
Interview: Christian Sendegeya

What it will take to bring peace and development to Burundi

Mr. Sendegeya is the vice president of the National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD) in Burundi. He was interviewed by Uwe Friesecke in October, and his answers have been translated from the French. For background on the political battle going on in Burundi, see EIR, Oct. 31, pp. 40-47.

EIR: Why is the CNDD fighting the current government of Pierre Buyoya militarily, through the FDD [Forces for the Defense of Democracy]?

Sendegeya: It is Buyoya, his party, and the Army that made the Oct. 21, 1993 coup attempt, and then completed it materially on July 25, 1996. In actual fact, the coup d'état succeeded because of the Government Convention. The authors of the 1965, 1969, 1972, 1988, and 1991 genocide and President [Melchior] Ndadaye's assassins are still in control of the state. In these conditions, it is impossible to restore democracy, build the rule of law, or set up a fair, sound justice system.

In order to rule, the military-civilian oligarchy in power since 1966 relies on a monoethnic army trained to kill anyone who challenges the system, and on a police force and a magistracy designed for oppression.

Since the coup d'état of Oct. 21, 1993, we estimate some 200,000 people have been killed, at least 190,000 of them—mainly Hutus—by bayonets wielded by the government Army.

Buyoya, since his return to power, has set up Nazi-style concentration camps in which, according to the World Health Organization's report, 1,000 people are dying every day, all of them Hutus.

The international community, especially neighboring countries, has ordered Buyoya many times to reinstate the National Assembly and political parties, to unconditionally open peace negotiations with all parties to the conflict, and to dismantle the concentration camps. The National Assembly was not reinstated, contrary to popular belief, because the Constitution of the republic was abolished. A parliament cannot function without a Constitution. Moreover, for reasons of permanent insecurity concerning their personal safety, more than half of the parliamentarians are in exile abroad. A quorum cannot even be reached. Political parties are still forbid-

den to deploy out in the country and talk to their activists. Since the agreement for negotiations was signed on March 10, 1996, by delegations of the military junta and the CNDD, negotiations have been deadlocked.

EIR: Is the CNDD a Hutu movement? Some say the CNDD and the FDD are dominated by Hutu extremists, who only want revenge.

Sendegeya: The Hima Tutsi oligarchy, in power since 1966, always attempts to ethnicize the Burundian conflict, in order to claim that there is a hypothetical "Hutu danger." It is true that, during these 30 years in power, the conflict has been ethnicized, because of systematically organized genocide against the Hutus.

But in the Frodebu party [Burundi Democratic Front] and CNDD, we intend to prove—and we have done so—that the Burundian conflict is rather a political one, upon which the military-putschist rulers try to stick an ethnic label. All Tutsis cannot accept responsibility for crimes committed against the Hutus; responsibility lies with the Hima military-civilian oligarchy that is in power. The proof of this is that in 1972, and again in 1993, when these Himas decimated the Hutus, they also went after those Tutsis who disagreed with their policy.

Tutsis such as Amédé Kabugubugu, Pierre Ngunzu (ex-ministers); Thadée Sindayigaya, former general director of the Presidency; administrator Gikoro; Commissioner Zacharie, and many Tutsi military men and students were killed by the Army in 1972. In 1993, the Hon. Gilles Bimazubute (vice president of the National Assembly), Englebert Sentamo (governor of Karuzi), Emille Ndayishimiye (director of the Rumonge oil-works), Sebwanza (high school teacher), and, later on in 1996, Lieutenant Colonels Nzeyimana Dieudonné and Zihabandi Cyrille—all of them Tutsis—were killed by this oligarchy in power.

And, don't forget the last King of Burundi, Ntare V, and his friend Emmanuel Biha. I myself have been in exile since 1994. I am a Tutsi, but I had to flee from the Army. Others Tutsis are also in exile, they are all leaders of the Frodebu-CNDD. I will mention Léonce Ndarubagiye (former governor of Gitega), Joseph Ntakirutimana (parliamentarian, for-

mer governor of Ngozi province, and former diplomat), the late Stanislas Kaduga (deputy), Jean-Marie Ngendahayo (former foreign minister), and his brother Déo Ngendahayo, and Mohamed Rukara (regional representative of the World Islamic League).

