Africa's Totalitarian Temptation

Africa's Totalitarian Temptation

The Evolution of Autocratic Regimes

Dave Peterson

Contents

Acknowledgments

* * *

All the opinions expressed in this book are mine alone and should not be attributed in any way to my employer, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), although I am grateful to NED for the experience and home it has provided me.

1

Africa's Totalitarian Temptation

Yes, totalitarianism beckons Africa once again. Familiar and back in fashion, the old flame has returned. It matters not how different the geopolitics are from what prevailed some few generations ago. Of course, there is no longer a Nazi threat, no longer a Cold War, no longer the depredations of colonialism, no longer the independence ideologies that animated much of Africa in the past century. Yet, many of the essential features of Africa's new totalitarianism clearly recall that peculiar system of tyranny that once subjugated a great part of the world, inflicting war, genocide, and terror and stifling human freedom. Manifest today in a handful of African countries, the new totalitarianism has demonstrated vigor, durability, and growing appeal. Repressive political systems have long thrived in Africa, but totalitarianism is distinct. Indeed, a wide range of authoritarian and semiauthoritarian regimes still hold sway in many countries of Africa. Anarchy, warlords, terrorism, insecurity, corruption, and other symptoms of poor governance cause great suffering across the continent as well. Totalitarianism, however, has features that set it apart, as is explained in this book. In the pages that follow, I confirm its presence, depict its behavior, assess the implications, and suggest the response.

The totalitarian temptation in Africa is no mere academic debate. It has been present and continues to percolate throughout the current African political discourse, surfacing in policies and actions that affect the daily lives of millions of African citizens. Increasingly, critics denounce certain African governments as "totalitarian." Yet these same governments have promised, and sometimes delivered to their citizens, good governance and thriving economies. Abroad, respected international opinion leaders laud their performance and vision for the future. These governments are generating new

1

policies, laws, behaviors, and patterns that have established a degree of control and are building a record of success that rivals anything achieved by African dictatorships or democracies, whether past or present. They are having influence, and their example is spreading. Many Africans have either embraced or submitted to this new political order; some are resisting.

As the globe shrinks, as social media dissolves borders psychologically, refugees disregard them physically, and leaders attempt to resurrect them politically, the free world now confronts the ascendance of nondemocratic governance systems that defy the former neoliberal status quo. These systems call into question the sanctity of competitive, free and fair elections; the separation of powers; the inviolability of individual rights such as speech, assembly, and religion; and the role of security forces. They include theocratic, kleptocratic, and populist dictatorships, as well as what could be described as stable, technocratic, and benevolent autocracies. But some of these systems are going further, not content with control over government and regime, but determined to make the entire social order subservient, including media, religion, business, and civil society. They have at their disposal advanced communications and surveillance technology, sufficient reservoirs of money, and powerful police, intelligence, and military forces. They have transcended national boundaries, sharing with one another techniques, as well as political, financial, and other means of support, to stay in power. Robert Kagan decries the reemergence of authoritarianism around the globe and despairs the lack of a democratic liberal response. The distinction between authoritarianism and totalitarianism is fading, he contends, as surveillance technology overcomes the former limitations of coercive political systems to make effective means of absolute control more widely available.[1] Africa has not been immune from global trends, and variations on many of these nondemocratic systems may be found in Africa. And so it is that, after almost disappearing from the scene, totalitarianism is back on the global agenda. With the advent of new forms of information and surveillance technology, Larry Diamond has warned of "a nightmarish modern-day version of Nineteen Eighty-Four," or what he has called "'postmodern totalitarianism,' in which individuals appear to be free to go about their daily lives, but the state controls and censors all information flows while compiling 'social credit scores' that mash up every type of digital footprint an individual leaves into an overall indication of political and social reliability."[2] Africa has its own experience and lessons to add to this global evolution of autocracy. Ominous, yet beguiling, totalitarianism beckons us all.

Governments espousing authoritarian models of economic development and political control are nothing new; in fact, they have dominated Africa since independence. During the 1960s, Ghana, Guinea, and Mali formed the Casablanca group of countries advocating socialist policies. In

the 1970s and 1980s, seven African countries described themselves as Marxist-Leninist, including Benin, Congo-Brazzaville, Madagascar, and Somalia, and three others went so far as to formally align themselves with the Soviet Union, namely, Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia.[3] On the right of the political spectrum, regimes such as Mobutu Sese Seko's Zaire, South Africa's apartheid system, Idi Amin's Uganda, Francisco Macías Nguema's Equatorial Guinea, and Jean-Bédel Bokassa's Central African Republic all went well beyond standard authoritarian norms, imposing radical policies of social control and brutally repressing opposition.

Crawford Young has traced the waves of Africa's political opening and closing in tandem with Samuel Huntington's successive global waves of democratization, including a first wave, the era of African independence from colonialism, which corresponded with the restoration of democracy in Europe in the aftermath of World War II; a second wave, which he confesses was more of a stirring than a tsunami, when Ghana and Nigeria briefly experienced weak, democratic government in the late 1970s, which coincided with the fall of fascism in Greece, Spain, and Portugal; and Africa's third wave of liberation that began in 1989 with the sovereign national conference of Benin, which coincided with the fall of the Berlin Wall. Young notes how quickly, from the beginning of African independence, the democratic structures foisted on Africa by departing colonial regimes were discarded in favor of the single mass party, and how in pursuit of rapid development, Africa looked to the Soviet bloc and Maoist China for examples, later culminating in the Afro-Marxist regimes.[4] But analysts have rarely classified any African regimes as totalitarian. They have deemed Africa too undeveloped, too fragmented, too dependent, and too technologically deficient to host such a system. Or more positively, they have postulated that Africa is too pluralistic, resulting at worst in "mobilizational authoritarian regimes."[5] Africa played a part in World War II and was often a Cold War battleground, or a geopolitical pawn, but no one ever considered it a major contender in the ideological contest between the democratic and totalitarian powers. Rather, Africa has been marginalized in geopolitical debates, dismissed as a nonplayer, backward, inconsequential. Yet developments in Africa have consequences for the rest of the world, every bit as much as the rest of the world impacts Africa.

Africa's Marxist experiments ultimately failed and the most notorious dictators have all died, but authoritarian governments have survived and changed with the times. Contrary to my presumptions and those of other democracy advocates, it can no longer be denied that a handful of these governments have successfully achieved stability, economic growth, and international respectability. Ostensibly, they appear to be well governed, though this cannot belie, upon even a cursory investigation, the lack of basic political freedoms as well as the disturbing extent and unique aspects of the

repression. This book will show why these governments must be considered not simply authoritarian but full-blown totalitarian systems despite their, as the Chinese might say, "African characteristics." Several governments will be shown to be prime examples of this phenomenon, while others in Africa that have also been condemned for their repression and sometimes even described as totalitarian will be shown to not, in fact, be totalitarian, strictly defined. Whatever the case may be, many not-yet totalitarian African governments have begun to emulate the totalitarian models, adopting new policies and behaviors or maintaining old ones that reinforce their control and deprive their citizens of rights and freedom. The temptation pertains, thus, not just to a handful of countries that have nearly consolidated totalitarian systems, but to the political evolution of the entire continent.

