Tutsi were having to make choices between old and new channels of power and patronage.

The movement of the Tutsi into the mission orbit transformed the position of the Catholic Church. It was appropriate that as Monsignor Classe moved in as leading spiritual authority in the State, so Gashamura, the king's ritual expert and head of the Tsohe, should pass out the other door. Gashamura, never forgiven for his role in ousting the Ega when the Belgians arrived, was haunted by Kayondo. The Ega chief was jockeying his nephew, Rwigemera, into line for succession and denigrated Gashamura as a fanatical 'sorcerer', a charge bound to succeed with the Europeans.<sup>2</sup> It was in vain that Musinga appealed to the Bishop to save his umwiru; the Inshongore knew too well how to manipulate the missionaries.<sup>3</sup>

Musinga seemed to be at a loss how to counter the massive onslaught on the traditional prerogatives of king and court. He reeled from one humiliation and defeat to the next; the Belgians forced him to disband the ntore so that he watched helplessly while the pride of his entourage

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1. 'Umuntu iyabunze Abami 2 umwe aramanga amaze agakunda umwe' see Rwagataraka to Lecoindre 25, 30 November 1926 C.O.

2. Des Forges Rwanda under Musinga 308-309

3. Kabgayi Diary 15 March 1925; Rapports annuels 1925-1926, 8; Coubeau to Classe 10 December 1924 C.O. suggests that the Bishop thought Gashamura was planning a rising.

fell under European influence. 'Musinga seems very clumsy to me at the moment', wrote the Kigali Resident. 'Fear has perhaps made him lose a little of what I took to be his political sense...it seems to me that we have been frightened of a phantom. Can it be that Native institutions are destined to disintegrate at our touch?'<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the Liberal left hand was at last aware what the right hand was doing, nonetheless, concession after concession were wrung from the mwami; the first-fruits ceremonies were abandoned<sup>2</sup> and, in April 1925, Musinga took the unprecedented step of sleeping outside the capital after visiting Kabgayi.<sup>3</sup> A visit from the Governor brought another humiliation; the king refused to acknowledge his presence and was summarily ordered to Astrida whence he was instructed to return to Nyanza and receive the Governor with fitting protocol.<sup>4</sup>

The mwami's recourse to the missionaries was limited by the fact that the Bishop's ear was for any solicitous.

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1. Coubeau to Classe 28 September 1924 C.O.

2. Umuganura was stopped after Gashamura's deportation, see Father Martin's notes on Bumbogo 23 November 1924, Derscheid Papers

3. This was on the occasion of Father Classe's Silver Anniversary as a priest. Rather pathetically, Musinga asked the Bishop to keep it a secret that he slept away, see Classe to Voillard 22 April 1925; Kabgayi Diary 19 April 1925

4. Rapports annuels 1925-1926, 8



noble Kayondo, who was turning his attentions to the Nyiginya traditionalists, Kanuma and Bandora, helped the Fathers out by provisioning the seminaries at times of scarcity. Ntulo felt obliged to follow suit.<sup>1</sup> At the end of 1926 when an important court case was proceeding in Nyanza, Father Lecoindre was petitioned by Rwagataraka, Ntulo and Serukenyinkware, the latter a litigant;<sup>2</sup> they let the priest know that the correspondence was being kept a secret from the king. More sinister for the mwami than these clandestine letters was the way Rwigemera, his second surviving son, was complaining to Kabgayi how he was more and more persecuted by his father because of his rapprochement with the Europeans, government and missionaries.<sup>3</sup> The young prince was another masterful exponent of the art of priest-handling and laid great stress on Musinga's homosexual habits, doubtless after

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1. Kabgayi Diary 4 December 1925, 18 July 1926
  2. Serukenyinkware was the mwami's chief expert in court sacrifices and his later defection to the pro-European faction was of great significance. Mutara Rudahigwa seems to have been greatly influenced by him. After learning to read and write he was given Kanage and Bwishaza provinces. See Political Report for Rubengera 1929; Derscheid Papers; Rwagataraka to Lecoindre 14, 23, 25 November 1926; Serukenyinkware to Lecoindre 1 December 1926; Ntulo to Lecoindre 12 December 1926 C.O.
  3. Kabgayi Diary 21 October 1926. Rwigemera was essentially the Inshongore candidate for the mwamiship as against Rudahigwa who, at this stage, was still supporting the king.

hearing their stories of the Uganda martyrs. 'Our Musinga', Classe was to write, 'has nothing to envy a Mtesa or a Mwanga about in old Uganda in this sphere'.<sup>1</sup> The Bishop was informed that Rudahigwa, the mwami's eldest son, had all the king's favours since he had promised to continue the traditions of the dynasty 'over which the famous Bandora has been put as custodian'.<sup>2</sup>

The strategy of the Inshongore was clear; they saw Musinga as a spent force and tried to isolate him further by picking off, one by one, his closest allies;<sup>3</sup> seeing the threat of an all-Hutu Church in a Belgian territory, they were manoeuvring to maintain the position of the ruling class and major Tutsi lineages. Their appeal was irresistible to the Fathers. Their 'collaboration' might be contrasted with the traditionalists' 'resistance', but the contrast would detract from the more important point that the struggle between king and nobles, the feudal dynamic, had been transformed by the Pax Belgica and the demands of western Christianity.

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1. Rapports annuels 1925-1926, 8

2. Kabgayi Diary 21 October 1926

3. It was here that the missionaries were most important as the Inshongore successfully played on the Christianity vs traditional religion conflict. In Rwagataraka to Lecoindre 1 December 1926 it is suggested that Bandora is a 'sorcerer' trying to poison the prince. The Rapport sur l'administration Belge du Ruanda-Urundi speaks of 'asservissement du mwami aux devins' 1926, 6. Bourgeois Banyarwanda Vol. I, 183 presents the same picture.



The Belgians had thought the worst of Musinga since an insurrection scare at the end of 1924. His behaviour during the Governor's visit had not helped matters, so when Rwagataraka put around the story that Rwigemera was about to be poisoned on account of his close association with the Fathers, it was readily believed;<sup>1</sup> the scheming prince was moved to the safety of Kigali. Evidence is scanty, but it seems that the administration contemplated deposing the mwami at this point. Musinga certainly began doing his utmost to gain the Fathers' favour. When they sent Rwagataraka to court in November 1926 to plead for a new mission at Nyamasheke, it was granted.<sup>2</sup> The White Fathers considered it a great coup since the site chosen, on the shores of Lake Kivu, was an ikigabiro, sacred ground on which one of Rwabugiri's residences had once stood.<sup>3</sup> In January 1927, Musinga wrote the Bishop a pathetic letter begging him to be friends again and warning him against rumour-mongers. 'These people (Inshongore)', he wrote, 'want the king to be caught like Gashamura'. To oppose the traditionalists, he explained, was like trying to make an enemy of the thunder God, Inkuba; 'you can do

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1. Rwagataraka to Lecoindre 1 December 1926; p.408 n.3

2. Rapports annuels 1930-1931, 322

3. Rwagataraka, who had been saved from death on two occasions by the Fathers' treatment, was now something of a mission agent; he seems to have paid for the 102 hectares of the Nyamasheke site himself, see Mibirisi Diary 18 February 1927.

nothing against them but they can harm you'.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps Musinga was a prisoner of the court to be sacrificed for the survival of the Tutsi State, as he was symbolically in the appeasement ceremonies. Bishop Classe was willing to give him the benefit of the doubt; he went to Bujumbura to plead on his behalf with the Governor, but even he was moving away from the illusion that the Queen-Mother was the source of all evil, towards a realisation that what he called the marche-en-arrière had the king in the vanguard.<sup>2</sup>

Probably the Belgians did not depose Musinga then for want of a suitable successor; to justify suffering the wrath of the Liberal press, they wanted a worthwhile substitute. The Vicar-Apostolic, it seems likely, was unwilling to rock the boat at a time when the Tutsi were converting in increasing numbers; the number of catechumens at Kigali rose from 353 in 1924 to 2,697 in 1928; at Kabgayi the numbers doubled. The movement was limited to the Catholic Church; according to the White Fathers, the Tutsi were unimpressed by the eschatological doctrines of the Seventh-Day Adventists.<sup>3</sup>

The Tutsi were now dividing into traditionalists who regretted the passing of court ritual and who frequented diviners and Lyangombe mediums, and progressives, who were

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1. Musinga to Classe 6 January 1927: 'Kandi barashaka kugirngw'abantu bandje bazafatwe nkuko Gashamura yafashwe'. Ninkuwakwangana n'Inkuba ntachyo yayitwara, ariko y'ibishatse yakimutwara' C.O.

2. Rapports annuels 1925-1926, 8; de Lager Ruanda, 525

3. Rapports annuels 1923-1924, 1925-1926; 1926-1927, 23



ready to take a little catholicism with their education. But disruptive prophetic religion had nothing to commend it, whether Nyabingi prophetesses or Adventist preachers. An interesting spread in the popularity of the Nyabingi mediums between 1924-1928 appears to have been limited to the Hutu.<sup>1</sup> Sharangabo, the leading Nyiginya noble in Buganza, viewed both Nyabingi and the C.M.S. with a jaundiced eye; he had threatened to kill the English missionaries when they first arrived.<sup>2</sup> The Tutsi were ready to assimilate institutional catholicism; they saw dangers to their monopoly of power in aberrant eruptions of the spirit world.

These were heady days for Bishop Classe. Tutsi diviners were reported to be burning their amulets and equipment, two hundred of the pupils at Nyanza school were catechumens, and, though the old guard like Sharangabo died resolutely refusing baptism, their sons were one step from the font. Musinga's wife, Nyirakabuga, the mother of Rwigemera so banished from court, asked the Zaza Fathers in February 1928 to build her a hut near the mission so that she could receive regular instruction.<sup>3</sup> Unspoken but

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1. The mediums were said to have 'thousands' of adepts in Buganza. The Fathers concluded that the mandwa cult was for the Tutsi while 'the Nyabingi cult is no less widespread amongst the Hutu', see Rwaza Diary 13 May 1928; Rapports annuels 1924-1925, 463-465
  2. Ruanda Notes No. 16 April 1926, 11; Rapports annuels 1924-1925, 464: 'Sharangabo detests the Nyabingi'.
  3. Rapports annuels 1927-1928, 285-287; Zaza Diary 21

understood, pretenders were moving forward to be groomed for the role of Christian King.

The vision of a Catholic aristocracy, informed by the Faith and leading a subject peasantry along the paths of righteousness, and economic development, now seemed something more than a mirage glimpsed by Lavigerie from across the Sahara. It was a peculiarly Catholic habit to talk of common sense when a point was proven, and of dogma when it was not; reason and pragmatism increasingly characterised Classe's correspondence in the 1920s.