So, the CNDD is not a Hutu movement, and much less an extremist Hutu movement. All the Tutsis I mentioned, except for the Ngendahayo brothers, are founding members of the CNDD and are part of the leadership. I myself am vice president of the CNDD.

We do not seek revenge, but we think the Hima dynasty must come to an end, in order for democracy and justice to flourish for all. As you know, the Hutus in Burundi make up over 85% of the population, and they have suffered from the Hima oligarchical system more than we Tutsis. It is quite normal that they should outnumber Tutsis in the CNDD. That is natural. If you try to make a revolution, like the one we are building, without Hutus, you will never succeed. But it is not a Hutu movement. It is open to all Burundians, whatever their ethnic group, who are fighting for the ideals I spoke of.

Besides, those who say it's a Hutu movement, do so purposefully. They push this sensitive issue in order to maintain division. In 1961, when the first pluralist elections took place in Burundi, Prince Louis Rwagasore and his party, the Uprona, won with over 80% of the votes. Rwagasore was a Tutsi, but the Uprona was never said to be a Hutu party, even though it was because of the Hutus that he won with such a wide margin.

The Frodebu is said to be a Hutu party, and the CNDD as well. Is it because the presidents are Hutus? And if I am elected president of the Frodebu or the CNDD tomorrow, will they then become Tutsi?

EIR: How did you become the vice president?

Sendegeya: I have been a member of the Frodebu National Executive Committee since it went underground, and I was responsible for propaganda and recruitment. I then became Vice General Administrator of National Documentation and Migrations, and then vice president of the National Assembly, before leaving the country. So, I am not unknown to Burundians, and the esteem they have for me is unquestioned. When the election of the CNDD Executive Committee took place, I had no trouble getting elected to the number two position. . . .

EIR: Frodebu was the party which won the elections of 1993. When and why was this party organized, and who took the initiative for it?

Sendegeya: The Frodebu was created clandestinely in July 1986, at the initiative of a group of 20 people. At that time, other political parties opposed to the sole party in power existed, but operated from abroad, which explains their ineffectiveness in mobilizing the masses. The Frodebu was born

and developed inside the country. Faced with bloodthirsty military dictators, Burundians could no longer remain passive. The dictatorial shift of the rule of Bagaza, who was also attacking the Church at the time, as well as the bad relations he had created with neighboring countries, were the tripwire for those who were thinking about building a better future for Burundi and Burundians.

EIR: Would you say, that today, the CNDD represents the heritage of the late Melchior Ndadaye and Frodebu?

Sendegeya: Yes, unquestionably. I told you how Mr. Ntibantunganya and a small group of Frodebu cadres were misled into signing the Government Convention, which meant de facto sanctioning the Oct. 21, 1993 coup d'état. He was disowned by all the people who had voted for the Frodebu. These people massively joined the CNDD in the struggle to save the Frodebu's achievements and, thereby, Ndadaye's heritage. . . .

If we were to decide today to transform the CNDD into a political party and to leave the Frodebu label to the Ntibantunganya group, I don't know that Frodebu would even make it to 10% in the elections. In other words, the CNDD saved the Frodebu from otherwise certain disappearance.

Today, because we have taken up arms, the military junta is forced to negotiate, and international opinion is not as indifferent as it was, concerning the Burundian problem.

EIR: What did the election of Ndadaye as President of Burundi in 1993 mean for the country? And why was he assassinated?

Sendegeya: The election of President Ndadaye in 1993 meant a great deal for our country. For the first time in Burundi's history, a Hutu has been elevated to become head of state, by the people themselves, Hutus and Tutsis together. For once, for the first time since 1962, the people had exercised their sovereignty to elect their own leaders. As for us Tutsis who had been with Ndadaye up to his victory, we had proved to the Burundians that a Hutu could also lead the country, and that the idea of the so-called innate qualities allowing only Tutsis to rule, was just an invention of the colonizers, who sought to divide and conquer. Unfortunately, this Darwinian thesis was developed by a prelate who had come to preach God's word.

The election of Ndadaye and the Frodebu victory was a victory for all those thirsting for peace, freedom, and justice. His assassination thus inevitably led to revolt and a generalized uprising. He was killed simply because he was a Hutu. That is unfair and intolerable.

EIR: How do you see the conflict between Hutu and Tutsi? What is the historical reason for it, and why, to this day, does it take such a violent form?