In this new era, Africa poses a set of questions that the rest of the world is also asking and must answer. Is there a moral equivalency, a trade-off? Is the new totalitarian model superior to democracy, more effective in delivering good governance, promoting economic growth, and maintaining peace? Is it, or should it be, Africa's future? And is democracy by contrast inherently flawed in the African context, incapable of providing sustainable development, rooting out corruption, suppressing ethnic conflict, or establishing order? Is democracy just a foreign ideology masking the plunder of resources, installing favored leaders, fronting for an international agenda antithetical to African interests? A related question concerns the nature of freedom. Is it an absolute value, or is it a luxury, the fantasy of a few rabble-rousers, inconsiderate of the needs of the society as a whole? What does it mean to be free, what use is freedom? Is it some abstraction that ignores the material needs of human beings, or does it provide something more tangible, something worth fighting and even dying for, beyond religious or ethnic identity or financial gain? Can it help Africans resolve their problems, or does it only exacerbate them? Then there is the notion of human rights. Is it, too, a Western imposition, a hypocritical stance that devalues communal values and judges Africans by a different standard than that which applies to Americans or Europeans? Is it only African abusers who go before the International Criminal Court (ICC) and not more powerful abusers in the West guilty of crimes at least as egregious? Does the right to freedom of assembly too often lead to violent demonstrations, freedom of speech to libel and incitement, freedom of religion to fanaticism and terrorism? Does rule of law mean the criminals with money go free while the poor citizen, falsely accused of stealing a chicken, must languish in prison? Do all these vaunted liberal democratic values bring more anarchy than social cohesion? Do they mean faith in a strange text, a constitution, or international declaration rather than in God or ancient traditions?

Hannah Arendt once said in an interview, "Totalitarianism begins in contempt for what you have. The second step is the notion: 'things must

change—no matter how, Anything is better than what we have.'"[6] Africa today provides fertile ground for such thinking. Arguably, its lagging development, insecurity, corruption, and inept governance lend themselves to authoritarian solutions. Furthermore, the decades of one-party rule, the persistent poverty, the colonial legacy, the natural resource curse incentivizing rent-seeking and clinging to power, and certain traditional governance structures can also theoretically form the basis for authoritarian, patriarchal, "neopatrimonial" politics. Viewed in contrast to the frequently disappointing performance of most of Africa's relatively young democracies, the achievements of a few particularly strong, righteous, supreme leaders are, not surprisingly, admired by many African leaders as well as ordinary citizens. Ostensibly, these neo-totalitarian leaders have stood austere and incorruptible while their democratic counterparts have lavished exorbitant salaries on members of Parliament and heads of state, flaunting their corruption. While the new totalitarians have pursued their vision of justice and growth, in many democracies the wealthy and powerful have bent the rules to enrich and protect themselves, even as the majority of citizens have languished in poverty. The new totalitarians claim to have delivered peace, order, and security, while many democracies have floundered in incompetence, nepotism, and patronage. They have united their polities and imposed discipline, while many democracies have fallen into ethnic and political conflict, rife with intolerance and demagoguery. The totalitarian leaders are elected with massive majorities, and national public opinion polling suggests they really are incredibly popular. And it is not only Africans. Shamelessly, many European, US, and other international policymakers and donors fawn over these regimes that claim to have achieved international development goals of good governance, economic growth, stability, and harmony despite the limits those regimes have placed on citizens' so-called rights.

Democracy and human rights have by no means disappeared from the African agenda. Not yet. Most African governments and the African Union (AU) still officially espouse democracy and human rights; many grassroots activists, journalists, and politicians still call for it; and continent-wide, public opinion polling demonstrates broad, if not always unequivocal, support for it. Every year many African governments are holding better and reasonably democratic elections, such as those in Nigeria in 2015 and in Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, and Ghana in 2016. Dictators continue to succumb to democratic transitions, including Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso in 2015 and Yahya Jammeh of Gambia in 2016. Internationally, policy declarations and foreign aid budgets continue to acknowledge the need for democracy, even if the tone has become softer and the budgets more modest. For that matter, many dictators still feel compelled to declare themselves to be democrats, though often qualifying the definition. Nevertheless, for many reasons, the consensus in favor of democracy that has prevailed in Africa over the past

quarter century is diminishing. Democracy's advocates are increasingly finding themselves demoralized or on the defensive. Ten to 20 years ago, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and other African heads of state tried to build agreement around NEPAD, the New Partnership for African Development, and the AU established the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) to encourage good governance and respect for human rights. Today, few African heads of state are as adamant in championing democracy as they once were, and opposition politicians are being imprisoned, popular advocates are being silenced, and international support for democracy has waned.

If the intrinsic value of liberal democracy is to be embraced and fought for, there must be a firm understanding of why it is necessary. For those who advocate fervidly for democracy, who have not given up the struggle, the cause is not served by denying that the totalitarian model has had achievements. Nor is it advanced by pretending that the totalitarian model is only transitional, that it is not really totalitarian, that it is doomed to fail, or that it is harmless. It is not advanced by pretending that democracy is ultimately superior and destined to prevail, that no effort need be expended on its behalf, or that it will happen of its own accord. And it is not advanced by pretending that none of this matters, that the consequences are immaterial for most Africans, that both sides are morally equivalent, and all of this is really alien to African politics anyway. Rather than surrender, rather than deny the threat or turn a blind eye, it is time for democrats to wake up, get their act together, and provide an appealing alternative. As is the case globally, it is best to admit the need to join in an ideological contest for Africans' hearts and minds and to enter into the fray fully aware of the challenges and contradictions. The future of Africa is at stake, with implications for the world. In this book, I have thus assembled facts and provided analysis to be considered in weighing the relative merits of the contending camps. I then draw some conclusions regarding the totalitarian temptation and speculate about its future prospects.

Totalitarianism Defined

Given the pejorative connotations surrounding the label *totalitarian*, the term must be applied with precision as well as with a full appreciation for the implications of such a designation. Otherwise, it becomes just another insulting epithet with little analytical value. A massive amount of political science literature has been devoted to the subject.[7] Until recently, the threat totalitarianism once represented to the Western democracies seemed to have receded. Study and debate over totalitarianism did revive somewhat in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall, but it was as if it had nearly disappeared.[8] Today, however, as the power of the surveillance state has grown

with the pervasiveness of the internet and the tide of populist authoritarianism rises around the globe, the danger of totalitarianism is once again frequently invoked in contemporary discourse. Sales of George Orwell's book *1984* have soared. In this context, there is a danger that the true gravity conveyed by the word *totalitarianism* will become cheapened and diluted by careless usage. With more serious application, totalitarianism, in current geopolitics, continues to find some resonance in the concern with North Korea, a vestigial and eccentric anachronism that nevertheless retains its power to oppress its own people in labor camps and threaten the rest of the world with nuclear weapons. Cuba also still retains much of its totalitarian legacy, although this has faded steadily with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the retirement and death of Fidel Castro, and the slow normalization of relations with the United States. No one today still declares Russia or China to be totalitarian regimes, although residual and resurgent totalitarian features of these and some other governments should be of serious concern. Given these circumstances, some scholars have concluded that although authoritarian governments persist, totalitarianism has disappeared in the modern world. William Dobson, in warning of the current ascendance of authoritarianism, has dismissed totalitarianism as "a distinctly twentieth-century phenomenon," "the most ambitious undemocratic gamble ever made, and it performed poorly."[9]

This is in dramatic contrast to the prevailing sentiment in the West just some 60 years ago, when the scholar Carl Friedrich asserted that "totalitarianism is the most perplexing problem of our time."[10] Even after the defeat of Adolf Hitler's Germany and the death of Joseph Stalin, the power and menace of totalitarianism generated enormous debate not only among political scientists but among just about anyone working in government, business, labor, psychology, arts, and literature. The ongoing strategic challenge posed by the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War undoubtedly focused attention on totalitarianism. At that time, the precise understanding of totalitarianism was only beginning to gain some consensus. Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski proffered their influential definition in 1956, which included six key elements:

- An elaborate ideology, consisting of an official body of doctrine covering all vital aspects of man's existence to which everyone living in that society is supposed to adhere, at least passively; this ideology is characteristically focused and projected toward a perfect final state of mankind—that is to say, it contains a chiliastic claim, based upon a radical rejection of the existing society with conquest of the world for the new one.
- A single mass party typically led by one man, the "dictator," and consisting of a relatively small percentage of the total population (up to

10 percent) of men and women, a hard core of them passionately and unquestioningly dedicated to the ideology and prepared to assist in every way in promoting its general acceptance, such a party being hierarchically, oligarchically organized and typically either superior to, or completely intertwined with, the governmental bureaucracy.

