

Can We Learn the Lessons From the Genocide in Rwanda?

by Uwe Friesecke

The world is commemorating the horrible end-phase of the war in Rwanda, ten years ago, when hundreds of thousands of Rwandans lost their lives. The United Nations, the Rwandan government, and many so-called experts have defined as genocide only the events between April and July of 1994, and insist that the discussion be limited to what happened inside the government-controlled area of Rwanda during that period. Certainly the extent of violence and brutality that human beings inflicted upon their fellow citizens, often their nearest neighbors, was unbelievable. The systematic slaughter of civilians who were selected for murder because of their group characteristics went beyond the limits of human comprehension. The killing of about 800,000 people within four months in Rwanda is only rivaled by the mass killings of the civilian population of Cambodia between 1975 and 1978. It clearly was one of the worst human catastrophes since World War II.

We should lament the fact that the four Western governments which could have intervened by military force in April 1994 to stop the killings—the United States, Britain, France, and Belgium—did not, even though they were fully aware of the consequences. We should also ask, what lessons the United Nations should learn from the experience of utter failure in 1994. But, unfortunately, so far, this discussion has served more to exculpate those whose actions *before* 1994 set the dynamic for genocide into motion, rather than clarifying the needed lessons to be learned. When Yoweri Museveni and Paul Kagame, the current Presidents of Ugandan and Rwanda, commemorated the dead from 1994 at a state ceremony in Kigali, Rwanda, on April 7, 2004, it was a cynical insult to the countless victims of the wars of the last 14 years in Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly called Zaire), and Uganda. because these two dictators carry part of the responsibility for it. The seemingly sincere confessions of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and of Western governments for their failure in 1994 are, unfortunately, covering up the fact that their guilt reaches much further than not having stopped the killing. All protestations to the contrary, neither the UN nor the Western governments have learned the lessons.

The Rwanda disaster happened as an integral part of a nasty Anglo-American neocolonial policy for the continent. The essence of this policy is, that conflicts can be manipulated to establish power structures in Africa, which continue the

looting of raw materials by Anglo-American companies, with French companies as junior partners. And from that point of view, conflicts in Africa are *necessary*, to prevent African governments from using the riches of their countries for the development and economic well-being of their people. The tragedies of Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Congo clearly show, how Western governments regularly disregard principles of international law, if they conflict with the realization of their own interests of power.

Ironically, it was the London *Times*, which, on April 7, admitted to the guilt of the Anglo-American establishment. “We rarely hear about the West’s more recent sins of commission,” wrote Mick Hume. “Paul Kagame, the Rwandan President, has accused France of helping to prepare the genocide by supporting the Hutu-dominated regime. Rather less is said about American and British support for the other side in Rwanda’s civil war—Kagame’s Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front. The RPF was based in and backed by Uganda, the main Anglo-American proxy in the region. Rwandan rebels in the Ugandan military received training from the British. Kagame attended a U.S. army and staff college in Kansas.” The commentary even blamed the international financial institutions for their role: “By 1994, Western interference—and a harsh World Bank ‘adjustment’ programme—had helped to turn Rwanda into a tinderbox.”

The genocide of 1994 in Rwanda was the culmination of a process of reorganization of the power structures in East/Central Africa during the 1990s, a policy of “regime change”—even at the price of genocide. This policy had been pushed since the 1980s by one faction of the Anglo-American establishment. It succeeded, and brought governments to power which are, to this day, dependent on the Anglo-Americans. The dictatorships in Kampala (Uganda) and Kigali (Rwanda), as well as the fragile regime combinations in Bujumbura (Burundi) and Kinshasa (Congo), keep the raw materials-rich region under control for unlimited looting of gold, strategic metals such as coltan, as well as diamonds and timber. The claim by those regimes and their backers at the UN and in Western governments, that they have brought democracy, good governance, and economic development to their countries, is a crude joke. Everywhere the population continues to suffer from increased poverty and violence, as is most dramatically the case in Museveni’s Northern Uganda. In



Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni (left) and Rwandan President Paul Kagame: Their recent commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda was a cynical insult to the victims, since these men, and their Anglo-American sponsors, bear a large part of the blame.