Sendegeya: This Hutu-Tutsi conflict is a stupid conflict,

This Hutu-Tutsi conflict is a stupid conflict, but one which is wittingly kept going by a handful of individuals, for whom power means only their own interests. . . . It is incomprehensible and absurd for Burundians, especially among the Tutsis, to let themselves become hostage to such a suicidal ideology.

but one which is wittingly kept going by a handful of individuals for whom power means only their own interests, and not those of the nation or the Burundian people. It is incomprehensible and absurd for Burundians, especially among the Tutsis, to let themselves become hostage to such a suicidal ideology.

I have repeatedly said that if the Tutsis would only give up their boundless, pretentious claim to being God's elected people, the Hutu-Tutsi conflict would disappear by itself. Provided, of course, that a healthy democratic system is set up, in which all Burundians, irrespective of ethnic or regional considerations, have the inalienable right to participate in running their country, through free, transparent, one-man-one-vote elections. Unfortunately, there are some Hutu grouplets who think in terms of vengeance. They make themselves heard through a party called the Palipehutu (Hutu People's Liberation Party). They are as backward as the Tutsis ruling in Bujumbura.

In Rwanda, the Hutus took power in 1959-60, to reject the Tutsi monarchy, but, regrettably, they set up an exclusively Hutu power. We see the price they paid for that today.

I think that no well-advised politician would favor solving the Hutu-Tusti conflict with vengeance. A lasting, acceptable solution involves democratizing the system of government and the administration of the country.

The historical reasons for this conflict are well enough known. There were age-old inequalities between Hutus and Tutsis, that colonialization strengthened. But it appeared that these inequalities would be settled by Prince Rwagasore on the eve of independence. Unfortunately, after he was assassinated on Oct. 13, 1961, the Tutsis became ethnically intolerant, fed by their arrogance and ridiculous pretensions of being superior to the Hutus, which led the Hutus to revolt. But, how intolerance can go so far as to physically exterminate an ethnic group, is simply not comprehensible and revolting for any honest man who believes in God and in universal morality.

Even if the Hutus were the only ones to be the object of this intolerance, the consequences of it should jolt any honest person. That is why the Tutsis in the Frodebu allied with the democratic Hutus to change the situation. Since the peaceful approach had failed, we had no other choice but to resort to fighting.

EIR: What led to the genocide of April 1972?

Sendegeya: Again, it is this spirit of intolerance and of doing away with the other ethnic group by fire and sword that led to the genocide of 1972. Because, had there been Hutus who rebelled, they should have attacked the Army and other oppressing forces (gendarmerie, armed Tutsi militias), and not peaceful citizens, including children. By the same token, the Army and the police had no reason to massacre hundreds of thousands of Hutus throughout the country, when the rebellion launched from outside had only hit three or four villages in the south of the country.

We must say "no" to this universal intolerance and leave honest citizens in peace. That is why I have always rejected both Tutsis and Hutus who peddle intolerance. Fortunately, more than 90% of the Burundians loathe this ideology. But the Tutsi group preaching it is very well armed, militarily. Democratic Hutus and Tutsis who reject this ideology, must get organized to defeat all types of extremism.

EIR: Was there really a premeditated plan for killing so many people?

Sendegeya: When I analyze the facts, I can state today that there *was* a premeditated plan to exterminate part of the population. In fact, there were also unsettling things that happened just before the 1972 events and which, apparently, served as an alibi for what was to come.

First of all, at the end of March 1972, when the last monarch of Burundi, Ntare V, was in Uganda to sign a trade agreement, Foreign Minister Arthémon Simbananiye and Burundi's ambassador to Dar es Salaam, Mr. Mangona, quickly went to Kampala to arrange with Idi Amin Dada for Ntare V to be arrested and extradited, in exchange for a similar fate for Milton Obote (who was to be invited for a visit by his former counterpart and friend Michel Micombero, then handed over in the same way to Idi Amin Dada). On March 31, the government said that ex-King Ntare was preparing an attack against Burundi with mercenary forces. Today, everyone knows that Ntare had never in any way been associated with any attack on Burundi.