• A system of terror, whether physical or psychic, effected through party and secret-police control, supporting but also supervising the party for its leaders, and characteristically directed not only against demonstrable "enemies" of the regime, but against more or less arbitrarily selected classes of the population; the terror whether of the secret police or of party-directed social pressure systematically exploits modern science, and more especially scientific psychology.

• A technologically conditioned, near-complete monopoly of control, in the hands of the party and of the government, of all means of effective mass communication, such as press, radio, and motion pictures.

• A similarly technologically conditioned, near-complete monopoly of the effective use of all weapons of armed combat.

• A central control and direction of the entire economy through the bureaucratic coordination of formerly independent corporate entities, typically including most other associations and group activities.[11]

Juan Linz has offered an authoritative and more updated definition of totalitarianism for the 21st century, noting the following characteristics:

• There is a monistic but not a monolithic center of power, and whatever pluralism of institutions or groups exists derives its legitimacy from that center, is largely mediated by it, and is mostly a political creation rather than an outgrowth of the dynamics of the preexisting society.

• There is an exclusive, autonomous, and more or less intellectually elaborate ideology with which the ruling group or leader, and the party serving the leaders, identify and which they use as a basis for policies or manipulate to legitimize them. The ideology has some boundaries beyond which lies heterodoxy that does not remain unsanctioned. The ideology goes beyond a particular program or definition of the boundaries of legitimate political action to provide, presumably, some ultimate meaning, sense of historical purpose, and interpretation of social reality.

• Citizen participation in and active mobilization for political and collective social tasks are encouraged, demanded, rewarded, and channeled through a single party and many monopolistic secondary groups. Passive obedience and apathy, retreat into the role of "parochial" and "subjects," characteristic of many authoritarian regimes, are considered undesirable by the rulers.

Linz also described the feedback between the center and the processes of participation within the controlled organizations, the role of propaganda and intellectuals, the use of terror, the system's collective or mobilizational aspects, the emphasis on conformity, and the frequent development of the cult of the leader as salient characteristics of totalitarianism. Some of these characteristics may also appear in nontotalitarian authoritarian regimes, however; and conversely, some of these characteristics may not be present in all totalitarian regimes.[12] He observed that no two totalitarian systems are alike, despite similarities. Fascism, Nazism, Stalinism, Maoism, and their permutations learned from one another, copying some elements and avoiding others, developing according to the particular social and historical circumstances of each system. The ideological foundations of Nazism were thin and irrational, and the system was ultimately short lived; those of Marxism claimed a scientific basis that allowed for a wide range of interpretations, including some that are even liberal democratic.[13] For the purposes of this study, Linz's notion of monism is critical and requires further definition. It is defined as "the conception that there is one causal factor in history; the notion of a single element as primary determinant of behavior, social action, or institutional relations."[14]

In a later formulation, Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan proposed "post-totalitarianism" as a regime type to help explain changes such as those that occurred in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall. According to Linz and Stepan, post-totalitarianism encompasses a continuum that includes early, frozen, and mature post-totalitarian systems. Early post-totalitarianism is typically distinguished by some constraints on the leader; frozen post-totalitarianism shows some tolerance of civil society critics; and mature post-totalitarianism features change in most aspects of the totalitarian system with the exception of the leading role of the party. While the absence of political, economic, and social pluralism is the defining characteristic of totalitarianism, according to Linz and Stepan, in authoritarian regimes there may be limited political pluralism and extensive economic and social pluralism. In the post-totalitarian systems, significant social and economic pluralism can be found as a result of regime-led "de-totalitarianization," civil society pressure, or decay of the system. Political pluralism, however, is not allowed, except in the case of satellite parties. In a post-totalitarian system, the leader always emerges from the ruling party, although the post-totalitarian leader, typically succeeding the death of the "maximum leader," may be more bureaucratic and technocratic than charismatic. Leadership of the "frozen" post-totalitarian systems may tend to be oligarchic and geriatric, and hence prone to collapse. Related to this is the decreasing power of ideology, going from its use to "mobilize enthusiasm" to its use to simply "maintain acquiescence," although unlike in authoritarian systems, ideology is at least still accorded

lip service. With the weakening of ideology, performance is given greater emphasis to legitimate the regime. Likewise, although mass institutions and mass mobilization still occur in post-totalitarian systems, participants tend to get bored and may escape to the private domain.[15]

Beyond such contributions from political science, other texts also serve as essential references. In her classic *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt focused on the totalitarian regimes of Adolf Hitler's Germany and Joseph Stalin's Soviet Union, identifying their origins in the uprootedness and "atomization" of her times. Arendt showed how the development of anti-Semitism and the colonial experiments of imperialism, especially in Africa, provided some of the foundations for totalitarianism.[16] She traced the emergence of the mob and demonstrated how this could lead to totalitarianism's mobilization and domination of "the masses" through terror and propaganda. She described the development of totalitarian movements, including the use of front organizations, and noted the perverse nature of the bureaucracy in totalitarian states, the aspiration to world conquest, the function of secret police to dominate society rather than simply to secure the regime, and the use of indoctrination and absolute terror, including in camps.[17] She noted that totalitarian ideology is less concerned about its content than "the logical process which could be developed from it."[18] She also analyzed the use of racism and anti-Semitism in totalitarian ideology.

Documentation of the Nazi and Soviet systems is extensive. But beyond the work of social scientists, Linz has recommended an examination of literary writing.[19] Indeed, the popular conception of totalitarianism has been well conveyed through literature, in fictional works such as George Orwell's *1984*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, and Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, as well as in nonfiction, such as Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl* and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*. These and similar works grasp the psychological and emotional impact of totalitarianism, not just because they offer powerful literary visions of potential dystopias or witness the terror of prison camps and secret police. Such works also posit totalitarian ideal types and add normative content to the political science descriptions and analyses of totalitarianism. They show how totalitarianism is not simply an alternative system of governance, a system that might entail the sacrifice of some lives and some limits on personal freedom, a system that ultimately could be for the greater good, or one that can organize society and deliver benefits. For these authors, totalitarianism threatened the very essence of what it means to be a human being and the ultimate trajectory of civilization. One might accuse the fictional accounts of being exaggerations, caricatures, and fantasies not reflecting any historical reality. Yet most readers will recognize the truths these authors convey and the dangers about which they warn. Like that of

the political scientists, their work provides some useful reference points with which to analyze these systems.