'If we want to take a practical point of view', he began to Mortehan, 'and look to the country's real interests, we have in the Tutsi youth an incomparable element for progress that nobody knowing Ruanda can underestimate. Avid to learn, desirous of becoming acquainted with all that comes from Europe, wanting to imitate Europeans, enterprising, realising well enough that traditional customs have lost their raison d'être, but nevertheless preserving the political sense of the old timers and their race's adroitness in the management of men, this youth is a force for good and for the economic future of the country'.<sup>1</sup> Poised at the portal of the Church in 1927, the Tutsi appeared again to the Bishop as 'borm chiefs'.<sup>2</sup>

The Belgians did make a half-hearted attempt to introduce a sprinkling of Hutu chiefs and karani, but it foundered on the entrenched opposition of the Tutsi. The

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1. Classe to Mortehan 21 September 1927 C.O. 2. *ibid.*



impossibility of ruling without the nobles' consent was well illustrated in the case of Joseph Lukamba of Zaza. He rose to prominence in Gisaka during the British interlude on the strength of his mission connection and literacy; in September 1924, he was replaced by one of Gashamura's sons on orders from Musinga. Pressure from the Belgians enabled him to retain two hills for a while, but he was soon chased off and left only with control of Zaza hill on which the mission stood.<sup>1</sup> The only career now open to him was in mission employment; he later became a school inspector and his son, a sub-deacon in 1928, was to be consecrated Bishop Aloys Bigirumwami.<sup>2</sup> Kaberuka, the Catholic Hutu chief of Ndiza, literate after attending Nyanza school, was in charge of 73 hills and 3,913 head of cattle; an administrator described him nonetheless as 'held in low esteem, if not despised, by the Watusi'.<sup>3</sup> If Classe could not conceive of Rwanda ruled by the Hutu, it was because no-one else could.

Nor had the reductio ad anarchia argument dear to the Vicar-Apostolic lost any of its force in the 1920s. The Bushiru umuhinza had little control over breakaway segments of his lineage and clan feuds abounded;<sup>4</sup> he was notoriously anti-mission and led a rising in June 1925 with a disaffected

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1. Zaza Diary 14 October, 19 November 1924.

2. He was consecrated on 1 June 1952 at Kabgayi.

3. Nyanza Report 1929.

4. See Political Report for Bushiru 1925, Derscheid Papers.

catechumen against the collection of crop dues.<sup>1</sup> The last of the independent Hutu units fell in 1928 when the umwami of Bumbogo was deposed;<sup>2</sup> his lineage had held the office of umuganuza, bearer of first fruits to the Rwandan kingdom.<sup>3</sup> Little in the Hutu kingdoms was appealing to the Fathers; the Mibirisi Superior saw 'the lack of authority of the chiefs over their subordinates' as 'a very serious cause of the missions slow progress...'. The former belong to the Hutu class and around here Hutu chiefs are little respected'.<sup>4</sup> The model of the Hutu polity was still the rebellious Kiga where the Nyabingi mediums disturbed Belgian rule,<sup>5</sup> a model that did not fit into the thinking of the law-and-order school of administration. 'A Hutu does not want to be commanded by a Hutu', one administrator declared roundly.<sup>6</sup>

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1. The same umuhinza Nyamakwa had been resisting since the days of the Ndungutse rising, see p.294 n.4. In 1923 as a result of repeated clan feuds the Tutsi Chief, Nyangesi, was put over the province, but commanded little allegiance while Nyamakwa was still alive.
  2. This was Nyamurasa, see Martin 'Notes on Bumbogo'
  3. The Nyanza official for the ceremonial, Gashamura, was already deposed, see p.406 n.2
  4. Rapports annuels 1924-1925, 454.
  5. The Belgians began arresting Nyabingi mediums in 1927 in an attempt to subdue the north, see Rwaza Diary 31 May 1927, 13 May 1928; Rapports annuels 1925-1926, 15. Still, four years later the Tutsi chief of Buberuka, Kahitakibwa, was murdered while trying to collect taxes, see Servranckx to Father Superior Rwaza 26 October 1931
  6. Servranckx 'Rapport de sortie de charge' Shangugu 1930



The visit of Monsignor Hinsley to Africa in 1927 and the Vatican's commitment to educating an elite pushed the White Fathers further into the Tutsi camp; the Superior-General re-iterated Hinsley's message on the necessity of preparing a clerical and lay elite for Africa, and Classe immediately took up the theme.

The question is whether the ruling elite will be for us or against us. If important places in native society will be in Catholic or in non-Catholic hands; if the Church will have through education and its formation of youth the preponderant influence in Rwanda.<sup>1</sup>

If, as he suggested to the Belgians, 'the historical privilege of birth must be provisionally maintained',<sup>2</sup> it followed that the historical privilege of the Church could only be assured by an educated Catholic Tutsi elite. Consensus between Church and colonial government now existed.

Government subsidies helped the Catholic school system to respond to the enormous demands placed on it in the late 1920s. The Catholics produced a formidable array of 467 teachers, 297 with basic training and diplomas.<sup>3</sup> The Government schools were staffed almost entirely by mission-trained teachers, with only a dozen 'secular' teachers for

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1. A Pastoral Letter of 16 July 1927 in Instructions Pastorales de Monseigneur Classe: 1922-1939 Kabgayi 1940, 31, a printed collection

2. Quoted in de Lacger Ruanda 523-524

3. De Lacger Ruanda 510

677 pupils.<sup>1</sup> At Kigali and Ruhengeri, the Fathers ran separate classes for nobles with whose education they were entrusted. French courses were provided for Tutsi pupils at Save, Kabgayi, Kansi and Kigali mission schools, so most of the country's clerks and French teachers were trained exclusively within the Catholic system.<sup>2</sup>

Each mission had a Central school around which radiated a large number of bush schools where, after catechism, pupils learnt the three R's. At Kabgayi, for example, there were 75 chapel-schools, 28 served by catechists with some training as teachers, with an average of 1,194 catechumen-pupils.<sup>3</sup> Although at least four of these schools had mostly Tutsi children by 1928 - one with 79 Tutsi from poorer families - only a single teacher appears to have been from the nobility. The ten classroom Central school served 143 pupils who took a four-year course; teaching lasted four hours per morning four days a week with a month's holiday at the end of July. About one quarter of the teachers at the Central school seem to have been Tutsi; Chrysostome Mushumba, the son of a notable, with a certificat d'aptitude pédagogique, taught one of the classes in the 'first degree' - the first two years - and Augustine Gatabazi

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1. De Lager Ruanda 510

2. For each French-speaking clerk who knew how to type, the Fathers received 350 - 500 francs from the Government, see Coubeau to Commissaire-Royal 18 February 1924 C.O.; Deprimoz White Fathers' School Report for 1927-1928 Dossier 220 WEAR

3. Deprimoz School Report



who was a married ex-seminarian, taught in the 'second degree' - the last two years.<sup>1</sup>

After Bishop Classe had concluded a 'Contrat Scolaire' whereby the Church took over all education in the country, the Government school system was phased out at the beginning of the 1930s. Each pupil taught by the Fathers was worth 47 francs to them in subsidy, each diplomaed teacher, 600 francs per class of 25 pupils.<sup>2</sup> Such was the Church-State harmony, the shared goals, that the secular schools were redundant. 'You must choose Batutsi', Classe told the missionaries, 'because the Government will probably refuse Bahutu teachers... In the Government the positions in every branch of the administration, even the unimportant ones, will be reserved henceforth for young Batutsi'.<sup>3</sup>

As the mission Central schools assumed the full burden of educating the ruling class, Catholic education took on a two-tiered appearance; in several stations an almost segregated stream of Tutsi with well qualified teachers was eligible for special additional subsidies. In 1928, the segregation of Save school was rigid with Tutsi and Hutu sections in each grade. The Tutsi first year had 37 pupils registered, with an average attendance of 27; the Hutu class had 29 registered with an attendance of 18. The school

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1. Deprimoz School Report. The system was modelled on that of the Congo, see Lemarchand Political Awakening 134

2. De Lager Ruanda 517

3. Classe to confrères 15 May 1928 CR

inspector noted little progress amongst the Hutu; only four or five knew how to read. The second year Tutsi were taught by Petro Mukangale, described as 'a calm man having a great deal of authority over his pupils and knowing how to give his class very well'; his average attendances were 25 out of 29. The Hutu stream was taught by Joseph Ngendahimana, described as an 'élément assez médiocre'; 'very little energy, lacks frankness and has had several absences from his class without explanation, and often leaves his pupils' was the report; attendance was 18 out of 26. The numbers of Hutu in 'second degree' classes still exceeded that of Tutsi, and the final two classes could read and write Swahili. Ignace Ngayabosha, who had been to the old normal school in Dar-es-Salaam, took a third section of eight Hutu pupils for vocational training; as teachers; Tutsi pupils were given additional French classes.<sup>1</sup>

The main centres which reflected the recent inrush of Tutsi were at Kigali and Kansi where only 63 out of 326 and 15 out of 198 pupils were Hutu. At Zaza 48 out of 70 pupils were Tutsi but attendances were low because Kanuma, the Nyiginya chief, and his son, were against the school.<sup>2</sup> Broadly speaking, the picture was one of a pronounced movement into Catholic schools amongst the poor and ambitious members of the ruling class, the 'petit Tutsi', especially where the Banyanduga were influenced by the towns. Around

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1. Deprimoz School Report

2. *ibid.*



Nyanza, though, it was as if some inhibitory factor radiated from the court; 'the mututsi element', wrote the Catholic school inspector, Father Deprimoz, of nearby Kabgayi, 'is rather the exception in the station school'.<sup>1</sup> The profile of the Catholic schools faithfully reflected Rwanda's Church History; a majority of teachers and catechists Hutu with 'petit Tutsi' seeing the advantages accruing from Church membership.

The Belgian policy of providing a crash programme for their Tutsi bureaucracy through Church schools spelt the end of the Hutu Church. True, the education system was what Hinsley once called 'the portal of the Church',<sup>2</sup> but more important it now became the great generator and stabiliser of class structure. Bishop Classe, lured by the prospect of a 'racial aristocracy', now gave his blessing to Hutu subservience as Bishops of old had blessed the slave ships. 'We must not for all that neglect the classes of Bahutu young people and children', he told the Fathers, 'they also have need of being schooled and educated, and they will take up places in mine workings and industry'.<sup>3</sup> It mattered little that the 'reading' schools in the bush

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1. Deprimoz School Report 1

2. Monsignor Hinsley, Rector of the English College in Rome, made a tour of Africa in 1928 which marked a major Vatican initiative to improve Catholic education in the wake of the Phelps-Stokes Commission; see Linden Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance 153-159

3. Classe to confreres 15 May 1928

were hopelessly overcrowded so long as the Central schools kept vaguely to the 1925 Government syllabus and did not forfeit their subsidies.<sup>1</sup> Religion for the masses and elite schooling for the Tutsi was the order of the day.

As the streaming system allowed the Tutsi to consolidate their position while undergoing the transformation demanded by the colonial context, so the tensions within the Tutsi class, as poorer families clambered up the educational ladder, were reduced by an increasing racial solidarity. The European definition of race came with the definition of responsible government. The ruling class could now identify themselves as 'Hamites' and their subjects as 'Bantu'. As Father Pagès' book Un Royaume Hamite au Centre de l'Afrique fixed court history for the first time in written form, racial ruling class ideology was given the Church's imprimatur;<sup>2</sup> privileged pupils at school in Kisenyi could hear from Pagès himself the glorious exploits of the Nyiginya dynasty.<sup>3</sup>

The link between 'Hamites' and Semites appeared to be incontestable. It was as if Hamitic history involved.