Second, whereas the state authorities said they were informed of the coming attack, Micombero dismissed his government on April 29, the day of the attack. That is incomprehensible: A government is dismissed or reshuffled in

order to replace it straight away by another one; but in spite of the April 29 attack, and subsequent disorder for two months or more, Micombero did not name a new government until July.

Third, on the day of April 29, Ministers Albert Shibura (Interior and Justice) and André Yanda (Information and Party) were in Rumonge (village where the events were to erupt that same day) to meet with administrative, military, and judicial authorities from Bururi Province.

The hypothesis that the government itself had financed the Mulélists (troops of former Congo chief Pierre Mulélé, opposed to Mobutu), in order to create disorder and finish off the Hutus, seems ever more plausible to me. This is pure Machiavellianism. How else could you explain the fact that, already on May 1, the ruling power went after those Hutus and Tutsis (Kabugubugu was killed on May 1) that it wanted to get rid of, without even interrogating them? Moreover, Simbananiye Arthémon, who is still living, never denounced the Hutu extermination plan named after him.

EIR: Who were the main perpetrators of those mass killings, and why were they never called to justice?

Sendegeya: The main instigators of the Hutu extermination are well known. The organizers and perpetrators of the massacres are also well known. They were not operating at night, but in broad daylight. These were provincial governors, commanders of military units, prosecutors, and court magistrates, the General Staff of the Army, etc. . . . Not to mention the “brains” behind it: Micombero, Simbananiye, Shibura, and Yanda.

Why were they never brought to trial? In Burundi, these people, even if they are no longer active on the political scene, remain very influential in the background. Those who have the power (Army, magistracy, security) are their cousins and nephews, who have been gradually groomed to take over from them.

The UN should have assumed its responsibility, as it did recently in Rwanda and in the former Yugoslavia; but we wonder what is behind UN indifference and complaisance in the Burundian drama.

We have the impression—history will tell whether we are right—that there has always been a foreign hand involved preventing the UN from acting. The most striking example is the UN investigation into the 1993 events, which was falsified, after an underhanded intervention by a member country of the UN Security Council that we know well.

EIR: Why have all attempts at a peaceful resolution of the conflicts in Burundi so far failed?

Sendegeya: There are two main reasons. First, the ruling Hima oligarchy sees peace negotiations as an inevitable loss of its monopoly of power, because once you have peace, you have to create a truly national army, police, and magistracy, which are now the three main pillars of the dictatorship.

Second, we demand an investigation into all the genocides and political assassinations committed since independence, in order to end impunity. The authors of these crimes are still in power or exercise great influence in the wings.

EIR: What role did the neighboring countries and their governments play over the years, in the Burundi conflict?

Sendegeya: Neighboring countries never really played a role, or, if they did, only in a biased way. Mobutu’s Zaire sent troops to help Micombero during the 1972 repression. Nyerere’s Tanzania, which greatly supported liberation movements in South Africa, Mozambique, Uganda, and elsewhere, did nothing to help the Burundians. Today, these neighboring countries are involved in seeking a solution to the Burundian problem. But as long as sentimentality, taking sides for or against a certain group, and the specific interests of each one of these countries prevail, our neighbors are likely to fail or to find merely cosmetic solutions.

EIR: How do you see the change of power in former Zaire and the rise of Kabila?

Sendegeya: Mobutu’s regime was a dictatorship that all Africa was ashamed of. He not only destroyed infrastructure and the national economy, but the very soul of the Zairean people. Everybody, and especially those Burundian democrats fighting against another dictatorship, prayed for the fall of that regime. However, we would have liked it to fall through the efforts of the Zaireans themselves, and they should have been helped to do it themselves. The fact that the regime was overthrown by foreign armies, which the Zairian people do not support and which they consider to be invasion forces of an ethnic group, removes the salutary, beneficial character from the changes that all Zaireans so much desired, and mortgages the future of the new regime.

This new regime has now realized that it has to confront several protest movements, both within the country—some of them are even armed—and without. To solidly establish power, it is obliged to borrow the same dictatorial methods as those of the former regime. The world is once again witness to the denial of freedom of assembly and freedom of press. Human rights violations are frequent.

Not to mention the genocide of Rwandan and Burundian Hutus, which will stick in the throat of this new regime forever. Foreign financial groups have now seized former Zaire’s wealth. For the people, the fall of Mobutu has only meant a new type of colonial conquest. But it is perhaps too early to pass judgment, even if the beginning seems worrisome. It is never too late to correct things. But, when international financial mafias are in the game—wait and see.