Huxley's totalitarian vision preceded World War II. His future world state is relatively peaceful and prosperous, made comfortable by technological marvels and drugs. Yet social stratification, indoctrination, eugenic manipulation, and absolute bureaucratic control have led to a nightmarish world devoid of freedom and natural human emotions. In the end, the protagonist, John the Savage, unable to reconcile his former life of squalor and freedom on the reservation with the celebrity and order of "civilization," hangs himself. A totalitarian paradise reveals its dark side. Another early novel about totalitarianism, *We*, written around 1920 by Yevgeny Zamyatin, similarly portrays an orderly but vicious system, in which freedom is a crime and society must be protected from the chaos beyond the wall.

While Huxley and Zamyatin describe futuristic dystopias, other authors have sought to depict nightmarish visions more closely rooted in the present. Writing shortly after World War II, Orwell portrayed a violent and decrepit social order reflective of the totalitarian menace that had been partly defeated but remained present. He focused on the struggle of the individual against the omniscient presence of Big Brother, the security state. He portrayed the emasculation of language to manipulate human consciousness; the insinuation of the state and party into every aspect of an individual's being; the manufacture of a radical new order divorced from history and traditional society; the threat and prosecution of war in justifying the actions of the state; the deterioration of living standards and human values; the recruitment of informers and the use of information technology to spy; the use of turmoil within the ruling party and the abstract presence of the charismatic leader to exercise control; the differentiation between the party elite, its cadres, and the vast majority of the sheep-like population, the "proles"; and the sense of despair and resignation that ultimately prevails. Likewise, Koestler's narrative of the psychological turmoil and breakdown of a party leader in the course of his trial and execution, written shortly before World War II, synthesizes the experience of individuals in the totalitarian systems as they approached the apex of their strength. Orwell echoes Koestler's description of the absurdity and brutality of totalitarianism, including the torture and prison system.

African literature is full of accounts of repressive colonial systems and their dysfunctional successors. Prison literature, such as Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* and Wole Soyinka's *The Man Died,* compares to the works of Solzhenitsyn and Koestler in terms of the despair, absurdity, and courage described. The fictional works of Chinua Achebe, such as *Anthills of the Savannah,* Ben Okri in his *Famished Road*, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow* are a small sample of Africa's literature of repression. They describe the corruption, brutality, and lack of freedom

that have characterized many postcolonial African regimes. None of these stories are about political systems that can automatically be recognized as totalitarian, but they do portray the fertile ground from which such a system might spring. J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* approaches a totalitarian vision as it alludes to the South African apartheid regime. There is plenty in these books and those of many other African authors that is every bit as grim and despairing as what can be found in the work of Orwell or Huxley. Africans' variety of experiences of political oppression unite them with those around the world who have had similar experiences, but their descriptions of these experiences in literature also contain certain distinctions, such as the colonial legacy, the burden of racism, references to tradition, religion, and superstition, and the contradictions of the modern political order. The systems these accounts describe are not quite totalitarian, but they help us understand the temptation.

Likewise, although the African political science and ethnographic literature has largely continued to avoid use of the term *totalitarian,* it has described a variety of autocratic systems and sought to categorize them with names such as neopatrimonial, prebendal, integral, Islamist, biopolitical, Afrocommunist, Afro-Stalinist, and kleptocratic. This literature provides an understanding of the manifestations and mechanisms of repression in Africa that have evolved over time. The concept of totalitarianism, however, deserves due consideration as a way of analyzing African autocracies, especially because the term is increasingly used in common parlance to describe a variety of African regimes. Beyond the Africanist literature, this book draws parallels between the evolution of autocracy in Africa in the past decade and what is transpiring in the rest of the world, thus locating Africa in the current global political discourse. It thus argues that an old concept, forged mainly in the mid-20th century trauma of Europe but gaining new relevance around the world, also applies in today's Africa.

In sum, the literature on totalitarianism that has just been briefly reviewed presents the moral imperative for democracy and human rights, the difference between right and wrong, the reason why freedom remains a human aspiration, and the danger that totalitarianism poses for humanity. The authors implicitly juxtaposed the oppression of the totalitarian world with values upholding human rights and democracy—including freedom of speech and thought, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of religion and the rule of law, freedom from torture and police brutality, free and fair elections, and the right to life. Today, these human rights are usually regarded as universal values, not particular to the West or the developed world. Obviously, this consensus has not always existed, as demonstrated by the ascendance of totalitarianism only 80 years ago. Now, including in Africa, the consensus is no longer unassailable. Although Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini embraced the totalitarian

label, Africa's new totalitarians refrain from doing so; they are more elusive and subtle, preferring to describe their regimes as somehow democratic. They may criticize neoliberal ideology and denounce Western cultural and political hegemony, but they have adapted to it. They choose their words carefully. Rather than attacking the democratic consensus head-on, they deflect it, re-define it, or simply pretend it does not exist. They have turned the moral imperative on its head, suggesting that the security and development brought about by their rule is more popular with the masses and conducive to human rights than is the existence of a political opposition or a free press. Thus, the new totalitarians are often elusive, coy, incognito, difficult to pin down. That is why it is necessary to know exactly what to look for.

Although Linz, Arendt, and Friedrich and Brzezinski, as well as the novelists, emphasize different aspects of totalitarianism, there is enough agreement among their writings to make a working diagnosis for totalitarianism possible. Linz advises looking for the conflation of party and state, an all-encompassing ideology, and mass mobilization. Friedrich and Brzezinski, in addition to the elements of chiliastic ideology and party-state that overlap with Linz, add the use of terror, technological control of communications and force, and control over the economy and civil society, which Linz also alluded to in his definition. Arendt reinforces the focus on terror and ideology, dissecting the hypocrisy and cynical utilitarianism of it, its structures and mechanics, and the psychology that creates and drives it. She traces the relationship between anti-Semitism, totalitarianism, and genocide. And Orwell helps us to appreciate the role of technology, terror, and propaganda, providing the term *Orwellian* that so perfectly captures totalitarianism's doublespeak. Huxley shows that totalitarianism need not be forever violent or economically unsuccessful, that it might exist as a stable and efficient, all-powerful and all-knowing system, a particularly important insight in the postmodern African context. Friedrich suggests passive obedience is sufficient in a totalitarian system, while Linz insists that totalitarianism demands conformity and active, if not voluntary, mass participation.

But Linz disagrees with Arendt's concept of the alienation of mass society as a basis for totalitarianism and de-emphasizes the use of terror. Further, he does not consider a single supreme leader to be inevitable in a totalitarian system, although he admits this is probable. Linz notes totalitarianism's appeal, its pseudo-democratic enlistment of the masses in its utopian project. He explains how ideology provides totalitarian systems with legitimation and a sense of mission and describes the role of the party in expressing the unique syndrome of ideology, monistic power, and mass mobilization. Linz also helpfully distinguishes totalitarianism from sultanism and various forms of authoritarianism. Further, he recommends that

the term *systems* be applied to totalitarianism, conveying its infiltration into all of society rather than simply into the formal political and state institutions implied by the terms *regime* and *government*. Linz and Stepan underscore the dynamic nature of totalitarian systems. Totalitarian systems may change over time and may collapse or transform completely into another type of system.

Thus, knowing what to look for, we may begin the search. But at the beginning of the 21st century, as noted earlier, for most political analysts and the general public, totalitarianism had become a fading paradigm, no longer a cause for concern. The rise of the European Union (EU) beginning more than 50 years ago and the fall of the Berlin Wall some 25 years ago have obscured the remnants of the two greatest totalitarian models. China's slow but steady opening since the demise of Mao Zedong had removed that system from consideration as a totalitarian country, however undemocratic and repressive it remains. China's free market, developing associational life, diminishing ideological fervor, and declining mobilizational character have evolved radically from Mao's totalitarian project, despite Diamond's premonition of a postmodern nightmare surveillance state.

