

## **SAMIR AMIN**

### **RWANDA , Twentieth anniversary of the genocide 1994-2014**

Twenty years later full light has not been thrown on the shooting down of the plane of the then President of Rwanda, Habyarimana. The event was immediately followed by the genocide of the Tutsis by Hutu militias. Therefore two hypotheses remain to this day equally possible: 1) the plane was shot by Hutu extremists, making a pretext of the event to initiate the planned cleansing and get rid of the President who opposed it, 2) the plane was shot by Tutsis in order to provoke a massacre and get the pretext for their “liberation army” stationed in Uganda to “liberate” (or “invade”) Rwanda, even if they may have underestimated the size of the massacre of which they would be the victims.

The drama is not an ethnic war, as usually reported. Hutus and Tutsis belong to the same nation, speak the same language. Hutu is the name given to the majority (85%) of peasants submitted to the power of an aristocracy, called Tutsi, who being free from agricultural labour, are the owners of a numerous cattle and devote their time to administer the country. A system similar to the Hindu caste, without being as extreme: intermarriages are permitted. The Germans ruled the colony until 1919 through a compromise leaving to the aristocracy its economic privileges and giving to their choice an explanation according to which the Tutsis were a “superior race”. The national liberation movement was, for that reason, confused. As elsewhere the local privileged classes (here the Tutsis) joined the demand for independence, hoping to maintain their positions, while many Hutu leaders combined independence with social demands aiming at removing the privileges of the Tutsis. In Burundi a compromise was reached between those two views, not in Rwanda where the Hutus captured wholly the power. As a result number of Tutsi leaders emigrated to Uganda and organised in exile an “army” with the support of Uganda and the US.

France, Belgium and US are involved in the region and therefore share responsibility in the drama. In particular France and Belgium who supported the “Hutu” regime of Kigali, and certainly could not ignore that the extremists in the regime were planning a genocide. Nonetheless replacing a government of the majority by a quasi restoration of a power system ignoring it is not viable. According to the Arusha agreement elections should be held, whose results would certainly compel the regime to at least serious concessions to the Hutu vast majority. Kagame does not accept it; his military dictatorship must continue, supported by Washington. The Western powers are interested not in the doubtful riches of Rwanda, but in the immense mineral resources of the Eastern part of the neighbouring Congo, in particular rare minerals. The modernised army of Kagame, fully devoted from the very start to its US masters, is to that effect useful tool : it does not only control Rwanda, it operates in Congo with the pretext of chasing the remnants of the Hutu Rwanda former army, it even had the arrogant ambition of controlling Kinshasa, until Kabila abandoned their previous military support and started reconquering the Eastern provinces of Congo. There have been times of tension between US, France and Belgium, until seemingly the Europeans accepted the US command in the region. But that submission might be questioned. African countries, Uganda first -the major ally of Washington in the region -South Africa, Zimbabwe, Angola, are supporting one or the other partner, i.e. Kagame or Kabila.

The case of Rwanda is indeed dramatic. There are no signs for the whole region moving out from continuous wars and chaos, allowing imperialist permanent interference and plunder of its resources. The only admissible solution would be diluting the violent inheritance of Rwanda through the building of a kind of loose “confederation” of the Great Lakes region, incorporating Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania,

Uganda and the Congo (there are Hutu/Tutsi minorities in all these countries), pursuing a common sovereign project as distant as possible from the Western powers. An immense task for the popular and democratic forces in the region.