

Marcel Kabanda, UNESCO, Rwandan historian and co-author of Les Medias du Genocide

Marcel Kabanda: Good morning. So I have a text, which is rather long, but I'll try not to follow rather what it says in the text, but to summarize somewhat. If it goes too quickly, if it's not understandable, then please indicate to me, and I will adapt accordingly. So you can understand therefore it's difficult for me to speak here, just after General Dallaire. So I'll try nevertheless, between what he says, and what I'll explain to you, I'll try and ensure a certain continuity here. I think what he gave was a very good introduction to the following presentations, which will come. He talked on the basis of his experience as a military man, but he also talked about the media, and the role of the media. And he spoke at length also about foreign media. I myself, I myself, will just talk about the media in Rwanda. He mentioned the role, which could be played by the media in a positive way so as to help to resolve issues, to inform people, and I myself here will focus on the role which the media have played really in a negative way, an adverse way, and as he said really the media are the double-edged sword. In the written media, which affected Rwanda during the 1990s, the best one known, though, is the Newspaper Kangura. It's well known for its historic hatred of Tutsi, and against Hutu, who expressed their desire for change, for freedom, for democratic openness. It was founded in 1990, and headed from the beginning to the end by Mr. Hassan Ngeze. It became famous soon in the publication in December, 1990, by what was called The Ten Commandants About Hutu, by these ten commandants, it was encouraging Hutu to realize the Tutsi were an enemy first and foremost. To move away from them, to break all links with them, links of marriage, business links, professional links, and to break up the historic, political, cultural community of Rwanda, and to build another one, one which would be more pure apparently, alongside which there would be a different category, which would be tolerable, but nevertheless have to be closely monitored because they wish to dominate. But Kangura is not known simply for making a call to freedom. It was also known by the propaganda over four years so as to ensure the failure of all attempts at mediation or reconciliation, preferring to reconciliation rather the logic of confrontation. This is more than just suggested. It's actually expressed, clearly expressed, that the words associated with this are evoked carefully of violence, which is very serious, and what I regret myself is I didn't conduct a statistical study of the number of times terms, such as "death" and "blood" were used.

Also, through cartoons and caricatures, you can see, that men are dishonored. They're undressed, and they're always shown really in positions, which are really not to their credit. In 1990, Rwanda was at the crossroads. Refugees had lived for 20, 30 years outside, and they were asking to come back. They demanded therefore they put an end to certain practices. Within the country, more and more people were protesting to demand an opening to a multi-party system, the position repatriation of refugees.

There was a feeling of asphyxia within the country, the feeling of abandonment outside also, come together, and they speak out against the hypocrisy of the system, which claims to be republican and democratic, when it, in fact, clearly practices tyranny.

So in answer to the war, and to the request for political openness, the regime reacted by

recalling the reaction of 1950, the revolution of 1959. This reference has a dual advantage. It makes it possible therefore to bring the armed opponents, to put them into the category of being simply nostalgic, and it calls on the mobilization of the people, who were called to defend the advantages gained. It also, it could also appeal to the first popular movement in 1963, an episode, which legitimized violence, and was extreme violence. From 1990-1994, but particularly during 1991, the newspaper Kangura published a number of articles in which it used the Tutsi as a scarecrow to scare people in the world of business, claiming that they were governing, despite the appearance, which was the majority in the school system, both in terms of teachers, and also in terms of students, and also in the church, and everything, which was the symbol of modernity, for example in cities.

So therefore, we're going to focus primarily on all these passages, and some of these articles, which illustrate this movement back to the 1950s and, 60s. You have to recognize that the revolution was legitimized at the beginning by this observation, which was made in what you could call the Bahutu Manifesto of 1957. I'll read the main points of this document to you. "The problem is first and foremost a problem of political monopoly enjoyed by one certain group, the Tutsi". What Kangura was trying to do in 1990 is to try and convince the electorate that the situation still prevails. It was trying to paste the Rwanda society of 1990, he was trying to put on it the image of 1957. It was speaking out against so called hegemony of the Tutsi, where the majority of people were the victims first. It was asking the Hutu to remember the revolution of 1959, and this for him was essential to remain a democracy.

It pointed out that the war conducted by the Tutsi never stopped, and you can read, for example, this in Kangura number six of December, 1990, that since the revolution of 1959, not did one day the Tutsi ever give up the idea of re-conquering power in Rwanda, and exterminating intellectuals and dominating the Bahutu farmers. It suggested that with this process of conquest and revolution, the Tutsi had made considerable advances, and that they were mobilizing the work markets, trade and also finance. And you can read, for example, in November, 1991, the following, "The Bahutu Tutsi can constitute 50 per cent of government officials, 70 per cent of private business employees, 90 per cent of staff in embassies and international organizations, and they occupy important positions everywhere. Nevertheless, they constitute only 10 per cent of the population. Therefore this image was an image of an invading Tutsi, an invasive force."

The same thing applies also in education. He states the following with respect to an education system you can read this in May, 1990, "For as regards to education, the minority remains in leadership."

Another article the same month, but in 1992, suggesting the statistics for education at all levels of secondary education are looked at very carefully, we'll be surprised to see that Tutsi are everywhere. They're present everywhere. Kangura explains the increase of the role of Tutsi in the social and political field of the country through the negligence with which the scoring system was carried out. It criticizes the government for lacking vigilance, and for giving the Tutsi identity cards, indicating in fact that they were Hutu,

which made it impossible therefore to control and conduct discrimination. And it says because of the practice of falsification of identity, the policy of balance is a failure, and that's why in the schools the Tutsi, and those who kept that identity constitute now 80 per cent of the staff.

The same practice is also used with respect to political parties. They criticize those people, who try and revive the old party. It accused them of being cowards, opportunists. It builds up again the en diable; it doesn't want to add other things to it. Kangura nevertheless is trying to suggest to all the Hutu that the best to continue this campaign is the president Habyarimana. I wasn't able to do this, but at least I'll come to the conclusion now.

When you reread this text, we're particularly struck by the interest shown to history, and why Kangura had to remind them of the speeches of 1954, and Joseph Gitara (?) in 1976. In a society where experience is so respected, this is an excellent argument. The past provides the evidence that violence against Tutsi was seen, but we can see nevertheless that throughout the history nevertheless made it possible to improve things for certain people. You could therefore look at the logic and genocide here. This is clearly stated. You identify the Tutsi from within as being accomplices with any action for refugees. Thank you very much.