The two countries still sometimes categorized today as totalitarian, Cuba and North Korea, both conform to the definition that has been elaborated due to their conflation of state and party, promotion of an overarching ideology, and efforts at mass mobilization. The use of terror, technology, propaganda, and economic and social control also still pertains. Nevertheless, as their systems have aged, they have also lost their vigor, and neither country poses much of a threat to the world order. Both are small, relatively isolated, and economically feeble. Their citizens suffer, and while these countries can inspire international headaches and condemnations, they present nowhere near the same existential threat to the free world that the ambitions for global domination of fascism and communism once did. Both Cuba and North Korea might soon be candidates for the post-totalitarian category. Other very repressive governments exist, such as those of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Vietnam, and Belarus, but all of them fail to meet at least some of the essential conditions for classification as totalitarian regimes. Elsewhere, by the year 2017, authoritarianism was resurging in Russia and some other Central Asian and Latin American countries, but significant pockets of pluralism have survived in these countries, and ideology and the mass movement are essentially absent, disqualifying them from consideration as incipient totalitarian systems.

Even if it has all but disappeared elsewhere in the world, the totalitarian urge, dormant for at least a quarter of a century, has revived in Africa. As already noted, it is dressed up differently, often comes across as relatively benign, stays on good terms with the West, and projects stability and economic prosperity. It is protecting international strategic and secu-

rity interests. The trains, so to speak, are running on time. But having carefully defined totalitarianism, we see that what can now be found in Africa, in all the essential features, is recognizably the same totalitarianism that scholars debated 60 years ago. The siren call today is no less seductive than it was then. At their peak, Hitler and Stalin had many fans, both at home and abroad. Asserting that something comparable is happening in Africa, however—and as will be shown, having discovered ample confirmation of it in the political science literature as well as in popular conceptions of totalitarianism—does not mean to imply that what is happening in Africa is a regression to earlier political models or that it fits neatly into any typological box. Africa's totalitarian temptation may draw on the legacy of communist ideology and include historical and cultural experiences with parallels in other parts of the world, but it is otherwise unprecedented. It is modern, dynamic, self-confident, defiant. As it evolves, it becomes less revolutionary than status quo, less alarming than reassuring. It belongs to a specifically African context, with all the demographic, economic, cultural, and historical baggage that brings. It can teach lessons that can be applied elsewhere, just as it may be borrowing ideas from other modern authoritarian systems. It is by no means isolated from the international system but is in fact quite integrated and compatible with it. Unlike Nazi Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union, Africa's totalitarian systems are not engaged in a geopolitical battle for global supremacy. They are not even minor players in some new cold war, despite their implication in a new scramble for Africa pitting China and/or Russia versus the West. They pose no threat to the West. For the most part, they want to be our friends.

The "temptation" has multiple dimensions, including totalitarianism's appeal to the African masses and African elites as well as to Western policymakers and scholars. In the old days, the seductiveness of totalitarianism was frequently noted, including the idealism and enthusiasm often associated with it, in contrast to the apathy or cynical acquiescence generated by mere authoritarianism or the disillusion sometimes aroused by democracy.[20] In *The Totalitarian Temptation*, written at the dawn of Samuel Huntington's third wave of democracy and the global nadir of democratic government, Jean-François Revel fretted about what he perceived to be the West's retreat in the face of the Communist advance. For the masses, particularly in the third world, communism presented an alternative based on class struggle and economic justice. For many liberal elites, its appeal was based on what Revel considered to be an unfair critique of the economic and moral consequences of capitalism. In particular, he blamed the left for its attitude ranging from "overt complicity to timid inaction."[21] Today, the irony is that the totalitarian systems Revel feared have almost entirely collapsed, largely due to their own structural contradictions, but also arguably due to the resolve

of the democratic West. In contrast, the new totalitarian temptation, despite its underlying critique of the West, has not only generated Western sympathizers but has also found a compatibility and projected an image in the West that arouses support and praise. Today, the West no longer cowers in fear or fails to muster the political will to confront totalitarianism. Rather, in the case of Africa, it is often confused and conflicted, sometimes embracing it as an ally, sometimes ignoring the reality or diminishing it. A growing number of Western critics, to be sure, have raised their voices in alarm, including many within Western governments. But their oft-plaintive appeals hardly resonate beyond policy papers and legislative hearings. Theory therefore needs to be enlisted to clarify this cognitive dissonance. Linz has called for a typology of totalitarian systems that includes a more dynamic analysis of change in and of totalitarian systems as well as comparison with other nondemocratic regimes so as to better evaluate them. "Certainly totalitarian systems must have many positive features that make them attractive to people who are not ignorant of some of their worst features," he suggests.[22] In that spirit, the following methodology is proposed.

Methodology

The methodology of this study consists of three sets of indicators supported by a range of primary and secondary sources. Like authoritarianism, totalitarianism is an autocratic system of government sharing all the attributes of repression and the absence of civil and political rights typical of such systems. In pursuit of evidence of totalitarianism in Africa, therefore, the first indicator to be determined is the level of political and civil freedom, which is readily provided by Freedom House's annual Freedom in the World Index. Many other worthy indices exist, including the Afrobarometer, the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, and the V-Dem Annual Democracy Report, all of which can be cited to reinforce the Freedom House findings and provide a more comprehensive appreciation of the political systems discussed in this book. Although the Freedom House index has certain weaknesses, it is the oldest and most widely used measure of democracy and freedom, or lack thereof.

Countries are scored from 1 to 7 in two categories: political rights, such as the quality of elections, and civil liberties, such as freedom of speech. Countries with a 1 are the freest, and those with a 7 are the least free. The scores do not necessarily reflect government performance, but rather the freedoms experienced by the people; thus, countries in violent conflict tend to be less free. In the 2013 report, of the 48 countries in the world categorized as "not free," 17 were in sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, the scope of this analysis was immediately narrowed to those 17. The worst group, receiving

a rating of 7 in both political and civil rights, included Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Somalia, and Sudan. The Central African Republic was added to this category in 2014 after a civil war, and despite successful elections in 2016, it has failed to receive any upgrade due to ongoing insecurity problems. The next worst group, with a combined average of 6.5, included Chad, to which Gambia, Burundi, and Ethiopia were added in 2015. Countries scoring a 6 included Angola, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mali (which returned to "partly free" after elections in 2015), Rwanda, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe (which was also upgraded from 6 in 2013 to 5.5 in 2014, and in 2015 climbed to 5, "partly free," only to fall back to a 6 after a military coup in 2017, a change that will be discussed in more depth). Countries scoring a 5.5 included Congo-Brazzaville, Djibouti, and Gabon. Uganda, which had been "partly free" in 2013, was downgraded to the 5.5, "not free," group in 2016. In some instances, these fluctuations between "not free" and "partly free" will be worth discussion. For the purposes of this study, however, most countries consistently scoring better than 5 will not be examined, since they qualify as at least "partly free" according to the Freedom House index.

