

Why did we take up armed struggle? Because we were left to fend for ourselves. After Ndadaye's death, we cried out for help to the international community, but in vain. In this way, we came to understand, as Dr. Jjumba said yesterday, that the way to fight fire is with fire. The obstacle to democracy is the army, and that is what we have to attack, to obtain democracy. That is our option. In our culture in Burundi, there is a maxim advising children to behave like respectable persons, but with a certain nuance: It says if children are among respectable people, they should act like them, or be scorned; but, if you are in front of lions, you had better act like lions, or be devoured! I think we are in front of lions right now: so we have to open our eyes and show our claws.

Arms not the solution

In our military fight, we are quite advanced. We have an army inside the country, with a well-established presence over the past three years. And it is growing with each new day. . . . So we can say, that the enemy in Burundi is already weakened: For example, the Burundian army used to have 75 armored vehicles or tanks, and we have burned about 50 of them. We have shot down at least four combat helicopters. We have killed around 4,000 soldiers fighting against us inside the country. I would add that the Burundian army is bankrupt and is being deserted, because we rose up to fight. I would remind you that we are also struggling against the Rwandan and Ugandan armies, who are present in our region. Yesterday, Dr. Gafumbegete showed you a photograph of the three chiefs of staff sitting together. They are always together, they fight together. But in spite of that, the determination of the Burundian people will not let them impose their system. It is true, of course, that we have the support of the population and the peoples of the region. This fortifies us tremendously.

Before concluding, I would say that the CNDD is very well organized now, and we have representations in many places. Those who wish more information on our movement can ask our representatives in Europe or elsewhere. We are also open to people who want to free our region. The theme here of "peace through development" is very important. Peace can not take place if systems of government do not heed the will of the people. We must do the utmost to make our people heard, so they may choose their own leaders and express themselves in all areas relevant to the nation.

We are convinced that in spite of the problems we heard about yesterday, in spite of the British elite, we will, with the determination of our people, stem the tide. We appealed to the international community, and now we have understood that our own force is what counts. And force depends on unity. There is an American author who said, "We have to shake hands and work together, or we will be hanged separately" [sic]. I think the time has come to shake hands. Let me state here my thanks to the Schiller Institute and all the organizers of this conference. I think the time has come to open up a new era of cooperation in order to defeat the

oligarchies ruling our countries.

We not only have enemies, we also have friends. And we must lean on those friends. Our enemies only speak the language of violence and arms. But arms are not the solution to the problem, as is seen in the fact that they have the arms, but no solutions to our problems. We must understand this phenomenon, so that we, who have the support of the people, use this instrument for the democratic rule of our countries.

Mme. Perpetue Nshimirimana

Burundi's future depends on us

Mme. Nshimirimana is the former Burundian ambassador to the United Nations. She addressed the conference on April 27. Her speech is translated from the French.

I will begin by asking a question: "Is there an international conspiracy against the populations of the Great Lakes region?" I have often asked myself this question, and, now, considering what happened in Burundi, I think we should have asked that question a long time ago. That way, we might have been able to avoid what is happening today. I have been well situated to witness the reactions of the international community, to its hemming and hawing, instead of taking care of what is going on in our region. This community should feel at least partially responsible for our suffering.

I was ambassador to the United Nations during the crisis in Burundi. I must say that when the death of President Ndadaye was announced, there was tremendous emotion in the world, and great sadness over what our country was going through. Deep inside ourselves, we thought the world would finally take charge of us. But we were wrong. I say that, because I saw the reactions: The United Nations condemned what was going on, the United States, France, Switzerland (where I live), and Germany, Burundi's leading creditors, condemned this action. So, we thought they had a good weapon—the financial weapon—with which to force those who wanted to take over Burundi to give up. Unfortunately, they did nothing, although the alarms had been sounded early on.

When he was speaking about me yesterday, Mr. Gafumbegete said I was trying to pull together an archive on what has happened in Burundi over the past three years. Let me tell you an anecdote: My father was assassinated 32 years ago, in 1965. I was too young at the time to understand what it was

all about. But when I grew up and wanted to understand, I started to do research. I said: "My father was a policeman, why was he accused of inciting a coup against the king?" When I was older, I started to look into the question, to get it documented. I wanted to understand what had happened, but, in looking at that time period, we could not find anything implicating these people.