Rwanda, the old oligarchy, which had ruled the country up until 1959, has returned from exile and established an iron grip over the country, and, blessed by the UN and the international community, silenced any opposition. As the London *Times* also pointed out, Kagame's government has skillfully manipulated the memory of the 1994 genocide to its own advantage. It, in particular, managed to avoid being held responsible for the well-documented crimes that Rwandan troops committed later on, in the 1998-99 war in Congo.

British- and U.S.-Sponsored Wars

Typical of the one-sided experts in the Rwanda genocide debate is Alison Des Forges, senior advisor to Human Rights Watch, New York. At a seminar at the beginning of March 2004 at the Protestant Academy in Loccum, Germany, she blamed the U.S. and British governments for not having intervened in April 1994, but she denied their responsibility for the origin of the genocide. She declared that they would have to answer many questions, but not to the charge of genocide. That charge would only apply to the perpetrators on the side of the Rwandan government in 1994, which was led by President Juvenal Habyarimana. The reality of what happened is thereby obscured, and those who are politically guilty at the higher level of strategic policy are not being called to account.

Through documents recently released from the U.S. National Security Archive and through various testimonies such as that from Canada's Lt.-Gen. Romeo Dallaire, who was UN force commander in Kigali in 1994, the U.S. and the British governments all the way through 1993 and 1994 were well informed about the escalation of violence in Rwanda. Dallaire's calls for help were always rejected. Germany's Gen. Manfred Eisele, who, in 1994, was Assistant Secretary General to Kofi Annan, then the Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations at the UN, confirmed at the Loccum seminar,

that a military intervention would have been possible in April 1994 to stop the killings. Later on, with Operation Hope to help refugees in Goma, Zaire, the U.S. military gave an example of how fast a military intervention can be organized.

But, according to Eisele, in April 1994 neither the UN, nor the governments in the Security Council, had the political will to decide on such a military intervention. Besides the small, ill-equipped UN force (UNAMIR) in Rwanda, there were U.S. troops in neighboring Burundi, French troops in Rwanda and nearby Central African Republic, Belgian troops in Rwanda, and British troops in Uganda. Some of them were used to evacuate Western citizens from Rwanda when the killing escalated, but to use these available troops to beef up the UNAMIR force, as was demanded by General Dallaire, was not on the agenda. Only Nigeria presented a draft resolution to the Security Council on April 13, 1994 to strengthen UNAMIR. This was strongly rejected by Belgium, Britain, and the United States. On April 21, the Council voted to *reduce* UNAMIR's strength to 270 soldiers instead. At the same time, the Council voted to double the strength of the UN force in Bosnia.

The actions of the U.S. and British governments in the Security Council show that it was not neglect or unfortunate circumstances that led to the fateful decision to withdraw UNAMIR, but rather was conscious policy. The Anglo-American governments were simply determined to change the regime in Kigali and bring Kagame's RPF to power. To reach that strategic aim was regarded as more important than to stop the mass killings. Consequently, a military intervention was excluded, and by July 1994 between 500,000 and 800,000 Rwandans were dead.

To bring the RPF to power had been Anglo-American strategy since the beginning of the war in 1990. It guided the British and U.S. diplomatic approach to the peace negotia-



Rwandan refugees in Goma, Zaire, in 1994. As many as 1 million Rwandans fled to Zaire within five days, to escape the massacres by both Hutus and Tutsis that followed the death of President Habyarimana—and that left some 800,000 people dead, in one of the most hideous human catastrophes since World War II.

tions in Arusha, Tanzania in 1993, where the Habyarimana regime was blackmailed to accept suicidal provisions in favor of the RPF. And it motivated the covert military support the RPF received from the United States and Britain.

Violation of the UN Charter

In October 1990, the RPF invaded Rwanda from Uganda, first under the leadership of Fred Rwigyema, and then of Kagame, who, for that purpose, had returned from a military training course at Fort Leavenworth, U.S.A. In reality, the RPF was an integral part of Museveni's Ugandan army. The Ugandan government in turn could do nothing without the consent of the British and American governments. The Museveni-promoted attack by the RPF on Rwanda was by all standards an act of aggression against a legitimate government. It clearly violated the spirit and letter of the Charter of the United Nations. But Security Council permanent members the United States and Britain did nothing to condemn or stop the RPF war. On the contrary, after its initial defeat by the Rwandan army, the RPF was able to regroup and emerge much strengthened with manpower and equipment, in January 1991, for a new and lasting invasion of Rwanda.