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1. Discontent at the quality of bush-schools was shown by some chiefs who wanted more than catechism lightly sugared with the 3 R's, see Sandrart 'Rapport établi en réponse au questionnaire adressé en 1929 par M. le Gouverneur du Ruanda-Urundi à l'Administrateur du territoire de Kigali' Henceforth Kigali Report 1929
  2. The monograph was first presented to the Institut Royal Colonial Belge in November 1930 and published in 1933
  3. Kisenyi Report 1929



the progressive dilution, a falling away from, some religious essence preordained to flower into the fullness of Christianity.<sup>1</sup> As early as 1907, the White Fathers were speaking of Tutsi history 'which obviously evokes biblical memories by their customs, often borrowed from Jewish customs'.<sup>2</sup> But what in Pagès was a pleasant jeu d'esprit became in some Belgian administrators unmitigated racism. The Banyarwanda were to be placed on an evolutionary ladder whose rungs were the crudities of physical anthropology. A.J.F. Stevens had the following to say about 'les rudes Bakiga':

Si le Mukiga se rattache au type noir grossier, il est pourtant loin d'avoir en moyenne le front aussi fuyant, le nez aussi écrasé et large, les lèvres aussi grosses et un prognatisme aussi accentué

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1. 'Monophysite on their departure from Abyssinia, the Hamites perhaps little by little in the course of their long exodus, forgot Christian beliefs and adopted superstitions and practices of the people in whose midst they lived'. He accounted for their 'degeneracy' by the fact that they descended from the Galla who were merely on the edge of Ethiopian civilisation, see Pagès: Un Royaume Hamite 8 c.f. Speke on Rumanyika: 'sprung from ... Abyssinians (who) were <sup>Christians</sup> like ourselves, and had the Wahuma not lost their knowledge of God they would be so also', see Speke J. Journal of the Discovery of the Sources of the Nile London 1863, 208
  2. Un Père Blanc 'Traditions des Batutsi' Missions d'Afrique 1907, 177-184

que le type congolais; en un mot, il y a dans cette race comme une poussée vers un 'mieux' esthétique tel que nous le concevons un échelon gravi vers le 'canon' européen.<sup>1</sup>

For such heirs to the evolutionary sociology of the nineteenth century, Tutsi rule was self-evident; 'their intellectual superiority has imposed them'.<sup>2</sup> Hutu, on the other hand, needed fond but firm paternal authority. 'Mahuku is not a bad sub-chief', wrote another Resident, 'but, muhutu, you have to supervise everything he does'.<sup>3</sup> Several missionaries agreed that the Hutu were incapable of governing, indisciplined and vulgar.<sup>4</sup> The Hutu Church, of course, gave the lie to them all, but it had faded into insignificance in the shadow of the Tutsi nobility and the Church triumphant.

The 1920s brought no succour to the Hutu; the initial effect of Belgian legislation was to worsen the lot of the peasants. They suffered the additional burden of kazi labour in Public Works, and compulsory planting of food crops like manioc and sweet potatoes.<sup>5</sup> Tax revenue rose from

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1. Stevens 'Rapport de sortie de charge' Byumba 1933

2. *ibid.*

3. Dryvers 'Rapport de sortie de charge' Mutara 1932

4. Rapports annuels 1924-1925, 454

5. For hostile reaction to kazi and compulsory crops, see Rwaza Diary 28 July 1923; Nyundo Diary 20 March 1924; Zaza Diary 29 November 1925; Rapports annuels 1923-1924, 372; Ruanda Notes No. 19 January 1927, 19



one million francs in 1925 to almost two million in 1928 as the three franc fifty centimes were collected more efficiently.<sup>1</sup> Attempts at legal reform were hopeless; only two or three Residents spoke tolerable Kinyarwanda, and courts could be visited only two to three days a week. Belgian dependence on Swahili meant that Hutu litigants could only gain access to Residents through easily bribed interpreters. Spot checks on court records were made but the Tutsi found countless loopholes, and many occasions for bribing judges, assessors and secretaries.<sup>2</sup> Since the Tutsi shebuja could still exert his influence through the legal system, arbitrary exactions continued; to counter the reduction in ubuletwa some chiefs began demanding it per individual rather than per inzu.<sup>3</sup> Even garagu began to be expected to hoe for their lord.<sup>4</sup> Tax collection for the Belgians provided an additional pretext for pillaging, so was increasingly supervised directly.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Nyanza Report 1929; Paternostre de la Mairieu Le Rwanda 109-113

2. An example is found in the Nyundo Diary 3 May 1923

3. The consensus of replies to the Governor's questionnaire in 1929 was that exactions were common but peasants too frightened to complain.

4. Rwabukumba & Mudandagizi Les formes historiques 24 n.1

5. Until 1924, the Belgians directed labour demands through the mwami, but he used them as a punishment. After 1927, they used supervised province chiefs as the king's men were the worst offenders, see Zaza Diary 5 August 1926; Nyanza Report 1929; Leurquin Niveau de Vie 22-23.

The problem was that the administrators were too few and too sedentary to control the chiefs' exercise of power; this was, after all, the German justification for Indirect Rule. One Belgian admitted that the small Rwandan police force were 'brutes',<sup>1</sup> and it was recognised that the new chiefs, lacking wealth in cattle and land, were more rapacious than their predecessors. From 1924-1930, the good intentions of Indirect Rule gave way slowly to inadequate supervision by selected Belgian agents and their harassed Residents.<sup>2</sup>

The Ruanda-Urundi Ordinance of November 7th. 1924 on compulsory crop cultivation gave the Hutu an additional incentive to leave Rwanda. Owing to the favourable exchange rate, a good worker could earn one franc a day in Uganda on the cotton estates.<sup>3</sup> The price of hoes rose from 35 centimes in 1916 to 3-4 francs in the mid-1920s, and finally to 10-15 francs in 1929, so the cash economy was

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1. Wouters to Father-Superior Rwaza, undated (c.1930) Rwaza correspondence

2. Mulera Report 1929; p.423 n5

3. Cotton acreage in Buganda had risen from 86,000 in 1922 to 185,000 in 1924; by the end of 1924, 29% i.e. 1,394/4,834 labourers working for the Ganda were Banyarwanda. When the Ganda began to reduce their labour force in 1926, many of these men took jobs in the Public Works Department in Kampala. See Rapports annuels 1924-1925, 440, 473; Richards A.I. Economic Development and Tribal Change Cambridge 1951, 28-29; Powesland P.G. 'Economic Policy and Labour' in East African Studies No.10 1957, 42-48



as much forcing as luring the Hutu out of Rwanda.<sup>1</sup> The White Fathers were, to a man, opposed to the exodus as were the Tutsi who lost their ubuletwa labour; the Zaza missionaries let those leaving know that their banana trees on mission grounds would be confiscated.<sup>2</sup> But it was as bad to remain; kazi and ubuletwa fell on any unprotected individual, and the number available grew smaller in areas of high emigration.

The Fathers' attitude to economic development remained equivocal. They saw cash cropping as a safeguard against emigration, but also a danger: 'The small native producer, too tempted by the lure of profit which exportable products would bring him, may forget or neglect indispensable food crops', one missionary feared.<sup>3</sup> Yet Rwaza mission stimulated tobacco production in the 1920s by acting as entrepreneur for cigars marketed throughout the country. Mulera farmers, far from being 'subsistence farmers', had in the past benefited from the food economy to provision drought-stricken regions.<sup>4</sup> In this area, where the Hutu felt confident of food surpluses, a small tobacco growing industry sprang up around Nyundo market.<sup>5</sup>

In 1924, Rwaza mission purchased 6,430 francs worth of tobacco and paid out 3,132 francs in salaries to workers at

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1. Classe to Marchal 18 March 1924; Nyanza Report 1929

2. Zaza Diary 3 February 1927.

3. Rapports annuels 1927-1928, 274

4. See Vidal Économie de la société féodale 52-75 for an account of Hutu use of journeyman labour in other parts.

5. Education Report for 1921 M.634 AA

their small cigar factory; profits from sales amounted to 3,228 francs. The mission was buying over 6,000 kilos of local tobacco at five francs per kilo by 1931; the 47 factory workers produced 640,000 cigars worth 80,130 francs.<sup>1</sup> The station took on the character of an industrial mission with 130,000 francs paid out annually to salaried workers; this included construction labourers, porters, teachers, millers, carpenters, sawyers and masons, as well as factory workers. The millers worked round the clock in five shifts of twelve men each, producing a flour that the Fathers sold for 2.5 francs per kilo; they brought in about thirty thousand kilos of local wheat per year at 0.5-1 franc a kilo, and operated a very little profit. The carpentry shop and sawyers made furniture and provided construction materials for the growing town of Kigali.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps because of the precedent of Mulera's pre-colonial economy, Rwaza proved the most successful of the White Fathers' industrial ventures; there was also basket-making at Kabgayi, mat-making at Nyundo and pottery at Save, while all the major stations had their carpentry shop.<sup>3</sup> With the arrival of mining companies in search of

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1. Cigar factory statistics in Rwaza correspondence 1931
  2. *ibid.* and loose papers Rwaza correspondence c. 1930-1934
  3. The 1921 Education Report spoke glowingly of this effort: 'everywhere native artisans are trained and guided in their work by the missionaries; brick-layers, tilers, sawyers, carpenters, heavy-timber workers and many others have become useful auxiliaries in stations and with private individuals' M.634 AA



tin, and the parcelling out of the Rwandan wealth and resources to the Banque Populaire Belge, PROTANAG ( Syndicat Belge des Produits tannants et agricoles), and the Empain and Ryckman de Betz Companies, missions as employers of labour became relatively minor.<sup>1</sup> But still the training in skilled manual work continued under the Brothers; the mission received 23,500 francs subsidy for it in 1927, though the Belgians were dissatisfied at what they were getting for their money, now that elite education was the Catholic pre-occupation.<sup>2</sup> There were very few jobs for such mission-trained men and the most they could hope for in Kigali and Ruhengeri was a monthly salary of 50-60 francs.<sup>3</sup>

Mission stations were likewise unostentatious centres of agricultural experimentation. Missionaries issued coffee plants to their catechists who began cash-cropping on outstation grounds.<sup>4</sup> The success of the Rwaza cigar factory stimulated a number of Hutu to start buying tobacco at Nyundo themselves, make their own cigars and market them wrapped in banana leaves on the hills.<sup>5</sup> Bugoyi Christians took to buying fibre bracelets from the Hunde and selling:

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1. PROTANAG, for example, paid 1.5 francs a day; around Mibirisi about 80% of the men were employed by the Company, see Kamembe Report 1929, Derscheid Papers
  2. Mortehan to Classe 29 August 1928; Malfeyt to Classe 8 December 1928 C.O.
  3. Coubeau to Classe 15 December 1926 C.O.
  4. Zaza Diary 8 August 1926; Classe to confrères 20 August 1928 CR; 'Compte Rendu des Séances de Conseil' Rwaza 13 March 1928; Leurquin Niveau de Vie 59, 66
  5. Personal Communication: Father Manuel Daguerre, Rwaza

them for cattle in Central Rwanda.<sup>1</sup>

The missionaries were never enthusiastic about their role in trade and cash-cropping, seeing it in moralistic terms as 'amour du lucre'.<sup>2</sup> Nor did they want the Hutu tied forever to a degrading poverty, eking out a meagre living from the soil. Far from it, they saw Tutsi domination as a reason for the damaging flight from Rwanda, and complained when the Belgians wanted to start hotels on Kivu that Bugoyi would be turned into a human 'zoological park'.<sup>3</sup> They opposed the 'wrong type' of European coming into the territory and the cession of large tracts of land to Belgian companies.<sup>4</sup> Their training in apologetics had taught them only what to condemn; beyond the Bishop's call for private property, they had little positive ideas on development save that the Church should remain both Mater and Magister.