From this group of 17 countries, a second set of indicators will help establish the existence of those countries that may qualify as totalitarian, as opposed to simply authoritarian, systems. These indicators will be based on the three interrelated criteria provided by Linz, as discussed earlier, and will be referred to as (1) monism—that is, the conflation of state, party, security, society, and economy; (2) ideology—particularly its utopian and all-encompassing aspects; and (3) mass mobilization—including the use of labor gangs and other forms of conscription, as well as mass reeducation and indoctrination efforts.

To reinforce the identification of these systems as totalitarian, this study will note a third set of indicators, which are not exclusive to totalitarian systems but often correlate with totalitarian systems and provide their distinctive personalities. These include many of the characteristics cited by the political science and classical references noted earlier, including the use of terror, police, torture, prisons and prison camps, technology, bureaucracy, and surveillance.

Finally, the presence of imperialism and genocide will be explored. These phenomena will not be considered critical indicators, but both have often been associated with totalitarianism, although they have also occurred independently. In the African context, the sequencing and manifestations may be unorthodox, but the presence of imperialism and genocide is nevertheless an additional and intriguing contribution to the totalitarian diagnosis.

To elucidate these indicators, recent data will be gleaned from research conducted by established and reputable institutions such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International (AI), the International Human Rights Federation,

International Crisis Group, Freedom House, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), and Reporters Without Borders, as well as governmental and international agencies such as the US State Department and the United Nations (UN). Another source of data will be governmental documents, such as party manifestoes, policy statements, and official reports and statistics. Because of the prominence of the leader in totalitarian systems, a brief biographical sketch of the head of state, as well as selected speeches and writings, will be presented. Likewise, some short historical background for each country will be necessary, highlighting totalitarian moments and the foundations of the development of totalitarianism. Each case will also draw on interviews with dissident politicians, journalists, and civil society activists, as well as published opposition sources. Some scholarly literature, the work of political analysts, and news reports will also be cited. Finally, supporting data will be assembled from grassroots contacts and fieldwork conducted over my more than 30 years of experience in African political development. Due to the sensitivity of some of this information and concern for the security of those involved, however, some of this material will be attributed anonymously.

Having set forth a methodology, this work will present six case-study countries that at some point elsewhere have been characterized as totalitarian systems. The discussion starts with Eritrea, which makes the most convincing case. Yet Eritrea is isolated and exceptional; it fails to suggest a trend or model. The discussion therefore moves to Ethiopia, Eritrea's big sister and, until recently, the most formidable case. In contrast to Eritrea, Ethiopia's example has had implications for the entire continent and largely motivated this study. Next, Rwanda, which is often compared to Ethiopia and represents the most successful case, will be considered. Rwanda's role has been more subtle but at least as influential as that of Ethiopia, and its experiment has proved more durable. Following the advice of Linz, Zimbabwe will then offer a contrasting but therefore a deeper understanding of the totalitarian temptation emanating from the southern Africa region. Zimbabwe offers some lessons regarding the evolution of autocracy in Africa, underscoring both its persistence and its weaknesses and failures. Similarly, Sudan, in the greater Horn, affords an examination of the pioneering experience of totalitarianism's Islamist variant. As in Zimbabwe, the system in Sudan has both survived and failed. The final case to be taken up will be Equatorial Guinea, which closely resembles a totalitarian system but again includes salient distinctions that provide a sharper appreciation of the totalitarian phenomenon. In an effort to be comprehensive, as well as to demonstrate the broad penetration of the totalitarian zeitgeist, a more cursory survey of the remainder of the sub-Saharan continent will be undertaken. Work on this book began with a paper presented to the African Studies Association in 2011, and thus the

focus of this book stretches from the beginning to the end of the second decade of the 21st century. As such, this work has benefited from the dynamic and volatile nature of African politics, making each case study a moving target but also revealing how autocratic regimes evolve and hinting at their future prospects. With that objective, the discussion now turns to a brief review of totalitarianism's history and antecedents in Africa.

Notes

1. Robert Kagan, "The Strongmen Strike Back," *Washington Post,* March 17, 2019, A24–27.

2. Larry Diamond, "The Road to Digital Unfreedom: The Threat of Postmodern Totalitarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 30, no. 1 (January 2019): 20.

3. Marina Ottaway, *Africa's New Leaders: Democracy or State Reconstruction?* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999), 2.

4. Crawford Young, "Africa: An Interim Balance Sheet," *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 3 (July 1996): 53–60.

5. Juan J. Linz, *Totalitarianism and Authoritarian Regimes.* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 227–232.

6. Hannah Arendt, "Hannah Arendt: From an Interview," *New York Review of Books,* October 26, 1978.

7. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes,* 40–48, 291–328.

8. Hans Maier, ed., *Totalitarianism and Political Religions: Concepts for the Comparison of Dictatorships* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 199.

9. William J. Dobson, *The Dictator's Learning Curve: Inside the Global Battle for Democracy* (New York: Doubleday, 2012) 5–6.

10. Carl J. Friedrich, ed., *Totalitarianism: Proceedings of a Conference Held at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, March 1953), 1.

11. Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 22.

12. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes,* 70–75.

13. Ibid., 116–128.

14. *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary,* 2nd ed. (New York: Random House Reference, 2001).

15. Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 42–51.

16. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1958), 185.

17. Ibid., 389–459.

18. Ibid., 472.

19. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes,* 29.

20. Ibid., 16.

21. Jean-François Revel, *The Totalitarian Temptation*, trans. David Hapgood (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978), 39.

22. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes,* 136.

2

A Short History of Totalitarianism in Africa

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt identified Africa as the location for two key political discoveries that helped lay the groundwork for totalitarianism: race and bureaucracy. Quoting the reaction to Africans of Joseph Conrad's Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*—"Exterminate all the brutes," Arendt held that this European madness "resulted in the most terrible massacres in recent history, the Boers' extermination of the Hottentot tribes, the wild murdering by Carl Peters in German Southeast Africa, the decimation of the peaceful Congo population—from 20 to 40 million reduced to 8 million people; and finally, perhaps worst of all, it resulted in the triumphant introduction of such means of pacification into ordinary, respectable foreign policies."[1] The Boer experience in South Africa led to the development of "racism as a ruling device," which was later exploited by imperialism as a major political idea.[2] When the colonial instrumentalization of bureaucracy to impose domination of a small group over the masses was added to the mix, Africa provided a veritable training ground for experiments that would later be adopted by the Nazis, according to Arendt. Later, Benito Mussolini would attempt to establish his own version of fascist rule in the Horn of Africa, which has left some legacy as well and will be discussed later.