EIR: How do you, speaking for the CNDD, propose to arrive at a lasting peaceful resolution to the Burundi crisis?

Sendegeya: Although we were forced to resort to weapons,

we have always maintained that a negotiated settlement is preferable. We, in the CNDD, think that even if we achieve military victory, we will be obliged to call upon the defeated party to sit down with us at the negotiating table and find a political solution.

We want lasting peace. We do not want to chase our rivals of today out of the country. They would end up reconstituting a new force and again resort to armed struggle. We do not want our country to be perpetually at war. That is why, since 1994, we have said that negotiations are necessary. But the oligarchy in power is against that. So, we shall continue our struggle, and exerting international pressure to get them to negotiate. Such negotiations must target the fundamental problems of the Burundian people as a whole, and not the sharing of ministerial or leadership positions, as was the case of the shameful, humiliating Government Convention.

These fundamental problems were defined in the general negotiating agreement signed in Rome on March 10, 1996 by the CNDD and the government of Bujumbura. These involve:

1. Reestablishing constitutional and institutional order, which implies, above all, ending the coup d'état (including the effects of the Government Convention) and restoring democracy.

2. Reforming defense and security forces (Army, gendarmerie, and other law enforcement functions), which entails:

- merging forces present on the ground in order to have truly national forces that are representative of all components of the nation;
- depoliticizing these bodies;
- revising the laws governing them, and effectively separating the missions of the Army from those of the gendarmerie.

3. Reforming the magistracy:

- create conditions for an effective independence and for indirect control of abuses of such independence;
- make the magistracy a representative body for all components of the nation;
- reconsider the organizational code and judicial competence;
- revise certain measures in certain codes (criminal, labor, etc.) to bring them into conformity with Burundian customs and human rights;
- finally, and above all, eliminate impunity by creating an International Criminal Tribunal (composition to be agreed upon), to try crimes of genocide and political crimes committed since independence.

To these three fundamental problems, one should add the question of repatriation and reinsertion of refugees and persons displaced by war, and the definition of a system of democratic rule. As the Burundian problem is basically a political problem, which has received an ethnic label in order to justify the unjustifiable, we must avoid having Hutu-Tutsi negotiations leading to ethnic solutions. We should rather

orient solutions toward a system of democratic rule in which all ethnic components will automatically consider themselves integrated, without having to use ethnic arithmetic.

Perhaps, in the beginning, we should be somewhat more realistic, and move progressively toward the ideal system we propose.

EIR: What has to change politically in the Great Lakes Region to promote a peace process for Burundi?

Sendegeya: First of all, we have to create conditions for peace, within and outside each country in the region. In other words, each country must undertake a real process of national reconciliation, and eliminate, in this way, hotbeds of internal conflict. This involves a great effort to get beyond one's personal problems and to put national interest above all. That does not mean that we should drop attempts to completely expose certain atrocious crimes that were committed here and there.

After this process of national reconciliation, we suggest that regional powers hold a conference to study the process of regional integration, which might lead to the creation of a politically and economically viable type of federation. This should be complemented by a kind of round table with foreign countries and organizations, with a view to financing a Marshall Plan, allowing the newly federated states to establish their economies on solid ground.

But, given the present situation, our politicians must commit themselves to a new nationalism and to the sovereignty of our peoples over their wealth. Otherwise, there will be plenty of interference, to try and sabotage our projects, or to eat away at the future federal construction. The charted course may be long, but it will depend on our common will. If all be willing to engage on this course, we should be able to promptly begin solving our internal or border conflicts, and then to address common security considerations, by forming a federal Army under unified command.

In all possible cases, and this is true for all underdeveloped or developing nations, it is indispensable to redefine our economic and political relations with the major powers. Let us not forget that the two world wars were caused, among other things, by unbridled competition on markets and international resources. What we see today cannot help but worry us.

EIR: The CNDD negotiated with the Buyoya government in Rome. Was this successful?

Sendegeya: In Rome, we signed a draft agreement for negotiations, whose highlights I mentioned, and these should be on the agenda of the negotiations as such. This draft agreement stipulates that, once hostilities have ended, other negotiating partners will be designated.