By 1927, it was not simply that Musinga was losing out to the nobles, but that the universal feeling that Rwanda was about to undergo a social and economic transformation greatly strengthened the Inshongore against the traditionalists at court. There were cars on new roads, 'a race for the

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1. Rapports annuels 1928-1929, 330

2. ibid. 1926-1927, 14

3. ibid. 1927-1928, 274

4. ibid. 273. In Classe to Mortehan 3 May 1928 there is a stiff remark about 'hundreds or even thousands of hectares free or to be sold free' to foreign buyers, with a reference to Article 6 of the Treaty of 18 April 1923, the part concerning respect for African interests. C.O.



tin Klondike' in Gisaka,<sup>1</sup> imported hoes and cotton cloth in the markets, talk of a new Catholic vocational school at Astrida,<sup>2</sup> and C.M.S. missionaries with qualified medical personnel. Musinga and the court traditions began to seem an irrelevance, an anachronism.

At this point, the king made the serious blunder of despairing of Catholic support and trying the Protestants; not only had they little power in the country but brawls had taken place between Catholic and Adventist catechists around Kabgayi, and the Fathers resented the intrusion of the new sect.<sup>3</sup> A pastor was encouraged to teach the young Tutsi at court,<sup>4</sup> and, a few months later, the C.M.S. were welcomed in Nyanza and allowed to give Bible lessons.<sup>5</sup> Whereas in 1926 the mwami used to write anxious letters if the Fathers failed to make their courtesy calls at court,<sup>6</sup> now there was silence. Musinga carefully noted the names of nobles openly professing catholicism, and young catechumens of 5-6 years standing feared to receive the baptism they desired.<sup>7</sup> 'The Sultan Musinga', wrote Classe to Algiers,

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1. Classe to Marchal 16 August 1927 WFA

2. The Brothers of Charity school was finally opened in the early 1930s after many delays, and gave training in administration and veterinary science for Ruanda-Urundi.

3. The Adventists were quite successful amongst the Hutu and opened a school for pastors at Gitwe, see Kabgayi Diary 4, 5 March 1926; Classe to Marchal 7 May 1927; Rapports annuels 1926-1927, 23; 1928-1929, 316; de Lager Ruanda

4. Rapports annuels 1926-1927, 23

'has become, or rather revealed himself to be, absolutely anti-catholic'.<sup>1</sup> If the Bishop's 'fiat' counted for anything in the question of Musinga's deposition - and it seems likely that it did - then the mwami had alienated a useful ally and gained nothing.

After their appearance at court, the Catholics took the Protestants for a force to be reckoned with; the Vicar-Apostolic ordered the throwing up of temporary structures throughout Protestant-threatened areas, and tried to pass them off as chapel-schools to the Belgians.<sup>2</sup> Since Classe had faithfully echoed the administration's social policy to the point where Tutsi rule was a resonating orthodoxy, he was somewhat affronted to find the Belgians limiting the proliferation of his poorly equipped mud-and-thatch bush schools, the Martello towers of the religious scramble.<sup>3</sup>

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- 5) Church J.E. Quest for the Highest; 20, unpublished typed booklet prepared for a Makerere Religious Studies Project covering the years 1927-1971 of the C.M.S. Rwanda Mission.
  - 6) Rapports annuels 1925-1926, 8
  - 7) Van Overschelde A. Un Audacieux Pacifique Grands Lacs 1948, 123

1. Classe to Marchal 7 May 1927
2. The C.M.S., who were gaining their first Tutsi converts, had become more acceptable to the Belgians after Paston Anet had done some skilfull lobbying in Brussels, see Anet to Franck 5 September 1923, 27 November 1923 AE/II No.1918 AA; Ruanda Notes No.18 November 1926; No.19 January 1927
3. Classe to confrères 20 May, 15 June, 20 August 1928; Borgers to Vanneste 2 July 1928; Coubeau to Classe 7 June 1928; Marzorati to Classe 5 August 1928 CR & C.O.



The unfortunate effect of Protestant competition was that Bishop Classe became even more concerned that the missionaries should do nothing to cross the chiefs, and he wanted the Tutsi's entry into the Church to be as easy as possible. 'Special rules according to the taste of individual missions which are exaggeratedly severe' had to go.<sup>1</sup> On no account were the Fathers to threaten chiefs with denunciation at the Residence for misdemeanours. 'We need them and we will need them all the more when freedom of worship is better and more completely practised', he told them.<sup>2</sup>

This is not to say, though, that the White Fathers lost all interest in the conduct of Tutsi rule; the behaviour of the chiefs during a particularly severe famine in 1928-1929, appalled them. Over 35,000 died and 70,000 emigrated to Uganda while chiefs hoarded grain and seed, and continued as was their wont to allow cattle to trample over the Hutus' crops.<sup>3</sup> Around Lake Mohasi and in Gisaka where the rains failed completely, mortality was as high as 50-60%; at the height of the famine, 1,000 refugees per week were passing north through Gahini.<sup>4</sup> In thinly populated areas there were

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1. Classe to confrères 15 May 1928 CR. The period of postulancy was reduced to 3-6 months as a result of this prompting, see Smoor to Superior-General 22 March 1932 Dossier 221 WFAR
  2. Classe to confrères 15 May 1928
  3. Zaza Diary 20 July 1928, 13 January 1929; Rapports annuels 1928-1929, 313-315
  4. Zaza Diary 5 May 1929; Church Quest for the Highest 36

no reserves and no roads over which relief could be brought.<sup>1</sup> The Tutsi consistently opposed the extension of arable land for fear it would eat into their pastures, and the Hutu saw planting food crops as yet another punishment or kazi labour.

It was shortly after informing the Governor of the gravity of the famine that Classe felt obliged to don the mantle of the reformer again. He dwelt on two main injustices, suggesting that it was unfair to deprive dispossessed chiefs of their cattle and men on losing office, and, with unusual impartiality, deploring the failure of chiefs to recognise that the Hutu had more than usufruct rights over land and cattle.<sup>2</sup> It was some measure of the Bishop's influence that the Governor circularised the Rwanda Residents the following:

A second abuse that ought equally to be forseen is that which consists in recognising natives of lower rank (bahutu or batwa) as having, even over goods produced by their labour or acquired by means of its fruits, only an incomplete right (usufruct, use, possession for life etc.) which has nothing of the character

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1. Even in a Christian parish like Zaza, 400 died. Estimates of numbers going into Uganda in 1929 ranged from 35,000-50,000, see Classe to Voillard 10 August 1929 WFAR; Richards Development and Tribal Change 36; Powesland Economic Policy 50
  2. Postiaux to Classe 13 September 1929 C.O.



of an absolute property right. We must assure this respect for an absolute right on movable property and cattle that workers have acquired by their toil. By tolerating that a right, either wholly or in part, over wealth not created by them and without a true concession of land or breeding cattle, should pass into the hands of the Batusi chiefs or other notables, the authorities would, in reality, be making themselves accomplices to an assumption of property rights which neither custom nor tradition suffice to justify or authorise... If the native does not have any precise notion of these juridical ideas at the moment, it is incumbent on us to educate him on the matter, correcting his errors and moulding his mentality with perseverance and patience.<sup>1</sup>

The Bishop saw the instructions as 'a point de départ for the recommencement (sic) of certain property rights for the natives, rights without which the development of these regions will be impossible!<sup>2</sup>

This Liberal cause, mooted in 1923 and now pressed, might seem out of keeping with Classe's reverence for the status quo. Sandrart, the Kigali Resident, was opposed to agrarian revolution on the most Catholic of grounds. 'The muhutu farmer has been for generations accustomed to work the ground alone and for himself', he wrote, 'except of course

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1. Postiaux to Residents Territoriaux 13 September 1929 C.O.

2. Classe to Postiaux 2 October 1929 C.O.

when customary dues are concerned. He is an individualist by nature. Now, the cult of the individual without any powerful cohesive bonds engenders anarchy. Will not the fact of proclaiming too baldly "rights over land" lead the primitive to an exaggerated idea of liberty and ordering of his life ?<sup>1</sup>

The solution was that Monsignor Classe was merely parroting the major theme of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical Rerum Novarum:<sup>2</sup> 'Private ownership...is the natural right of man; and to exercise that right, especially as members of society, is not only lawful, but absolutely necessary'.<sup>3</sup> The spectre of communism was never to leave the Catholic Church during the colonial period, and much that was doctrinaire and shortsighted may be attributed to the clerical 'Cold War' many a bush missionary imagined himself to be fighting. The obsession was shared by the Governor who confided in Classe the disturbing news that 'communism and bolshevism, in other words the two parties which have inscribed on their programme the ruin of Society, are about to turn their forces of destruction on the colonies'.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Kigali Report 1929

2. Published in May 1891, it came as a tardy response to socialism with a denial of class conflict, defence of the family against the State and sanctity of private property as the main themes.

3. See also Pius XI's Quadragesimo Anno published in 1931 for the same emphases.

4. Postiaux to Classe 15 July 1929 C.O.



Coffee and tobacco cash cropping, though, did produce a revaluation of land amongst a few; 'European' land with 'European' crops, for example catechists' plots, tended increasingly to fall outside chiefs' jurisdiction and became Christians' private property.<sup>1</sup> But such change was essentially the product of continuing mission patronage and protection and took place within a clientship context.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Mulera Report 1929

2. While famines continued and the only Hutu to get help were those with powerful patrons, there was little incentive to leave the feudal nexus. Indeed, Classe's proposed 'reform' of Belgian practice would have strengthened a class of feudal landowners separate from office holders. Overall, the Catholic mission still reflected the impress of clientship. The authority of catechists, sent out in increasing numbers when limits were put on the number and quality of bush schools, was offset by that of the bakuru b'inama. On occasions the latter intimidated both chiefs and Christians, and meddled in cases. Even Godparents were looked to as patrons. Once catechists settled on a hill, they might expect their catechumens to hoe for them like any chief. Much to the distress of the Resident, the Rwandan clergy at Murunda went to the point of taxing cattle crossing mission grounds. Nonetheless, the existence of the strong hierarchy of Tutsi chiefs cushioned Rwanda from the grosser Church abuses that characterised the Congo in the 1920s. See Nyundo Diary 4 February 1926, 24 October 1927, 5 November 1930; Zaza Diary 27 May 1927; Rwaza Diary 25 November 1930, 5 April 1931; Classe to confrères 20 August, 21 September 1928 CR; Classe to Voillard 24 April 1926 WFAR; Coubeau & Borgers to Classe 3 February 1930 C.O.; Rapports annuels 1931-1932, 256 1933-1934, 413; Arnoux Les Pères Blancs 140, 168



The movement of the ruling class into the Catholic schools and hence into the catechumenate continued unabated throughout 1928-1929, especially in regions like Muramba and Rambura where there were newly arrived Banyanduga out to seek their fortune, and long-standing 'petits Tutsi'.<sup>1</sup> Important women, nobles like Nyirashongore, a wife of Rwabugiri, and Mukamulera, one of Musinga's daughters were being netted.<sup>2</sup> News that Musheshambugu, his favourite daughter married to the Ega chief Rwagataraka, had begun to receive instruction was too much for the king; he cursed her in a heart-rending letter which ended in a tragic plea for her to show whether or not she was the daughter of the mwami of Rwanda.<sup>3</sup>

Although the king was a very rich man under Belgian rule, he had become a powerless symbol. His sons manoeuvred to succeed him and his daughters turned away from a pathetic, irascible and fast-aging man. Under pressure from the Belgians, he threw caution to the winds and officially visited the provinces, for the first time, possibly in the hope of drumming up support. The Nyabarongo was belatedly crossed, and he was given a warm reception by the Hutu throughout the north.<sup>4</sup> If this was a last bid to save the throne, it was somewhat half-hearted; attempts had

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1. Rapports annuels 1929-1930, 313-314. Both stations incidentally had Rwandan clergy, an added attraction.