Article 1 of the United Nations Charter states:

“The Purposes of the United Nations are:

“1. To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace; . . .”

Article 33 states:

“The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.”

The RPF leadership claimed that they invaded Rwanda to settle the issue of refugees, and to change the Habyarimana government, because it was, in the opinion of the RPF, dictatorial. Obviously both reasons given, were no justification for war—especially since the Rwandan government in 1990 had already agreed to substantial compromises. A joint Rwandan-Ugandan commission had, with the help of the UN High Commission on Refugees, developed different options to reintegrate the refugees into Rwandan society, and President Habyarimana was willing to change

the one-party state. So, the dispute between the Rwandan government and the large exile community was on its way to finding what the UN Charter's Article 33 called “a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation.”

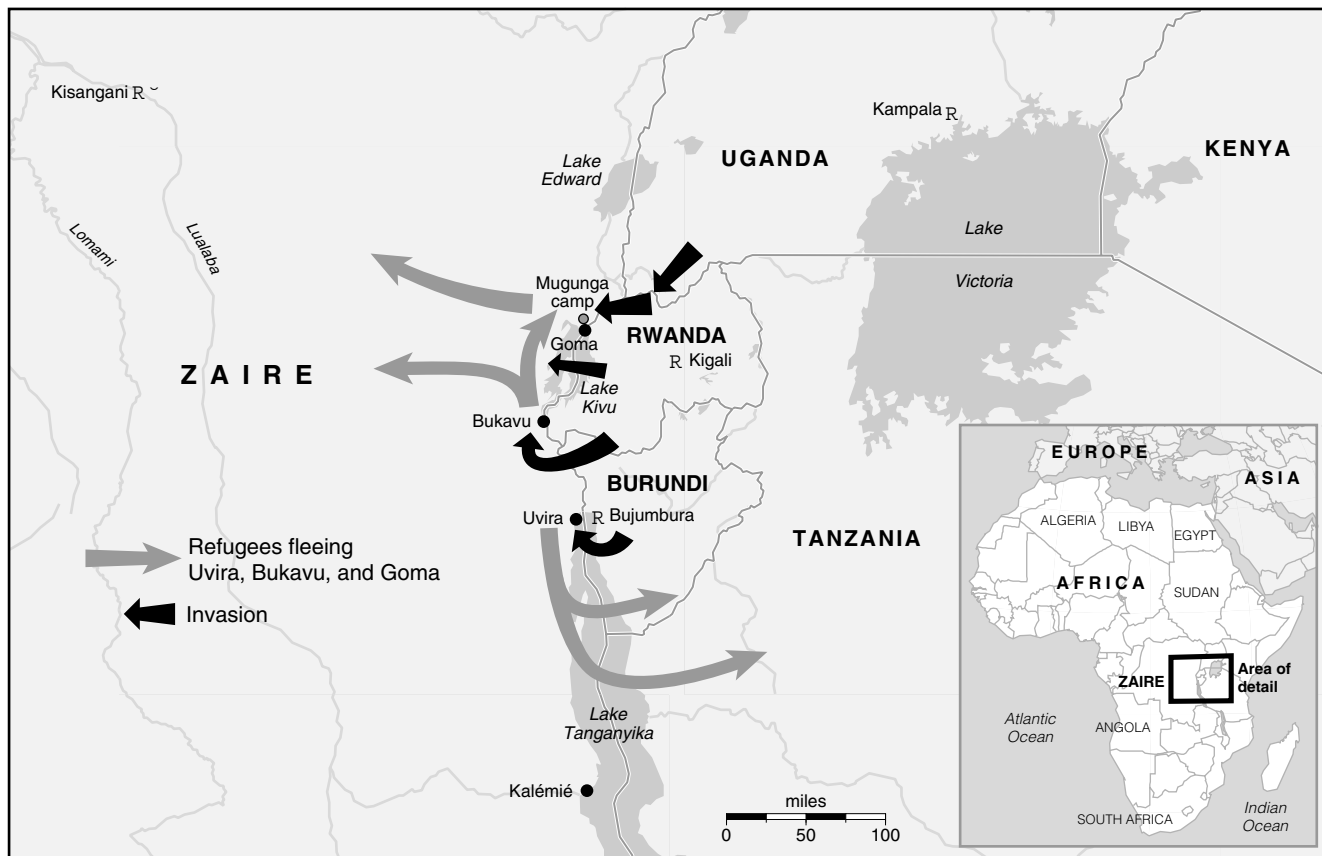
But despite the clear language of the UN Charter, the United States and Britain not only helped the RPF to start the war, but later on they legitimized the aggressor, the RPF, by giving it equal status with the Rwandan government in the Arusha negotiations.