Today, these negotiations are blocked for the following reasons:

1. The Bujumbura government violated the secrecy con-

vention by using this preliminary agreement to get the embargo lifted. This was frustrating for us, and we decided to make it known to everyone, because otherwise, it could have been used against us. The government was going to profit by it and then stall the real negotiating process.

2. The Tutsi extremists in Bujumbura want nothing to do with negotiations. They put forward two pretexts, but we know that their hidden reasons are linked to two concerns:

- To prevent Hutus from effectively participating in the administration of public affairs and all other sectors of our national life, which would have been the logical outcome of negotiations;

- Among the extremists are to be found all those criminals guilty of the genocides and political assassinations that this country has known since 1965, and who fear that such negotiations will put an end to their impunity.

3. the present government acts in bad faith.

Mr. Buyoya, who himself promulgated the Constitution of the Burundian Republic in March 1992, after it had been adopted by referendum, then abolished it on June 25, 1996, and does not want to reinstate it. Besides the fact that this shows unacceptable contempt for the population, it also reflects an obvious determination to prevent the functioning of the National Assembly and political parties. If a revision of Constitution should prove to be useful, it would first have to be reinstated, and then, together, we could examine the advisability of revising it, and what to revise.

1. It was agreed that all known genocide and political crimes committed since independence would be identified and tried by an International Criminal Tribunal, but he violated this clause of the agreement more than twice.

He applied to the UN secretary general to set up a tribunal which would judge the so-called genocide of 1993, which the Frodebu was accused of perpetrating. In this way, he hoped to short-circuit the agreement that speaks of all genocides and political crimes—including the assassination of President Ndadaye—committed since 1962.

2. He assigned Burundian courts to judge those presumed guilty of the 1993 massacres, even though those courts were rejected because of their partiality by the great majority of Burundians and by international human rights observers in Burundi. The death sentences pronounced and executed last month were condemned in form and in substance by the entire international community.

3. The international community has demanded that Buyoya dismantle the Nazi-style concentration camps that he had created throughout the country, but he refuses to do so. This goes against the agreement signed in Rome, in which both signatories committed themselves to behaving in such a way as to advance negotiations.

4. To protect unadmitted interests, certain groups oppose, in an almost conflictual way, the Rome process, and the Arusha process directed by ex-Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere.

In our opinion, these two processes are not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary. But these groups think we are going to negotiate power-sharing in Rome, and they want to woo Nyerere and the leaders of our sub-region into helping them gain power. They are wrong. The CNDD intends to negotiate the terms of a truly democratic rule, which will call the population to go to the polls as soon as hostilities have ended, so as to choose their own leaders at all levels.

EIR: What about the new initiative of Julius Nyerere to mediate in the Burundi conflict?

Sendegeya: As I said, it is a praiseworthy initiative. But it should not exclude the other process, just as praiseworthy, which began earlier and was further advanced. The two are complementary. We only demand that both mediators be impartial and avoid taking sides.

EIR: Knowing the problems of your region very well, what advice would you give to the U.S. government and members of the U.S. Congress, as to how American foreign policy could promote peace and democracy in Burundi and the neighboring states?

Sendegeya: As the leading world power, the United States has the possibility and the means to promote peace and democracy in the world, and therefore, in our Great Lakes Region. But, for that, the government and the American Congress must listen to all political actors, in order to better discern our problems. Today, our problems are treated with discrimination and partisanship in American circles. The versions presented by some are taken as Gospel truth, whereas what others say is discounted. That is due, in my opinion, to the multitude of decision-making centers in the American system (CIA, Pentagon, State Department, White House, Congress), whose interests and strategies may differ.

In any case, it is not in the interest of our countries, no matter who is in power, to block the interests of the U.S. or of other developed countries. We need their technologies, so it is desirable to have them on our side. It is through peace and security that our countries' interests will best be served.

We have legal instruments in our countries—laws on entering public markets—and if they are rigorously followed, they offer the best conditions for competition and dispel any fear of favoritism toward companies. In other words, we must fight against corruption coming from companies looking for markets or tapping rights, and have them enter into fair competition.

I am a manager, by training, and I admire the performance of American schools and companies in this domain. I think that if the United States engaged in promoting peace and security in our countries, as they did at home and in South Africa between whites and blacks, then American companies would have the opportunity to come into our

countries, in the interests of both peoples.