2. Rapports annuels 1928-1929, 317, 319

3. The letter is quoted in de Lacger Ruanda 529

4. Rwaza Diary 8 December 1929; Nyundo Diary 14 December 1929



been made to contact the British with a view to seeking asylum in Uganda with the king's herds and retainers.<sup>1</sup> Ironically, at the time Nyanza rule was at its strongest and money pouring in to the king, Musinga was at his weakest.<sup>2</sup> The crossing of the Nyabarongo in defiance of the tradition of the 'Yuhi' kings spelt the final defeat for the Abayobo; the king was trying another way, but too late for both Inshongore and Belgians.

As the Great Depression brought commercial activity virtually to a halt, young Tutsi flocked into the schools and catechism classes to secure the benefits of the western economy and bureaucracy. Tutsi baptisms accounted for 1,934 of the 9,014 in 1930; at new stations like Nyamasheke, where Rwagataraka's influence was strong, figures were as high as 193/393.<sup>3</sup> Tutsi now became the majority in the Minor seminaries, and 19/25 Bayozefiti were from the ruling

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1. Rapports annuels 1929-1930, 300, 323; Des Forges Rwanda under Musinga 346

2. Coming into Nyanza for the king was an annual tribute of about 100,000 francs plus 5% of Belgian tax revenues. Tribute collected from Shangugu province, for example, amounted to 72,900 francs in 1929 of which the most valuable item was 2,791 hoes valued at 34,492 francs, see Bourgeois 'Rapport de sortie de charge' Shangugu 1929, 1934; Rapports annuels 1929-1930, 301. It was the nobles' political support that Musinga was lacking.

3. Rapports annuels 1930-1931, 277-278. Rwagataraka was the key to the Fathers' success in Shangugu, see p.409 n.3

class.<sup>1</sup> The noviciates of the Benebikira had a similar lease of life with thirty postulants in all at Rwaza, Save and Kabgayi.<sup>2</sup>

At the capital only Musinga's two sons, Rudahigwa and Rwigemera, were not on the catechists' registers, and the king was openly mocked by catechumens.<sup>3</sup> Fathers installed themselves in Nyanza with a permanent pied-à-terre and classroom for catechism lessons.<sup>4</sup> The king's ill-considered approach to the British seems to have finally alienated the Belgians, and an hysterical outburst at his daughter's conversion had destroyed any lingering sympathy in the Vicar-Apostolic; it was said that he raved openly and trampled a crucifix under foot.<sup>5</sup> Communications with Kampala at a time when hundreds of Hutu had fled to Uganda from famine in Rwanda were designed to put the Belgian Colonial Ministry in an acutely embarrassing position.

While Classe had been willing to plead for Musinga in 1926, he now used his influence to prepare Belgian public

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1. Attempts had been made to start a postulancy for Brothers during the First World War, but only Brother Oswald persevered. Classe began again in an annex to the Minor Seminary at Kabgayi in August 1929, see Classe to confrères 24 August 1929 CR; Rapports annuels 1930-1931, 301; 1931-1932, 271-273; de Lacger Ruanda 456-457

2. De Lacger Ruanda 456-457

3. Catechumens tauntingly sang hymns outside the royal enclosure, see Van Overschelde Un Audacieux Pacifique 124; all Nyanza school pupils were catechumens, see Kabgayi Diary 9 May 1931

4. Kabgayi Diary 1 January 1929 5. Rapports annuels 1930-1931, 284



opinion for the mwami's deposition. Shortly after the king's anti-christian letter to Musheshambugu in January 1930, he wrote the Governor a memorandum which described Musinga as 'haineusement anti-européen'.<sup>1</sup> He then sent off two articles to L'Essor Colonial et Maritime, one of which again pressed the need for property rights, the other denigrated the mwami.<sup>2</sup> With the Colonial Ministry behind him, and public opinion softened up in Belgium, Voisin, the new Governor, could get rid of the king. Committed to social reforms that were rendered ineffective by Tutsi intransigence, yet wedded to the Tutsi for 'Indirect Rule', the Belgians needed a scapegoat for their failure to get the country moving. 'He would quite deliberately wish stagnation on his people', wrote Voisin, 'if an early dotage still allowed him any will for something more than his perversity and hostility to the Christianisation of his country'.<sup>3</sup> The new Governor planned to intensify Rwandan agriculture, codify customary law on dues, improve livestock, provide schools and carry out a census. It was to be a clean sweep. He wanted a list of the king's sins for the Minister's use, in case there were repercussions in

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1. Quoted in de Lacger Ruanda 524

2. Classe L. 'Pour moderniser le Ruanda' L'Essor Colonial et Maritime 4-11 December 1930 No. 489-491; 'Un Triste Sire' No. 494, 495, 21 and 25 December 1930. In case the point was missed, the latter was sub-titled by the Editors: 'It is necessary to get rid of Musinga'.

3. Voisin to Classe 5 January 1931 C.O.

Geneva.<sup>1</sup> Ten days after the Governor's first confidential letter to the Bishop, the echo came back loud and clear from Kabgayi:

The peace, good order and administration, on the one hand, and the material, moral and social progress of Rwanda on the other, will never be achieved in a lasting way on firm foundations, despite the Government's constant efforts, as long as Musinga is mwami of Rwanda.<sup>2</sup>

Rome had spoken and the Inshongore had carried the day.

But if Musinga was to join Kabakas Mtesa and Mwanga in the Catholic chamber of horrors, the problem of finding a successor remained. Voisin suggested Rudahigwa but the Bishop was unenthusiastic; the man was 'craintif' and 'indécis', thought Classe who feared the influence of his mother, the adroit politician, Kankazi.<sup>3</sup> Rudahigwa's record had little to recommend it; an observer in 1929 described him as 'distinctly and artfully hostile to the missions...very intelligent but completely lacking in character, a knave and a deceiver'.<sup>4</sup> Much to Musinga's displeasure, since it put the prince close to the Kabgayi Fathers, he was appointed to Marangara province where he inherited 10,040 cattle; the province was in chaos for a

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1. Voisin to Classe 15 July 1931 C.O.

2. Classe to Voisin 15 January 1931 C.O.

3. *ibid.*

4. Nyanza Report 1929. This was Lenaerts' comment.



year as Rudahigwa tried to wrest the cattle from the garagu of Tutsi lords and ibikingi holders.<sup>1</sup> Resistance was led by Kayondo's lineage which was struggling to place Rwigemera in line of succession.<sup>2</sup> Since few of the Marangara Tutsi would obey him, Rudahigwa began to court the Kabgayi Fathers, a move that assured his future.<sup>3</sup>

The Vicar-Apostolic received two visits from Rudahigwa in June 1931 and spoke to the prince about the changes that had been taking place in Burundi where the mwami lived in a luxurious modern house in Gitega and drove around in a car. Classe had decided to make the best of a bad job,<sup>4</sup> wean the prince from the old style of kingship and get him started on French lessons.<sup>5</sup> The heir-apparent next went to Bujumbura for a secret meeting with the Governor.

'Rudahigwa spontaneously asked me if you were au fait with

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1. Kabgayi Diary 21 June 1931; Nyanza Report 1929

2. Kabgayi Diary 15 August 1931

3. Classe to Voisin 23 July 1931 C.O. He had probably been making moves in this direction in 1930 for Classe, when first approached, limited himself to the reflection: 'above all have beside him "a well educated Administrator", balanced, prudent and capable of exercising over him a truly formative influence', see Classe to Voisin 15 January 1931. There was the implied reproof that this should have been done already.

4. Again, probably because Rudahigwa became a catechumen at this time, see Rapports annuels 1931-1932, 247

5. Classe to Voisin 23 July 1931 C.O.

my intentions', wrote Voisin to Classe, '...on my assurance that you were in perfect agreement he seemed very satisfied'.<sup>1</sup>

Under Voisin, amalgamation of provinces was given a fresh impetus and new chiefs were appointed over new enlarged jurisdictions. Mirenge province in Gisaka was unified under Simon Nyiringondo, a Christian from Zaza,<sup>2</sup> and other mission men gained several hills.<sup>3</sup> Kanuma complained of being 'slighted and rejected though he had handed over his chieftancy to no-one'.<sup>4</sup> Rudahigwa was given a car to get back from Bujumbura; the mwami protested that everyone but the king rode around in cars.<sup>5</sup> As senior chiefs converted to Christianity, some under pressure of deposition,<sup>6</sup> the mwami was left alone with the Queen-Mother; 'there would be no-one left to conserve our customs and our cult to the ancestors', he bemoaned.<sup>7</sup>

The Governor-General of the Congo, Wilkens, visited Bishop Classe with Voisin on September 11th. and 13th. to

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1. Voisin to Classe 15 July 1931 C.O.

2. See p. 388 n.5

3. Zaza Diary 5 May 1931, September 1931; Mibirisi Diary 11 October 1931

4. Zaza Diary 5 May 1931

5. Kabgayi Diary 2 October 1931

6. A good example of a political 'conversion' was that of Gakwavu at Rwaza, see Rwaza Diary 30 May 1930

7. Classe to Marchal 28 September 1930 W.F.A.R. The king had, of course, approached Franck on just this point, and the concern was quite genuine p. 371 n.2



set a date for the deposition.<sup>1</sup> At the second 1931 meeting Rudahigwa was introduced to the Governor-General, and a week later the Rwanda Resident was told to arrange for a meeting of notables in Kigali on October 12th. when the economic crisis, so they were to be told, would be discussed. This was merely a ruse to keep the nobles away from Nyanza at the critical juncture.<sup>2</sup> Whilst the notables met in Kigali, Voisin informed Musinga that he was deposed in favour of his son Rudahigwa. The king was reported to have cried a little but seemed to be fully expecting it; according to the Fathers, the Queen-Mother was shattered by the news and talked of suicide.<sup>3</sup>

At 10.30 a.m. on October 14th. 1931, a long file of porters with an escort provided by Ntulo accompanied the abami out of the Nyanza on the long journey to a special residence prepared for them at Kamembe. According to the missionaries, the end of Musinga's reign was the subject of 'complete indifference'; there was no outcry either at Nyanza or Kigali.<sup>4</sup> The mwami had ceased to rule long since; 'you hear little comment on the event in the region... people only know the name', the Mibirisi Fathers wrote.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Classe to Marchal 11 September 1931; Rapports annuels 1931-1932, 242

2. Voisin to Coubeau 21 September 1931; Coubeau to Administrateurs territoriaux 28 September 1931 C.O.

3. Rapports annuels 1931-1932, 243

4. *ibid.* 244; Kabgayi Diary 16 November 1931

5. Mibirisi Diary 17 November 1931

Le Drapeau Rouge saw the action as a wanton act of colonial oppression, the Manchester Guardian as a blunder.<sup>1</sup> For most Rwandans, the affairs of Nyanza did not concern them; the man not the office had been done away with.