The line of argument used by the RPF to justify war against Rwanda in 1990 resembles the arguments the G.W. Bush Administration made to justify war against Iraq. In both cases, the war was a violation of international law and the UN Charter. In Iraq, after the alleged existence of weapons of mass destruction proved to be a fraud, the only reason remaining was that Saddam Hussein's regime was dictatorial and oppressive. If such reasoning were accepted as justification for war, the world would plunge into never-ending wars. But, if it is politically expedient for the Anglo-American powers, the argument is used, no matter what the consequences are.

It may be no accident, that the origins of the RPF strategy to “solve” the Rwanda refugee problem by war, go back to the time of the senior Bush Administration in 1988, when the U.S.-government-funded Committee for Refugees, headed by Roger Winter, helped organize an RPF congress in Washington, where the strategy of war, not just to solve the refugee crisis, but for the RPF leadership to come to power in Kigali, was adopted.

Since that time, circles of the U.S. and British governments were organizing actively for the RPF, partly directly and partly through the government and military of Uganda. As the report of French judge Jean Louis Bruguière indicates

Anglo-American-Backed Invasion of Zaire in 1996



(*EIR*, March 26, 2004), this operational support for the RPF apparently continued all the way until the fateful shooting down of the plane on April 6, 1994, killing Presidents Habyarimana and Cyprien Ntaryamira (of Burundi). If the operation was planned by Kagame and Museveni, it immediately raises the question, what U.S. and British intelligence services knew about it. Were they actively involved? From their record in Africa since the 1960s, it would not be surprising at all.

Genocide Continues

The genocide did not stop in Rwanda in July 1994, but continued in Congo in 1996, when Uganda and Rwanda organized a rebellion to bring Laurent Kabila to power in Kinshasa. Again U.S. and British government agencies participated, sometimes disguised as private groups. And both governments refused to intervene to save civilians from being murdered. Rwandan RPF troops in particular were chasing Rwandan refugees throughout Eastern Congo and killing them by the thousands. The UN knew it, the U.S. government knew it, and so did the British government. A U.S.-led mili-

tary intervention to save the refugees was prepared, but then called off, with the cynical excuse that clouds prevented air reconnaissance from locating the refugees. Hundreds of thousands died in Congo in 1996, because the West refused to intervene. But even the toppling of former U.S. asset Mobutu Sese Seko from power in Kinshasa was not the end; Rwanda and Uganda started another war of rebellion in Eastern Congo in 1998, to replace Laurent Kabila. (He was assassinated in January 2001, and replaced by his son Joseph.)

More than 3 million people died in these wars in the Congo, which were part of the Western strategy of power changes in the region. And that strategy included genocide on an even larger scale than what happened in Rwanda. In total, more than 5 million died.

Individual killers, of course, carry personal responsibility for the crimes they committed, such as in Rwanda in 1994. But first of all, such guilt was not limited to one side of the war, and secondly, the strategists of Western governments, who did not personally kill anybody in these African conflicts, but designed the policies which were then implemented and

caused the death of millions, must also be held responsible.

The Bruguière report establishes the RPF, under the direction of Paul Kagame, as the organizers of the shooting down of the presidential Falcon jet on April 6, 1994. In response, Kagame provocatively told journalists that he is not sorry for Habyarimana's death. He was also clearly willing to pay the price of the mass killings that ensued, against his own ethnic group, to gain power in Kigali.

The report of the French judge is not the first one to point to crimes of the RPF. But because of political pressure, other reports were suppressed, such as the Gersony report, which, in 1994, documented the massacres that the RPF committed against the civilian population during their march on Kigali. Also, the massacres of Rwandan refugees fleeing into Congo, by RPF troops in 1996-97, have been documented. Carla del Ponte, the chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in 2003, had the material to hand down indictments against high officials of the RPF. But UN Secretary General Annan, under pressure from the U.S. government, forced her to resign from the ICTR.¹

In response to the Bruguière report, the Association of Defense Lawyers at the ICTR has now demanded prosecution of members of the RPF, and extension of the ICTR's mandate to include the crimes committed in Congo.