In 1993, I was an actor in political events in Burundi. And I thought, for the sake of my children, I do not have the right to tell them in 10 or 15 years, if I'm still alive, that I didn't know what was going on. So I went to work. From that point on, I filed, I indexed, I got my hands on anything I could that had to do with Burundi. I am telling you this, because during the three years I have been doing this, I have piled up a lot of documents, which show that the world is informed about what is going on in Burundi. International organizations, Amnesty International, human rights rapporteurs—they have all written about this. But what is happening to this pile of papers? Absolutely nothing!

During the La Baule conference in 1990, we were told to democratize our countries in order to receive aid. As Mr. William Munyen Babazi said, Burundi was a model for this. But when democracy was endangered, nobody, but nobody, came to help us.

So, we should ask ourselves the question: What is the use of democratizing? What can we gain from following this example, if those who propose it do nothing when it is in danger? This is serious.

You remember that just after the putsch in Burundi, a government was installed in Kigali, Rwanda, with the support of the whole world. Their first demand was: Help us, send us an international force to face down the military power, so that we can restore democracy, establish stability, and give a new start to the country. We have the text. As for Burundi, we were asking for only 800 men; 800 men to protect the President, the government, the television broadcasting station, the central bank, the prisons. No more. The first response came from Africa, which sent 200 men—but Africa has no money. If the United Nations had granted our demand, at that time, we might possibly have avoided those events which spread like wildfire throughout the Great Lakes region. But even those 800 men that Burundi requested were too many. After all, what is this international community? Does it really exist? Every Burundian is bitter when he remembers the indifference we met up with, not only since 1993, but for more than 30 years now.

That is why we now think that the future of our country will depend on what we want it to be. I will conclude on this note: If we do not mobilize in Burundi, in Rwanda, in Zaire or Uganda, we cannot expect manna to fall from heaven. This will not happen, as the facts have proven. The future of our country depends on us. Either we can cross our arms and wait, which means we will disappear, or we can decide to unite, to lay the basis for stability in the region of the Great Lakes.

Jean N. Gahururu

Rwanda needs peace through development

Jean Gahururu, of the Bonn-based Forum for Freedom and Democracy in Rwanda, presented this working paper on "Rwanda: Peace through Development and Regional Integration" to the conference on April 27. It has been translated from the French.

1. Brief review of the socio-political context in Rwanda

After the summit of French-speaking countries at La Baule in June 1990, but especially after the collapse of the communist system in 1989, processes of political reform were launched in French-speaking Africa. In Rwanda, with the promulgation of the democratic constitution in June 1991, more than 15 political parties were registered, during the course of this process. There was a rather remarkable liberalization of individual rights and freedom, above all in the press and private enterprise. I was myself General Inspector of Trade at the time, and I noticed a flowering of the private sector. This was done in spite of the atrocious civil war, that had been launched from Uganda on Oct. 1, 1990 by the RPF.

One can never repeat enough: That war not only devastated the country's economy (Rwanda's GDP reportedly dropped by half from 1990 to 1994), but it has also caused tremendous psychological and human damage. I am among those people who speak out about genocide in Rwanda, and we have called upon the United Nations to go and attest to this reality. I was then head of relief operations for the International Committee of the Red Cross. I stayed in Rwanda during the entire war, and was an eyewitness to many of these aspects of extermination.

The signing of the Arusha peace agreements on Aug. 4, 1993 led the two parties to abandon, at least on paper, their uncompromising positions. A large part of the population was relieved by that agreement, which included, in terms of socio-economic measures, the following points:

Cessation of war.

Formation of a new national army of 19,000 men, of which 60% and 40% respectively were to come from the RAF [Rwandan Armed Forces] (then numbering more or less 35,000 men) and from the ranks of the RPF (more or less 15,000 men).

Demobilization, over a period of nine months, begin-