Authoritarian ideology has an extensive and deep history in Africa. In the years after independence in the late 1950s through the late 1980s, dictatorships spread steadily until only a handful of small countries, such as Botswana, Mauritius, Gambia, and Senegal, preserved any semblance of liberal democratic freedom. Most countries were ruled by a cohort of leaders, including Ahmed Sékou Touré, Kwame Nkrumah, Modibo Keita, Mobutu Sese Seko, Amílcar Cabral, Julius Nyerere, Samora Machel, and

Kenneth Kaunda, who had attempted to instill in their citizens a variety of nationalist, revolutionary, socialist, and pan-Africanist ideologies, often with strong authoritarian elements. At the same time, such ideologies were heralded by revolutionary intellectuals such as Frantz Fanon, Che Guevara, Stokely Carmichael, and Malcolm X, who romanticized the use of violence, and by international apologists in the nonaligned movement, the Soviet bloc, or Maoist China, as well as in the West. Esteemed political theorists such as Goran Hyden, who taught at the University of Dar es Salaam from 1971 to 1977, lent intellectual support to the repressive, authoritarian state-building project in Africa. In his seminal work, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania*, Hyden avowed that "it is inevitable that the task of socialist modernization will imply the use of force in the same way as capitalist modernization did. It will be the painful task of socialist leaders to find the ideological justification for this in a situation where social expectations go in a contrary direction." Hyden went on to dismiss liberals who "criticize African governments for being too coercive and authoritarian, leaving little or no room for civil liberties." Hyden contended that "such criticism fails to take into consideration the conditions of those societies. The critics forget that the structural conditions of those economies are such that very often the only approach available implies authoritarianism." Advocating for the modernizing benefits of authoritarianism and declaring the inadequacy of bottom-up approaches, he suggested "Westerners should praise African governments for not using more coercion than they do." Hyden concluded that "political freedom, as conceived by Westerners is not the key variable that promotes development in African societies."[3]

None of these socialist ideologies or political experiments have endured, however much they may have inspired the framework for the authoritarian governments that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. Hyden was not espousing totalitarianism, and the link between political freedom and African economic development may indeed be tenuous, as he asserted. Moreover, the case he made for authoritarianism has largely been discredited in the wake of the African democratic renaissance of the 1990s. Nevertheless, many dictators have managed to hang on, and the privileging of economic development over political freedom that Hyden championed is once again gaining adherents. What distinguishes the new totalitarian regimes, however, is that while using the development imperative, they have gone beyond Hyden's relatively benign authoritarianism, beyond mere dictatorship and repression. They have created single-party political structures that assert strong control over the economy, eliminate independent civil society, impose all-encompassing ideological systems, and compel mass participation. The African totalitarian state seeks control over all aspects of social life, while the authoritarian regimes are content with, or are limited to and must be satisfied with, political control alone. Versions of

socialist and authoritarian ideology may still be found throughout the continent, but only a handful of countries have actually succeeded in deliberately establishing what can be considered full-fledged totalitarian systems. These are described in more detail in the following chapters, but first, a quick survey of some of Africa's totalitarian antecedents is in order.

Kenneth Grundy, citing the example of Ghana, contended that African states in the early years after independence were unlikely to evolve into totalitarian regimes since "the modernization process creates such destabilizing forces that rigid control of all forms of social life is unlikely in transitional societies" such as those found in Africa.[4] Closely following Carl Friedrich's definition of totalitarianism, Grundy could find no African regime that filled all of the criteria he sought as essential to totalitarianism—that is, an official ideology, a single mass party, a near complete monopoly of all the means of mass communication and a similarly effective monopoly of all the means of armed combat, the employment of terror and police control, and a central management and direction of the economy.[5] However, Grundy also pointed out that even in the cases of Nazism and Stalinism, totalitarianism is an ideal, rather than a real, type. Juan Linz confirms that the challenge of empirically identifying totalitarian systems along a continuum is less difficult than coming up with an essentialist definition.[6] Likewise, Grundy distinguished between totalitarianism as an ideological phenomenon and as an empirical one. In other words, a regime might call itself Marxist-Leninist but not successfully exert total control. Conversely, a regime might not call itself totalitarian but look and act as if it were. Although no African regime met Grundy's criteria at the time, he posited that some countries could evolve in this direction unconsciously or might aspire to but fail to achieve totalitarian control due to the inhospitable African social environment with its multitude of ethnicities and cultural traditions. Africanist scholars have since refrained from ascribing a totalitarian identity to any African government. The word *totalitarian* has too much Cold War baggage, connotes too much of a North/West preoccupation, is not appropriate for the African context or historical experience, is simply passé. Yet the word can be used accurately to describe a complex of phenomena that have been present in Africa for many decades, if not centuries, and have laid the foundations for more recent political developments.

The Case of Guinea, and Others

Ghana and Mali espoused socialist, one-party states at independence, but their experiments failed to gain much traction, as Grundy contended. Guinea's Sékou Touré, however, made the most concerted effort in Africa at

the time to impose a one-party socialist system with many of the elements of totalitarianism. From the beginning of his rule in 1958 when he declared independence from France with the slogan "Better poor and free than rich and a slave," Sékou Touré wanted not only to impose a single-party ideology but to transform every Guinean into a loyal adherent and to eliminate any counterrevolutionaries who resisted. The party directed government bureaucracies to set up forced labor battalions to build schools, roads, and clinics. The government also extended its control over trade and agriculture through marketing boards that paid low prices, and it nationalized private business, especially manufacturing, practically eliminating the private sector. The trade unions were brought under party control. Thousands of Guineans were imprisoned for political offenses under Sékou Touré's preventive detention acts, and an estimated 1.5 million of a total population of five million fled the country.[7] Sékou Touré cultivated close relations with Cuba, China, and the Soviet Union. Ultimately, however, Sékou Touré's experiment faltered as the Guinean economy collapsed and the country was isolated internationally, including within Africa, and was even largely abandoned by the Soviet Union.[8] By 1977, Sékou Touré began to shift his policies and open up the political system and continued to do so until he died in 1984, when the country was taken over by a military coup.[9]

Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg argued, in contrast, that only apartheid South Africa really qualified as a totalitarian regime and that all other authoritarian African governments at the time they wrote were simply tyrannies. They identified the methodical exploitation of the technological and organizational instruments made available by the modern state, which gave the apparatus of control greater power, reach, and effectiveness, as the distinguishing characteristic of totalitarianism. Because other than South Africa, at the time they wrote, they considered the rest of sub-Saharan Africa to be premodern, the tyranny characteristic of most of the rest of Africa, they found, lacks this capability.[10] "Unlike totalitarianism," they stressed, "tyrannical government is scarcely if at all bureaucratic; rather, it operates by providing the ruler Tyrant and all the petty tyrants in his employ with a license to act essentially as they see fit."

In retrospect, however, Jackson and Rosberg failed to appreciate the apartheid system's growing contradictions, which within 10 years of their writing would bring about its collapse. Although the apartheid government of South Africa did propagate an all-encompassing ideology that asserted not only political control but extensive social and economic control over the lives of South Africans, it never achieved absolute control. It functioned with just a few hiccups during the 1960s and 1970s but never fully consolidated. Apartheid was inherently unsustainable, as it attempted to impose the rule of a racial minority on a growing, and increasingly empowered, majority. Within the white community there was significant political opposition,

which was always, if barely, represented in the legislature but grew in apartheid's final years. There was also always some form of underground opposition, whether it took the form of the Pan African Congress, the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party (SACP), the Black Consciousness Movement, the United Democratic Front, the trade union movement, or numerous civil society organizations (CSOs). Nor was the independent press ever entirely extinguished. Even leaders such as Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, although in some respects constrained and co-opted by the system, nevertheless preserved significant political autonomy in KwaZulu and some of the other homelands. The apartheid state gained the acquiescence of some homeland leaders, but it never succeeded in mobilizing popular support among the masses of the African population. Some Afrikaner nationalists emulated Nazi Germany and its racial ideology, such as Eugene Terre Blanche, who even adopted a neo-swastika as his movement's official emblem. And the state did make effective use of bureaucratic and technological means of repression, such as the pass laws, apartheid education system, forced removals, police, and communications technology. The apartheid regime gained some degree of international acceptance under the guise of "constructive engagement," but the growing international opprobrium and isolation, as well as the "armed propaganda" of the exiled opposition, gradually undermined the apartheid edifice. However hard it tried, the apartheid state never consolidated totalitarian status in strict accordance with the established criteria. Linz expressed ambivalence about South Africa, observing its totalitarian potential due to the ideology and mobilizational aspects of the regime as well as critiquing the "racial democracy" that allowed political pluralism and democratic institutions among the white Afrikaner and English populations.[11]