The Ideologists of Violence

The alliances for warfare between Museveni's military and Kagame's RPF, which in the end embroiled Central Africa from Sudan in the North to Angola in the South, and former Zaire in the West to Rwanda and Burundi in the East in genocidal warfare, was not limited to East-Central Africa. The same phenomenon occurred in West Africa, with the destruction of Liberia and Sierra Leone. After the U.S. government had helped to topple Liberian President William R. Tolbert in 1980, because of his desire for nonalignment, some French circles, through their former colony Ivory Coast were instrumental in building up Charles Taylor's so-called rebel movement. The leadership was recruited from a pool of Marxist radicals from West Africa, including Guinea, and who were trained in camps in Libya and Burkina Faso. Some of those radicals went to fight alongside Museveni in Uganda and rebel leader John Garang in Sudan.

Museveni himself, at the beginning of the 1980s, belonged to a group of revolutionary radicals in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, before he started his Libyan-supported guerrilla war in Uganda. There he met Fred Rigyema, later the first leader of the RPF; Garang, the leader of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army; Issays Afeworky, today's President of Eri-

1. See also Lyndon H. LaRouche's commentary on the dangers of such supranational tribunals, "An Imperial Criminal Court," *EIR*, July 19, 2002. With reference to the establishment of the International Criminal Court in the Hague, LaRouche warned that "the thing to be feared more than either war or crimes against humanity, is the establishment of an imperial form of 'world rule of law' . . ."

trea; and Meles Zenawi, today's President of Ethiopia. Some have called this the Dar Es Salaam Kindergarten. But it was more a Dar Es Salaam-Ouagadougou-Tripoli network, whose revolutionary ideology was a brutal version of Frantz Fanon's theory of violence. Museveni and Taylor invented the phenomenon of the "child soldiers." This ideological background explains the unbelievable brutality which these rebel groups, including also the RUF in Sierra Leone, inflicted upon the civilian population, where violence was practiced for its own sake, as well as to gain power.

At the end of the 1980s, the British and U.S. governments proclaimed these so-called revolutionary leaders as the new leaders for Africa. Instead of Marxism, they, led by Museveni, adopted radical free-market economics, much to the liking of the New York and London financial institutions. Right after he took power in Uganda, President Museveni was visited by Britain's Secretary for Commonwealth Affairs Lynda Chalker, and has been praised ever since as a shining example of new African leadership. Except for Charles Taylor, most of the other radicals have, in the meantime, become the willing executioners of mostly Anglo-American neocolonial policy for Africa. Soon, they may put the last of their number, John Garang, into power in Khartoum. The wars that most of these leaders conducted fitted very well into the geopolitics designed for Africa in London, Washington, Paris, or Brussels.

IMF Austerity Paved the Way to War

The guilt of Western governments arises not only from the fact that they were so deeply embroiled in the destructive warfare in Rwanda, and later also in Congo. Western economic policy must take full responsibility for having ruined Rwanda by 1993, so much that the country and its government simply disintegrated. In 1984, in the middle of a devastating drought, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank forced President Habyarimana to adopt Rwanda's first structural adjustment program, called "rigor and austerity." At the end of the 1980s, world market prices for coffee, Rwanda's main export crop, collapsed, reducing government earnings by 50%. But instead of giving the country some relief, the IMF demanded even harsher measures. In November 1990, after the RPF had attacked, the Rwandan franc was devalued by 40%, causing a drastic increase in inflation of consumer prices. In 1992, in the middle of the war, another 15% devaluation followed, driving prices for food and fuel even higher. The government had to retrench its civil service, which affected tens of thousands of families. And a yearly payment of about \$10 million to service the foreign debt, did the rest of the damage. Burdened by more than a million internal refugees, who had fled the advancing RPF troops, the country was plunged into despair.

In this respect it is also clear that no lessons have been learned. The IMF still insists that the Rwandan government follow its structural adjustment program and pay the debt, above all else.

The genocide in Rwanda, Congo, and Burundi during the

Chronology of War, Genocide

August 1988: U.S. government-funded Committee for Refugees helps organize Rwandan Patriotic Front (RFP) Congress in Washington, where strategy to bring RFP to power by war is adopted.