Rudahigwa's enthronement was that of a Christian King. After the Governor proclaimed him mwami, Monsignor Classe, replacing the abiru, provided his reign name, Mutara IV; only then were the six court abiru officially informed by the Governor. Champagne toasts were drunk and, with Father Van Overschelde acting as official photographer, the royal drum Kalinga was shown to the crowd. Rwagataraka translated the speeches. Mutara's first visit was to Kabgayi where the seminarians presented him with a Larousse while a childhood friend read a discourse on the divine dependence of kings.<sup>2</sup> Cardinal Lavigerie's dream seemed to have come true.

'Musinga was like the rock that stops the torrent', wrote the Kabgayi diarist, 'once removed the water surges on.'<sup>3</sup> The number of catechumens registered at the station rose from 7,188 in 1931 to 18,950 in 1932; the number of baptised Christians increased from 8,535 to 12,339, reflecting the enthusiasm of the late 1920s.<sup>4</sup> A similar effect was:

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1. Rapports annuels 1931-1932, 247

2. Van Overschelde Monseigneur Léon-Paul Classe 74

3. Kabgayi Diary 24 November 1931

4. Rapports annuels 1931-1932; see also Zaza Diary 19 November 1931 for the immediate, rapid response to Musinga's dethronement.



registered at Kigali where the number of catechumens doubled that year.<sup>1</sup> The rumour circulated that Rudahigwa wanted people to make the sign of the Cross to greet him and to sign on as catechumens.<sup>2</sup> News came from Nyanza that the Queen-Mother herself was a postulant.<sup>3</sup>

Owing to the clientship structure of society in Central Rwanda, the dense population, and the absence of discrete villages, the movement once started snowballed and involved massive numbers. The Fathers called it Le Tornade and the title was appropriate inasmuch as the movement blew away the White Fathers' usual restraints and strict discipline for the catechumenate. Bishop Classe was carried away as much as anyone and a blind-eye was turned to the old four-year rule before baptism.<sup>4</sup>

The end of Musinga's reign marked the end of the young Hutu Church. At first the 'petits Tutsi' and Banyanduga settlers north of the Nyabarongo, then nobles, and finally women and old folk, chiefs and their garagu, joined the rush. The enthronement of the catechumen king came as:

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1. Rapports annuels 1931-1932

2. Kabgayi Diary 24 November 1931

3. *ibid.*

4. Classe wrote: 'To wish always to retard the baptism of the Batutsi is to discourage them and throw them into the arms of heresy', see Van Overschelde Monseigneur Léon-Paul Classe 62. Father Smoor complained '(the) famous catechumenate of four years used by the White Fathers does not exist in Ruanda... Here two years are asked for - save for some exceptions - after the medal. To get it, 3-6 months only are required' Smoor to Superior-General 22 March 1932 Dossier 221 W.F.A.R.

a climax to the conversion of the ruling class that Classe had so ardently desired; it was a triumph for a mission that had held onto the idea of becoming the State religion against apparently insuperable odds.

The Belgians had not only acknowledged the country's social stratification but re-inforced it by their political, educational and language policy.<sup>1</sup> The beginnings of the Tornado, from 1922-1928, were largely an instrumental response to the White Fathers' mission stimulated by the changing qualifications for chieftancy and status within the Tutsi class. But as the Inshongore won out at court it became something more; the nobility began to look around for a new religious legitimation for the mwamiship and the attendant stratification of society. Traditional rituals were removed from around the king, one by one, until the scaffolding around the mwamiship began to give way. Obsessed by the doubtful legitimacy of his claim to the throne, Musinga could never share Kabare's cavalier attitude to tradition. Nor could he see, like the Inshongore, that

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1. The Kigali Resident had written to Classe in 1928 that: 'The goal of the Government being to get for the greatest number of our young Batutsi lucrative employment, a knowledge of French would be of the greatest use for these elements', see Coubeau to Classe 14 March 1928 C.O. As a result the Catholic school system not only segregated pupils but tended to give French exclusively to the Tutsi classes destined for administrative tasks. The political policy was, of course, the extension of Nyanza rule over independent, Hutu, areas.



an intrusive religious system of the power of Christianity ought to be assimilated as the Lyangombe cult had been taken over by former abami, if it were not to destroy the kingship.

The conversion of the Tutsi was also a corporate recognition that the source of power within the State had shifted away from the mwami. For some, it was a fatalistic acknowledgement of the bankruptcy of the old order and its religious system. 'My child', Nyirashongore is said to have told her daughter, 'we have always believed in the spirits; we have offered them sacrifice and we have followed the customs of our ancestors; <sup>in everything</sup> what was the use of all that to us?'<sup>1</sup> For others, there was the stark realisation that without Christianity a man might be excluded from wealth and prestige, that he might be left out of the new order. A fear that drew its strength from stories of Hell-fire sermons, or perhaps traditions of Nyiragongo volcano, informed the dreams of at least one Tutsi convert.

When we were sleeping together in a big hut - we were the king's ntore - I had a terrifying dream. I saw God in a beautiful court with lovely children who were enjoying themselves playing happily. As I tried to approach them, Imana (God) pushed me back towards a very deep chasm in which were hideous men weeping and groaning. 'There

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1. Rapports annuels 1928-1929, 319

is your place', He said to me, 'you are wicked and must suffer with the wicked'. Then I replied: 'Have pity on me, I will do all that you ask', trembling all the while. He pushed me back again into this foul smoking pit when fortunately I caught hold of some branches which were hanging by the abyss. I went on begging for pardon and those who filled the pit, including my uncle who died some years ago, said to me: 'Come down. Do not waste your strength. It is no use saying that you didn't know. We have said the same and look, we are still here'. The only thing to do is His will'. Even more angry, Imana came and pushed me back with his foot. I let go of the branches and made a grab for a tuft of grass which gave way. Just as I was about to fall I awoke. That night I told the dream to my companions and the next morning I took my leave of our chief. When I reached home I went straight to see the catechist, Augustin, who admitted me as a postulant.<sup>1</sup>

In a remarkable way, catholicism became 'traditional' the moment the Tutsi were baptised in large numbers. 'It was the "done thing" for almost all the chiefs to wear the medallion round their necks and to expect their people to accept the State Religion without question', a C.M.S. missionary remarked.<sup>2</sup> And the term 'State religion' was

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1. Rapports annuels 1929-1930, 329

2. Church Quest for the Highest 73; and see also Ruanda Notes No.37 July 1931, 16



not mere Protestant sour grapes. Residents warned White Fathers when C.M.S. missionaries appeared on the horizon, and Governor-General Tilkens encouraged Classe to multiply the number of Catholic stations to counteract the Protestant invasion of the 1930s.<sup>1</sup> The terms of the 1906 Convention between the Holy See and the Congo Government, to 'favour' and 'protect' the missions were perhaps nowhere so broadly interpreted as in Rwanda;<sup>2</sup> Voisin contributed 50% towards the cost of new churches in both Astrida and Kigali.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, the Bishop's opinion was sought on weighty topics from minimum workers' salaries to the mechanics of deposing kings.<sup>4</sup>

The key to the happy marriage between Church and Administration was Monsignor Classe. He was what the Rwandans would call 'the man of the Belgians'. It was largely his definition of Rwandan politics and society that guided Belgian policy in the early years. Or, to state the case less strongly, he gave the Church's imprimatur to policies that seemed self-evident to all right-thinking colonials. He was certainly as much a

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1. Classe to Marchal 11 September 1931

2. The favour was nothing to do with colonial economic interest; of the two most powerful prelates in the Belgian territories, de Hemptinne was from rich Katanga and Classe from destitute Rwanda.

3. Postiaux to Classe 25 May 1930 C.O.

4. Coubeau to Classe 15 December 1926, 19 January 1927; Classe to Voisin 15 January 1931 C.O.

part of colonial administration as the abiru were part of the traditional court. Indeed, the Vicar-Apostolic could find no more fitting tribute for Monsignor Hirth in his eulogy on the veteran's fifty years of Christian ministry than 'doyen des coloniaux'.<sup>1</sup>

Intellectuals like Father Schumacher found his 'seigneurial' style of episcopate insufferable, and downright dishonest, or stupid, his lumping Musinga with the Kabakas.<sup>2</sup> And it was true that Bishop Classe did not seem pleased to find another overlord appearing in the person of Monsignor Dellepiane when the Apostolic Delegation began in Leopoldville in 1930.<sup>3</sup> Where he scored was with men like Tilkens, Postiaux, Voisin and Declerck: a few words between gentlemen, indiscrete Fathers kept in the dark,<sup>4</sup> nothing more was needed; that

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1. Classe to confrères 12 May 1928 in Instructions Pastorales 37

2. Schumacher to Governor 15 August 1935 Dossier 221 W.F.A.R. The Bishop had rightly spotted Schumacher as a dangerous customer and complained to Algiers about him long before, see Classe to Voillard 10 October 1925 W.F.A.R.

3. The Bishop explained at length how an Apostolic Delegate had his authority from the Propaganda so did not outrank the Ordinaries like himself, see Classe to confrères 1 October 1929 CR; also a huffy reference to the Delegate's arrival in Classe to Voisin 30 October 1931 C.O.

4. Classe to Voisin 15 January 1931 offers not to tell any missionary of the coming deposition. See also Voisin to Classe 26 October, 23 December 1931 for a gentlemanly handling of the uppity Father Pauwels.



was the world in which he liked to move and the rock on which he hoped to build his Church.

If the Catholic Church in Rwanda grew so rapidly into a State Church, it was largely because this was the role Classe was determined it should play, and a role which few of his contemporaries would have found inappropriate. The Hutu Church had indirectly split the Tutsi and divided the missionaries; Classe had been toppled in its heyday and the king in its decline. If, after 1932, it became a Tutsi Church, in the sense that its life increasingly served the interests of the ruling class, it was because the nobility, having done away with Musinga, needed a new 'tradition' to legitimate their role as custodians of Rwandan culture and owners of its material wealth.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS



- ababyakurutsa - wandering mediums possessed by the spirit of Biheko
- abahennyi - court functionaries who cursed the king's enemies
- abaja - (sing. umuja) female servants or concubines
- abanetsi - manual labourers
- abanyabutaka - Tutsi landowning chiefs
- abanyamukenke - chiefs with rights in pasture land.
- abasangwabutaka - those found on the land, referring to the Gesera, Singa and Zigaba clans.
- abase - a relationship between abasangwabutaka and Tutsi involving intercession with the spirits
- abasemyi - those who speak for others, interpreter
- abashobya - court ritualists in sacrifices
- abatware - (sing. umutware) military chiefs.
- abayeyi - (sing. umuyeyi) parent.
- Abayoboke - those knowing but a single way, name for the traditionalists in the 1920s.
- abazimu - lineage spirits
- abiru - (sing. umwiru) ritualists entrusted with the esoteric code and in charge of succession
- akidas - political agents in Tanganyika, highest administrative rank for Africans
- Badatchi - Germans
- bakuru b'inama - Catholic lay leaders of hill groups.