Poverty is also a source of conflicts in our countries, but it can only be overcome by bringing in technology. I detest the term "appropriate technologies," which barely hides the intention of foreign, including American, businessmen, to keep us behind in developing technology. Of course, things should be done, as much as possible, within the framework of mixed companies or joint venture projects.

EIR: How important is the economic development of Burundi and the region in such a peace process? What are the most urgent tasks for the economic development for Burundi and its neighbors?

Sendegeya: As I just said, poverty is one of the reasons for social conflicts which then turn into political conflicts. Burundians, like Congolese, Ugandans, Tanzanians, and Rwandans, do not have the high technologies to realize their many potentials. Businessmen do not have enough know-how. Most of our schools and universities do not have a curriculum for teaching international business and finance. We do not have prestigious diplomas for business administration, commercial higher studies, accounting, data processing, etc. . . . Scientific and industrial research is almost nonexistent. That is why our private sector is not developed and is not creating jobs. All university graduates and non-graduates go into the public function, which is oversaturated and otherwise paying unemployed people. That, in turn, has effects on the national economy, especially increasing inflation.

The IMF and the World Bank can introduce as many reforms as they wish in the Structural Adjustment Program, but the problems will remain, as long as our countries lack competent managers, and men able to create businesses and industries, to alleviate the public function and state companies. In present conditions, as long as the public function and state companies are the only milk cows, and lean at that, social injustice (tribalism, nepotism, favoritism) will persist on the job market, and will crystallize socio-political conflicts.

Just consider how much Burundi has spent since the 1980s and since 1994, for national defense, only to prepare for a war among children of the same country. It is absurd. Until 1990, Burundi's largest creditor for bilateral debts, was the former U.S.S.R. They did not loan one penny for development projects or for social aid; they only supplied arms used for self-destruction.

The most urgent objectives, to my mind, for Burundi's development and that of neighboring countries, are:

- Peace and security based on democratic rule (in fact, *sine qua non* conditions for them);
- Effective regional economic integration, gradually followed by political integration;
- Reform and reorientation of teaching curricula on the secondary and higher levels, to adapt them to the needs of

employment, production, markets, and managerial and technological know-how;

- Developing and encouraging scientific and technological research;
- Developing internal and transnational communications infrastructure, to facilitate commerce;
- Integrating agriculture and cattle-raising into an overall economic development program.

EIR: The American politician Lyndon LaRouche, together with the Schiller Institute and hundreds of parliamentarians worldwide, have called on U.S. President Clinton to organize a New Bretton Woods conference to establish a new, just world economic order. What do you think of this proposal?

Sendegeya: Since the gold standard system before the Second World War, and the gold exchange standard system set up at the Bretton Woods conference, at which time the IMF and the International Reconstruction and Development Bank were created, then again, until the international financial crisis prompting President Nixon to drop the dollar-gold convertibility in 1971, and bringing flexible exchange rates back into international trade, one thing has remained constant: International speculation is the root of the dysfunctioning of the international monetary system and, hence, of international commercial trade.

Several reforms of the IMF and the European Union have been attempted, but it is clear that increasingly exaggerated liberal orthodoxy has always inspired planned reforms of the Bretton Woods institutions.

We think that states, public authorities, while staying within the bounds of economic liberalism, must maintain their role as controllers and regulators, via Central Banks, and not give in to anarchistic speculation by financial groups and private industrialists. The results of this *laissez-faire* policy are borne by our populations and, ultimately, by states and their underlying political systems. Social crises with unexpected consequences can be sparked by them.

States cannot justify the catastrophe by taking powerful financial and industrial groups as scapegoats. States are vested with public authority. But even more serious, is that, in the name of these groups, the Bretton Woods institutions exert pressure on national leaders, and even challenge the sovereignty of states. I think that establishment of the new international economic order that certain people have wanted for more than a decade, is an urgent task. We should learn a lesson from what has happened on Asian markets these past few months, and in the Japanese banking system, which plays an important role in Third World development, and in international trade.

Some years ago, African countries had the idea of creating an African Monetary Fund. Asian countries, headed by Japan, have just brought up the idea of an Asian Monetary Fund. Perhaps Africans should join together with Asians to establish an African-Asian Monetary Fund.