October 1990: RPF, headed by Paul Kagame (a Tutsi), invades Rwanda from Uganda with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni's backing. RPF is largely the Ugandan army.

August 1993: Arusha Accords negotiated between the Rwandan government of President Juvenal Habyarimana (a Hutu) and the RPF under U.S.-British auspices. Accords grant RPF 50% of command and officer posts in the army, 40% of troops, seven Cabinet posts.

September 1993: UN sends peacekeeping force to Rwanda to oversee implementation of Arusha Accords.

October 1993: Attempted coup in Burundi with approval of Belgian intelligence and oversight of a Burundi Tutsi. President Melchior Ndadaye (a Hutu) and 100,000

Hutus are murdered by Tutsi-dominated military. More than 700,000 Hutus flee Burundi. World press ignores it.

December 1993: RPF moves 600 troops into Kigali, the Rwandan capital, under Arusha Accords.

January 1994: African strategists of British Ministry of Defence reportedly shift from Angola focus to Rwanda focus.

April 6, 1994: Plane carrying Habyarimana and Burundi President Cyprien Ntaryamira is shot down by rockets. Mass killing of Tutsis and moderate Hutus by Rwandan government troops erupts in Kigali, spreads throughout country. RPF begins blitzkrieg.

July 12, 1994: One million Rwandans flee to Zaire.

July 15, 1994: RPF takes effective control of Rwanda.

October 1996: Ugandan-Rwandan-run rebellion in Zaire, with U.S. backing, to topple President Mobutu Sese Seko and bring Laurent Kabila to power.

June 1997: Kabila in power.

August 1998: Kabila breaks with Uganda and Rwanda. They launch a new war in eastern Congo to topple him. He is assassinated in January 2001, but his son Joseph succeeds him. Rwanda still working for his overthrow.

1990s marks one of the darkest chapters of global policy after World War II. Led by the Anglo-American powers, but not opposed by any other power, African people were condemned to go through another version of colonial oppression, called globalization. And to this day there are enough African leaders and governments who willingly become complicit in this policy. The aspirations of the independence movements of the 1950s and '60s have been crushed. The leaders of that noble struggle were removed from power or killed. Africa has been denied the inalienable right for development. Instead of helping to prevent conflicts in Africa, the West promoted conflicts. It therefore becomes absurd when the discussion today focusses primarily on strengthening the African institutions for peace-keeping. As useful a role as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) played in Sierra Leone or Liberia, those interventions cannot substitute for the lack of a policy to prevent conflicts from originating in the first place.

The Alternative: Peace Through Development

Over the last ten years, Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. has led an international campaign against those in the Anglo-American establishment who are responsible for the genocidal policies in Africa. His Africa policy is a complete rejection of the neocolonialism which is so deeply embedded in London, Washington, Paris, and Brussels.

LaRouche and the Schiller Institute sponsored a seminar in April 1997 in Germany, titled "Peace Through Development in Africa's Great Lakes Region." The core of that policy

is a great infrastructure project, called Transaqua, which comprises the construction of a canal from Southern Kivu in Congo through Central Africa, to link up to the Chari River system, which feeds into Lake Chad at the northeast corner of Nigeria. The canal would divert 100,000 million cubic meters/year (5% of the total discharge of the Congo River) of fresh water from the Congo basin northwards to the Sahel area. The water would open up new land for irrigated agriculture, and, combined with new roads and railways, the entire Eastern Congo and Great Lakes region could be developed economically.

Transaqua was designed by an Italian engineering firm during the 1980s, and it was put on the agenda of the international economic and financial institutions. This could have become a vision for Peace Through Development for the entire region, and formed the economic basis for peacefully resolving the long-simmering refugee crisis in Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda. But Western governments and the World Bank rejected Transaqua, and, instead, opted for war.

LaRouche has supported Transaqua as one key regional project for the development of the African continent as a whole. Large-scale infrastructure projects in Africa would be part of LaRouche's program for the establishment of a new, just world economic order. If the international community were serious about lessons learned from the Rwanda genocide, it would finally begin to discuss and implement this policy. In that way, the dead of Rwanda, Congo, and Burundi could be honored truthfully, and the surviving victims consoled, with the prospects of a bright future.