- banyamuliro - keepers of the royal fire at Nyanza
- banyanduga - Tutsi from Nduga, used for new settlers in the north from Central Rwanda
- barozi - malign sorcerers, wizards
- Bayozefiti - Rwandan Josephite Brothers
- Benebikira - Rwandan Sisters
- Bezirk - German administrative unit of a circle
- Bulamatari - breaker of rocks, the Belgians
- burozi - sorcery, a malign charm
- corvée - forced labour
- culte de contestation religious movements that contest an established order and express the anguish of oppression
- Econome - bursar in charge of material needs of the missions in a vicariate
- fundi - a skilled artisan
- gufaha - to pay crop dues on leased land
- guhakwa - to pay court with a view to clientship
- ibikingi - plots of land given for usufruct by king and nobles to their clients
- ibirongozi - Hutu descended from disbanded German porters in Rwaza region
- ibisonga - intermediaries between Tutsi and northern Hutu families for crop dues
- ibitekerezo - court traditions of the Nyiginya dynasty
- igihugu - the country, land, geographical extent
- ikigabiro - royal burial site marked by a grove
- ikoro - annual tribute paid to king



- Imana - the creative force of the land and nation in Rwanda
- imisigati - Summer pastures
- inka - cow.
- Inshongore - 'progressive' faction at court in the 1920s
- intore - (gutora - to choose) catechumens selected by strong-arm methods
- inyangarwanda - haters of Rwanda, rebels
- inzoga - sorghum beer
- inzu - minor patrilineage
- ischanga - sub-clan
- itondo - virtue of self-control; 'stiff upper lip' of the Tutsi
- Kalinga - royal sacred drum of the Nyiginya
- kapitao - foreman, headman, lay leader
- karani - secretary
- kazi - forced labour for Public Works
- kubitsa - loan of a cow for usufruct
- kukiza - to save, spiritually, materially
- kwatisha - temporary usufruct rights over land, institution in Bugoyi
- mandwa - powerful protective spirits of the Lyangombe and Kiranga cults
- mazimano - provisions of food collected for army, travellers etc.
- Mpara - the court mandwa mediums
- mshenzi - a pagan

Mungu	- the Christian High God
mwami w'imandwa	- head of the court mandwa mediums
mwami w'imvura	- king of the rain, respected rain-callers' title
ngabo	- the Rwandan regiment
ntebe	- provincial seat of a Tutsi lord
ntore	- elite warriors skilled in martial arts, pages of king and nobles
nyambo	- royal herds, elite cattle exemplifying bovine beauty
nyampara	- mission agent, head of a work party or caravan
Nyiginya	- Rwanda's royal clan
Nyina	- mother, as in Nyina'rupfu, Mother-Death, Nyina Yuhi, Queen-Mother
rugo	- the enclosure, Rwandan home
serkali	- a government agent
Serwakira	- mandwa spirit
shebuja	- lord or noble, the patron
Terebura	- Father Alphonse Brard
Tikitiki	- Von Grawert, a German officer
Tornade	- rush of Tutsi conversions: 1930-1934
Tutsikazi	- a Tutsi woman or girl
tribunaux indigenes	- Native courts
ubugabo	- manliness
ubuhake	- clientship relation of feudal subordination in which a shebuja gives a garagu usufruct rights over a cow in return for service



- ubukonde - system of land tenure in the north in which rich Hutu abakonde lease out land for usufruct
- ubuletwa - labour demanded of peasants by their chiefs
- umugaragu - (garagu in text) client in an ubuhake relationship tied to a Tutsi lord
- umuganuza - functionary bringing first fruits to court for umuganura ceremonies
- umugome - a rebel, an opponent of the court
- umuhinza - Hutu land priest/king
- umukonde - rich Hutu landowner who leases out land for usufruct
- umwami - mwami in text refers to Rwandan king, umwami to Hutu land priest/king like an umuhinza
- umupfumu - a diviner
- umuryango - major patrilineage
- umutabazi - a saviour king in Nyiginya tradition who dies for the kingdom
- umutware - (w'umuheto - of the bow) a military commander/chief  
(w'intebe) province chief or designate left in charge while chief is at court

#### SPELLING

Clan names are given without their 'B' e.g. Ega rather than Bega. The 'r' and 'l' are interchangeable in Kinyarwanda so Kabare and Kabale, for example, denote the same name. Double vowels e.g. Musiinga instead of Musinga have been avoided though strictly correct; no possible confusion.

can arise in the text, and since this is not a linguistic study, the double vowel seems cumbersome.

TRANSLATION

French and German sources are quoted in the original when it was felt that translation would detract from the flavour of the original. Kinyarwanda and Swahili quotations were translated in Rwanda and given in English. Town names, like Astrida, are given their colonial form e.g. Astrida rather than Butare, with the exception of Bujumbura.

FOOTNOTE ABBREVIATIONS

- AA - Archives Africaines, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Place Royale, Brussels
- C.M.S. - Church Missionary Society Archives, Waterloo Road, London
- C.O. - Correspondence Officielle: correspondence between White Fathers and civil authorities in Rwanda 1900-1935, Archbishop's House Kigali, Rwanda
- CR - Correspondence Religieuse: correspondence within the Society of White Fathers in Rwanda, Archbishop's House, Kigali, Rwanda
- Derscheid Papers Yale University Microfilm No. 325.6757 D 438c of the J.M. Derscheid Collection
- Dossiers - Filing units in the White Fathers' Archives, Rome
- P. - Microfilm of Bujumbura German Archives now in the Archives Africaines
- Rwaza - loose correspondence at the mission, Ruhengeri P.O. Box Rwanda
- WFAR - White Fathers' Archives, Rome, Via Aurelia



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1) White Fathers' records have been progressively centralised during the past decade in the White Fathers' Archives, Rome, where they are available to researchers. There are still important archives, however, at Archbishop's House, Kigali, with documents from 1905 to the present-day. Individual missions retain occasional letters, a useful set being still at Rwaza. The centralisation has been subject to the vagaries of individual Fathers-Superior and Regionals, and has been somewhat haphazard, some documents reaching Rome a long time ago when a parish was handed over to indigenous clergy, some still at the bottom of the mission cupboard.

The Rome material is essentially diaries and correspondence between the Superior-General and the Rwanda mission, though sometimes mission-administration letters came back in a pile from a particular station. Bishop Hirth and Classe's letters form a numbered series 095000 in Dossiers 95 and 112, and are of particular value. The only diary I came across in Rwanda was a copy of the first years of Save mission at the University of Butare; an almost complete set may be found in Rome, largely originals, with valuable material for 1900-1935, after which content and quality of observation drops off markedly.

The bulk of documents at Kigali are letters between Vicar-Apostolic, missionaries and civil authorities, with



some copies of intra-Administration correspondence and circulars. This is contained in un-numbered dossiers marked with vague titles like 'Correspondence Officielle' etc. One such dossier contains useful material from the German period. At Rome, the researcher is largely in the capable hands of the archivist, Father Rene Lamey; I have never seen a catalogue of the Via Aurelia material but one is in preparation.

C.M.S. Records, a few dossiers of the minutes of the Executive Field Committee for the Ruanda Mission, 1935-1943, were made available to me at the C.M.S. headquarters. Dr. Joe Church was kind enough to let me read his unpublished history of the Ruanda Mission, Quest for the Highest, which provides many useful insights for the period 1925-1971.

2) German Records are to be found at three major archives, Potsdam, Dar-es-Salaam and, now, Brussels. The archive consulted by Prof. W.M. Roger Louis has reappeared in Brussels after last being seen c. 1961 in Bujumbura. Researchers are not permitted to consult catalogues in Brussels, but, as far as may be gathered, this material, on microfilm and in dossiers, contains the bulk of German material for Ruanda-Urundi. Annual Reports from the Rwanda Resident are to be found in Film No. 166 P. 1728, and films No. 167 and No. 168 contain incoming correspondence to the Rwanda residence. Lorne Larson confirms that

additional material on Rwanda at Potsdam and Dar-es-Salaam is negligible and does not concern the White Fathers' mission in Rwanda. I have only consulted the Brussels' archive, but until catalogues are made available in Brussels, the situation remains unsatisfactory and confused. For example, documents quoted by Louis from Bujumbura, I have seen in mission material at Kigali but have been unable to find in Brussels.

- 3) Belgian records are open to researchers within the limits of a strict 50-year rule. I have consulted the period 1916-1919 of military rule and 1919-1923 of civilian rule. Once again no catalogue is available; dossiers in the AE/II series are the most valuable and contain all the Rwanda material numbered from No. 1610 to No. 1848. The Derscheid Papers are fortunately richest for the period 1925-1935, and contain provincial reports of great detail; they partially alleviated the dearth of primary material for the end of Musinga's reign.
- 4) The most valuable thesis on Rwandan colonial history, as yet unpublished, is Alison Des Forges: Rwanda under Musiinga 1896-1931 from Yale University, 1972. This provides valuable detail on inter-Tutsi politics. There are, however, some puzzling bibliographical problems created by this work. I have been unable to find many of the diary citations in the diaries lodged in Rome. No hill references are given for her many oral informants, so it is difficult to track them down. I have drawn on this work



therefore only for insights into court politics, but not at all for interpretations of White Fathers' activities.

Alison Redmayne's B.Litt. Thesis The Concept of Feudalism Oxford 1961 has been a great help in clarifying my thinking about Rwandan feudalism. A useful survey of the sociological literature is contained in J.L. Van Meeren's M. Phil. Thesis for the University of London at the School of Oriental and African Studies The Social System of the Banyarwanda 1969

5) I was able to collect oral testimonies from Missionaries, Rwandan clergy and laity during the period April-July 1973 but in an informal fashion owing the profound political turbulence that preceeded the July army coup and followed the racial school-riots of March. Since interviews were aimed, directly or indirectly, at the issue of social stratification and conflict, what evidence that was obtained has been used with the greatest circumspection. Oral testimonies have only been cited for informants from the relatively quiet area of Rwaza in the north with a long history of Hutu independence. An unsatisfactory deployment of oral data seems to me inevitable for the colonial period, charged as it is with high levels of conflict, as long as contemporary fears and frustrations have a bearing on Rwandans' consciousness of the past. Collection and analysis of oral data in Rwanda clearly present unique difficulties that cannot be solved in a short visit. The work of Claudine Vidal, though, shows what can be achieved.

