

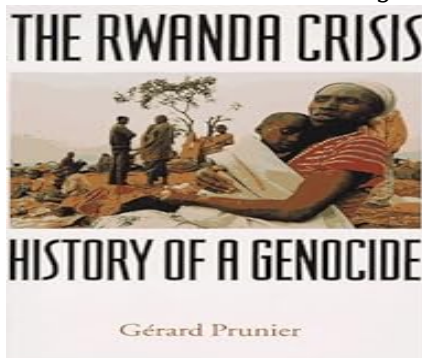
The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide By Gérard Prunier He shows how Western colonialists helped to construct a Tutsi identity as a superior racial type because of their distinctly non-Negro features in order to facilitate greater control over the Rwandese. It covers not only the unravelling of order fuelled by civil war and ethnic propaganda but presents the wider history so that those interested in the field can understand how and why such egregious crimes against humanity could ever develop. Ultimately the expose is not on the evils of either Tutsi or Hutu but how tragedy arises from geopolitical and economic meddling in areas deemed to be a sphere of influence by former colonial powers. English After reading this book.

In the spring of 1994 the tiny African nation of Rwanda exploded onto the international media stage as internal strife reached genocidal proportions. In *The Rwanda Crisis* journalist and Africa scholar Gerard Prunier provides a historical perspective that Western readers need to understand how and why the brutal massacres of 800000 Rwandese came to pass. Prunier shows how the events in Rwanda were part of a deadly logic a plan that served central political and economic interests rather than a result of ancient tribal hatreds--a notion often invoked by the media to dramatize the fighting. *The Rwanda Crisis* makes great strides in dispelling the racist cultural myths surrounding the people of Rwanda Prunier moves from the pre-colonial Kingdom of Rwanda through German and Belgian colonial regimes to the 1973 coup. The book chronicles the developing refugee crisis in Rwanda and neighboring Uganda in the 1970s and 1980s and offers the most comprehensive account available of the manipulations of popular sentiment that led to the genocide and the events that have followed. *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* Gerard Prunier explains in very readable detail the intricacies leading up to during and briefly after the genocide in 1994 starting with the German colonisation a hundred years before. The history is complex there are no simple explanations except that the population of Rwanda is divided into two ethnic groups - the majority Hutus and the taller and different-looking gifted Tutsis said to have once migrated from lands further north. A rapacious Hutu clique with links to President Habyarimana's wife saw itself losing hold firstly after the dramatic fall in price of coffee and other key commodity exports secondly as a result of being threatened by the impending Arusha agreements that would accommodate the Tutsi opposition. A combination of strong civil organisation heavy population density absence of places to escape to coupled with a naturally compliant Hutu population all favoured their message that eventually corralled Hutu communities into "bush clearing" (killing men) and "pulling out the roots" (women and children) using machetes massively imported by the government and aided by the actions of better-armed militia and army forces. For geo-political reasons (the so-called 'Fashoda complex' - a pathological fear of encroaching Anglo-Saxon influence in this case via the RPF links with Uganda) France was already a compliant benefactor and its resulting unwillingness to stand up to the regime and prevent the madness constitutes a major theme in the book. Even after the massacres and the realisation of French military personnel landed during Operation Turquoise during the later stages that they had effectively given a hand to the perpetrators President Mitterrand was deviously referring to a 'double genocide' by vastly over-exaggerating the retributions enacted by the victorious RPF whose takeover effectively brought an end to the massacres. The extraordinary aftermath included 1-2 million fleeing Hutu refugees who even in their camps in Zaire Tanzania Uganda and Burundi remained under control of the same men who had pushed them into slaughter. For all that might be said against him Tutsi President Paul Kagame has since overseen a general rise of fortunes in the country it is clear to me that the history of Rwanda is far more complicated than it first appeared. But I don't recommend starting with this book to read about the Rwandan massacre; the friendliest introduction would be *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* - then you can come back to this book and having already established a preliminary understanding of the Rwandan issue you will be able to see more clearly the history and the dry material described in the book becomes flesh and blood in your eyes. I was particularly impressed by the author's severe criticism of the Mitterrand government from his own experience as a French expert on Rwanda whose arrogance and foolishness before and after the

incident is clear. The author tends to put the blame on the Belgian colonization their shoring up the Tutsis as the superior race and the Hutus in a subordinate class almost creating a caste system,

Views propogated by European colonialists in the nineteenth century and carved into history by Western influence. Prunier demonstrates how the struggle for cultural dominance and subjugation among the Hutu and Tutsi--the central players in the recent massacres--was exploited by racially obsessed Europeans, Expertly leading readers on a journey through the troubled history of the country and its surroundings.

But one wonders how easily it could all happen again. The reason for Kagame's recent thinly-veiled attack on France during the 20th anniversary of the genocide can be understood. That the author is an ex-associate of the French government gives a gripping - and shameful - insight into the role France played in the affairs of Rwanda. But the horror that unfolded before our eyes had been building steadily for years before it captured the attention of the world. In the aftermath of this devastating tragedy *The Rwanda Crisis* is the first clear-eyed analysis available to American readers: From the massacres to the subsequent cholera epidemic and emerging refugee crisis Prunier details the horrifying events of recent years and considers propsects for the future of Rwanda: By 1994 the country was being run by the majority Hutus with the danger of invasion by the Tutsi RPF from its bases in Uganda: The minority Tutsis who happened to be in power in neighbouring Burundi had ruled before, Now they were being largely subdued and many had fled during previous confrontations: They started a programme of demonising the Tutsis and those Hutus considered moderates, All it took was the assassination of President Habyaramina who although providing an obstacle to Arusha had a stabilizing effect on the situation. It is clear to me now that a history of Rwanda is almost meaningless without a more general knowledge of the Great Lakes region: The book ends abruptly roughly six months to a year after the genocide and much of the latter part is still covered in a fog of war, The author himself was mainly concerned his critique of France's involvement in the Rwandan genocide and of French African policy writ large: The author does use a large variety of primary sources mainly derived from his connections in Uganda: English It is very well written informative and stands as rationally as possible from a scholarly standpoint quite different from the journalistic chronicle books of the same genre. English An interesting look into what brought on the genocide in Rwanda: the real perpetrators were the intellectuals - from both sides: English Again go from 0 to 60 in your understanding of the Rwandan genocide. Also excellent detail of the French role in the whole thing since Prunier is French and was working in the government at the time of the genocide. Very interesting insider's perspective very critical of French foreign policy. It really helps you understand how Rwanda got to the point of the 1994 genocide: But there were a lot of political details--too many for me: English Like his book on Darfur this book is the only complete history of the culmination of Rwanda's genocide, This book will tell you everything you need to know and more: English Really informative read about the Rwandan genocide English



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