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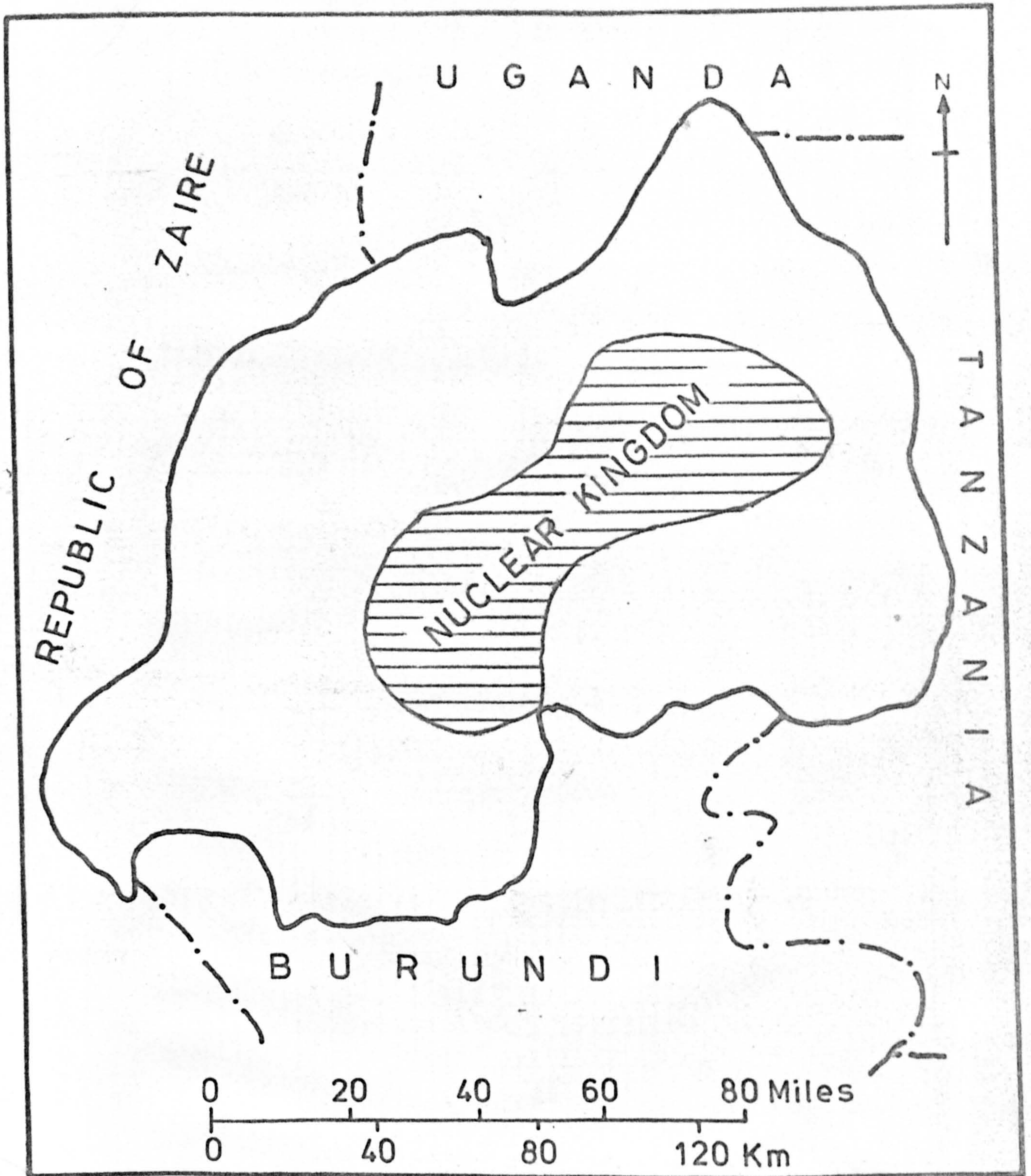
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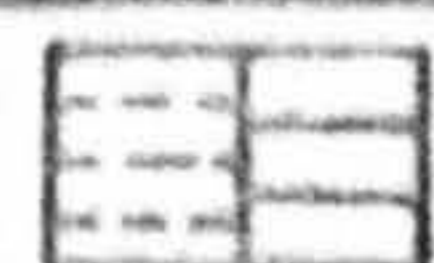






# THE NUCLEAR KINGDOM IN RELATION TO MODERN RWANDA

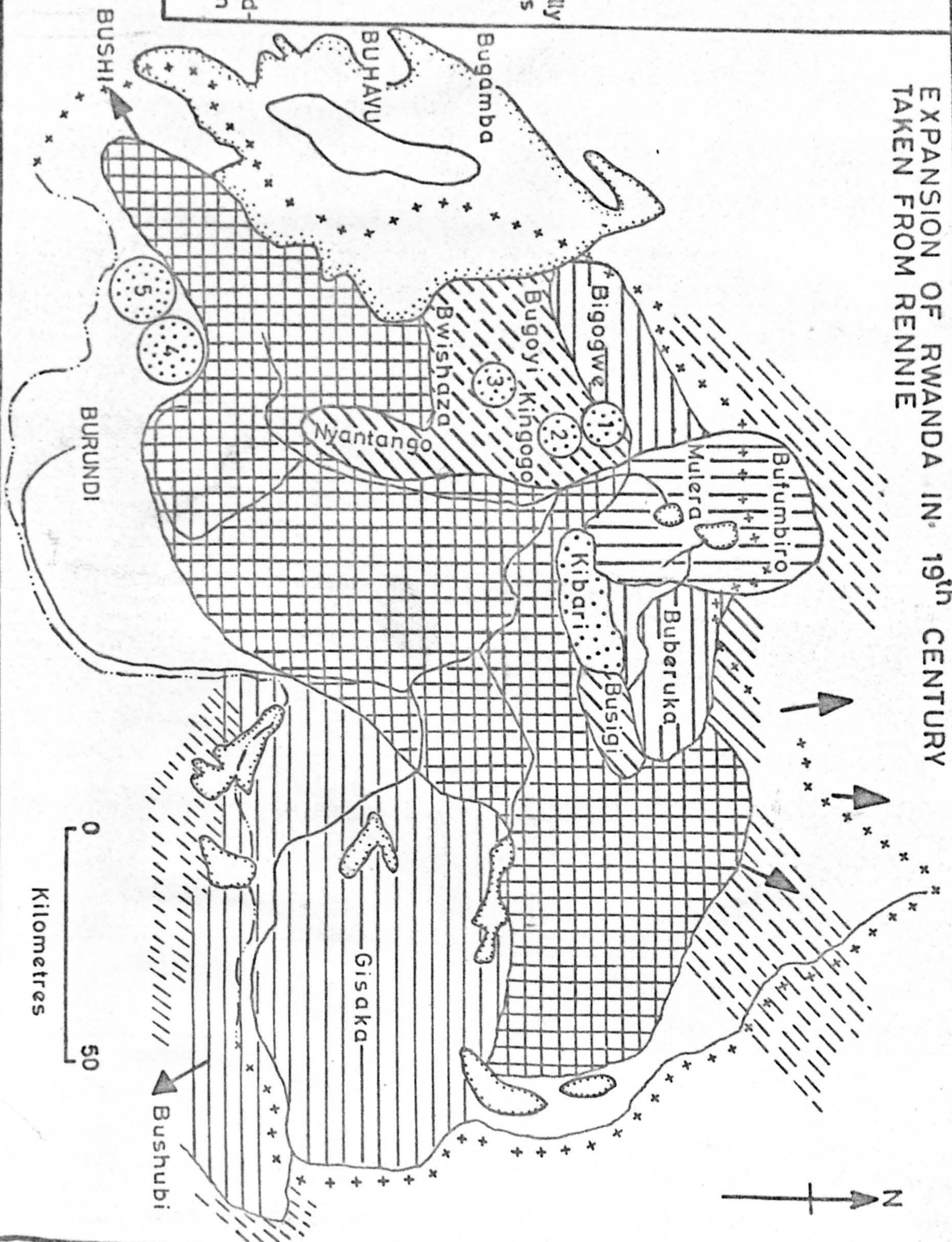




# EXPANSION OF RWANDA IN 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY TAKEN FROM RENNIE

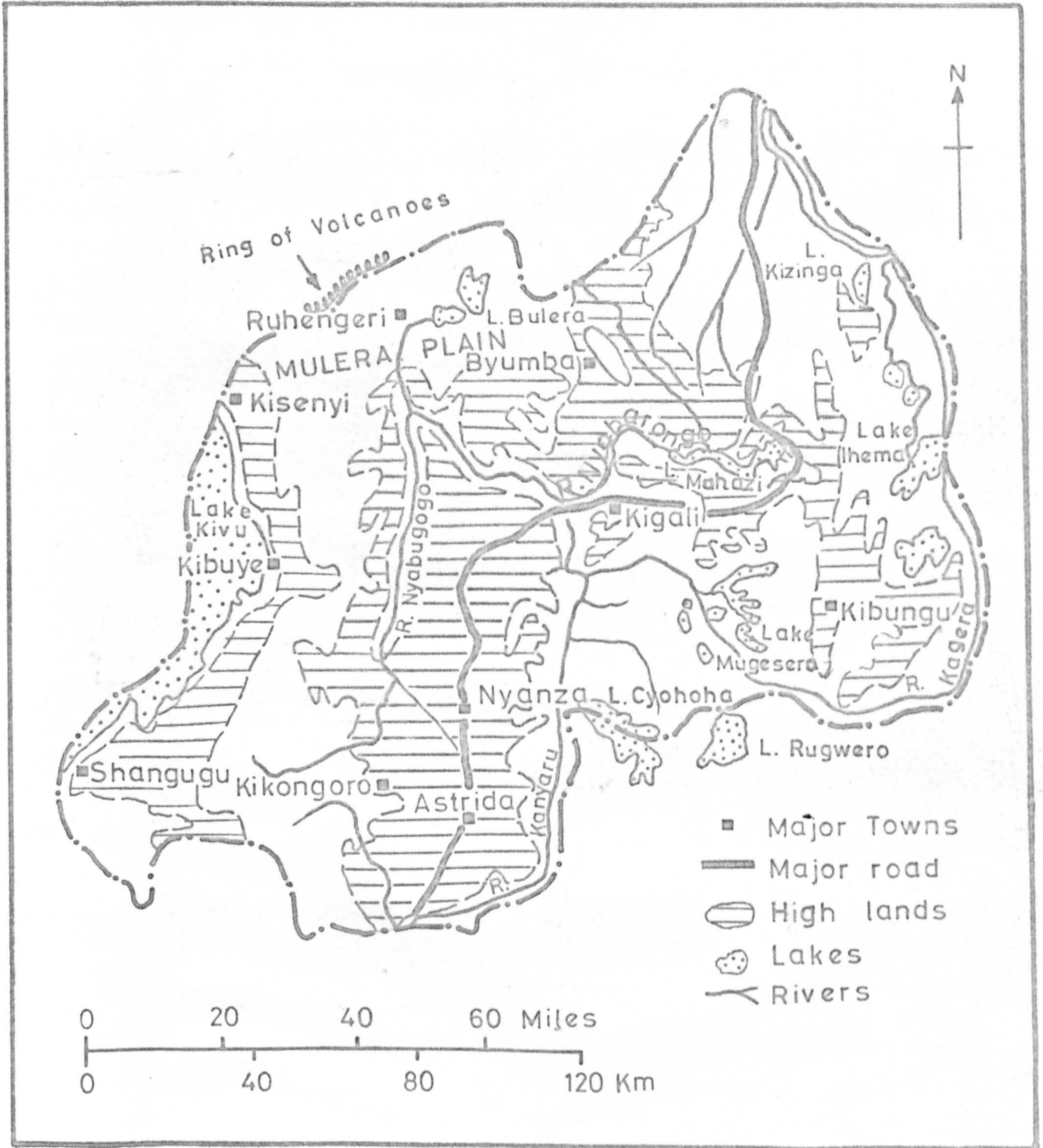
 Rwanda by 1800 added by  
 Gahindiro partial control only added by  
 Rwogera added by  
 Rwabugiri partial control  
 Areas essentially outside Rwanda's control  
 Directions of Rwanda's raiding expansion

1 Buhoma  
 2 Bushiru  
 3 Kingogo  
 4 Busozo  
 5 Bukunzi





# PHYSICAL MAP OF RWANDA





# CATHOLIC MISSION STATIONS BEFORE BELGIAN OCCUPATION





# PROVINCES OF RWANDA