Jackson and Rosberg preferred to categorize Sékou Touré's Guinea as a personal regime rather than a totalitarian one and placed Sékou Touré among the "philosopher-king" subtype in their classification system, along with Nkrumah and Nyerere. They recognized Sékou Touré's regime to be one of the most durable and despotic in Africa, however, and their analysis of his rule in fact corresponds closely to the definition of totalitarianism. Sékou Touré's emphasis on ideology, including in 20 volumes of his writings, and his determination to transform Guinean society and psychology, no matter the cost, were particularly indicative of his totalitarian inclinations. Likewise, Sékou Touré invested great energy in political organization and the cult of the leader. Assessing the role of the Guinean National Assembly, the Political Bureau, and Sékou Touré at the top, Jackson and Rosberg commented that "such a degree of political control over society and economy has meant that all individuals and groups who seek advancement or protection in Guinea must, in some manner or other, secure the support of the party; in practice, they secure the favor of a party cadre or leader. The party can be conceived

as a network of ties of patronage and dependence, favor and submission, from top to bottom. At the very top is the ruler—Touré—who can put anyone on notice at any time."[12] Their description matched Linz's first criterion for a totalitarian system almost perfectly. Indeed, Jackson and Rosberg expressed ambivalence about the totalitarian character of Sékou Touré's regime, ultimately citing its inefficiency as the main rationale for not considering it a full-fledged totalitarian system. Still, "in character with Stalinism and totalitarianism, the ruler in Guinea has been elevated and deified," they acknowledged, citing Sékou Touré's many glorified titles.[13] They also remarked on Sékou Touré's "undoubtedly totalitarian view" that "morality is subordinate to politics, and political virtue is what pleases the ruler."[14]

In *Afrocommunism*, Marina and David Ottaway examined the Derg regime of Ethiopia as well as the governments of Mozambique and Angola, which officially identified themselves as Marxist-Leninist and were aligned with the Soviet Union, but the two scholars found all of these regimes relatively unsuccessful and more comparable to the Eurocommunism of the 1970s and 1980s than the Soviet model of communism.[15] Like Jackson and Rosberg, the Ottaways recognized all the totalitarian features of Sékou Touré's regime but faulted him for his economic failures, declaring that "for all his Marxist inclinations, Sékou Touré never learned that any political system must have a sound economic base to survive and that economics cannot be totally divorced from politics." They concluded that "such a path to socialism is more likely to lead to disaster." Rational economic policy has not usually been associated with Stalin's regime, so one may question why both the Ottaways and Jackson and Rosberg placed so much emphasis on it. Surveying the landscape elsewhere in Africa, the Ottaways were equally dismissive of any other attempts to erect the communist project. These old Cold War ideological efforts have long since dissipated, but they still influence Africa's political development. Robert Mugabe's denunciations of Western imperialism, for example, still provide much of the framework for Zimbabwe's political debate and most of the blame for its economic travails. Although explicitly Marxist vestiges of totalitarianism remain in places such as North Korea and Cuba, today's political discourse in Africa rarely resurrects it, except in some academic settings. Nonetheless, the DNA is still there.

The Rise of Democracy, Its Failings, and the Totalitarian Alternative

The optimism that accompanied the African independence movement in the early 1960s gradually faded as military governments seized power and one-party regimes were established throughout the continent. By 1988, Freedom House could identify only a handful of "partly free" governments, and the

only free countries were Botswana, Gambia, and Mauritius, none of which had a population of more than a million. Economic stagnation was leading to onerous structural adjustment programs, further immiserating the African population. But the "second independence" of Africa that began with Benin's sovereign national conference in 1990, largely in reaction to austerity measures, and the collapse of apartheid in South Africa, culminating in democratic elections in 1994, dramatically reversed the trend. A wave of democratic elections, the flourishing of civil society, and the growth of independent media fundamentally altered the political landscape of Africa. Soon, democracy became Africa's new paradigm. Freedom House classified half the countries of the continent as democracies by 2008. Democratic principles were enshrined in statements and documents of the AU, such as the African Charter on Democracy and Elections; and initiatives such as NEPAD and APRM further promoted democratic government. The international community strongly encouraged this trend with generous funding for democratic reform, including election observations, incentives such as the Millennium Challenge compacts, and support to civil society and independent media. Over a middle time horizon, democratic government continues to make incremental progress to this day. Recent African elections, including those in Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Kenya, South Africa, and Tanzania were all credible, democratic, and reasonably free and fair. They have often been flawed, but alternation of power has occurred, and African citizens still invest great stock in them. Democratic institutions, such as the courts, the legislatures, the local governments, human rights commissions, and electoral bodies, are gaining independence in many countries. Social media and civil society flourish throughout most of the continent. African popular support for democracy has proved resilient.[16]

Yet despite the great progress over the past 25 years, many authoritarian systems have survived. The emergence of new democracies, the strengthening of democratic institutions, and the spread of democratic norms has slowed, while many democratic African governments have disappointed their citizens. In some countries, significant deterioration of initial democratic gains has occurred. In others, democracy never really got off the ground or stalled at an early stage. Restrictions on independent press and civil society have gained momentum. The collapse in March 2012 of Mali's democratic government, long hailed as a model after 20 years in the "free" category, signaled the fragility of democracy across the continent. The threat of terrorism has simultaneously undermined democracy directly, with terrorists killing innocent civilians and seizing control of communities, while providing governments with an excuse to suppress political opposition. Disappointment with the ability of democracy to deliver economic dividends for much of the continent and the persistence

of instability, corruption, and poor governance in democratic regimes have undermined popular support for democracy and strengthened the position of autocratic rulers. Many countries are still governed by strongmen who have used an array of repressive tools to cling to power, sometimes for decades, despite the inroads of multiparty systems, the independent press, and impertinent civil societies. Many African governments on Freedom House's "partly free" list present varying degrees of democratic government, such as those of Kenya, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Niger, Lesotho, and Mozambique. They hold elections, allow some civil society and independent media, and pay lip service to democracy, but their performance can hardly reassure most citizens that democracy is the best possible form of government. Afrobarometer polling has consistently shown strong popular support for democracy across Africa, despite some anomalies that will be discussed, but democratic consolidation has proven slow and uneven. Given such tentative progress, such "partly free" countries have shown themselves quite susceptible to the totalitarian temptation.

If we accept that "totalitarian" must be considered an ideal type, just as "democratic" must be, several African systems have been found to meet in some fashion the criteria for totalitarianism suggested by political theorists. There may be some remnants in these systems of opposition parties, or civil society, or media, or private business, for example. But this could be found in Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia as well. Some discussion will be in order as to whether these may be proto- or post-totalitarian systems, or altogether new types of totalitarian systems. But what each of these modern African systems does have in common is that opposition parties, the press, and civil society have been severely emasculated, if not entirely eliminated. Elections may be held, but the ruling party rarely gets less than 90 percent of the vote, and the party pervades all government structures and employment. The regimes demand absolute loyalty to the state and aggressively silence dissent, asserting complete control over all means of communication, movement, and association, and expanding their reach into the economic, cultural, and social lives of citizens. Through pervasive security and party networks, they monitor the daily activities of the population and demand mass participation in public works projects, indoctrination meetings, and political gatherings. Their ideological origins happen to be in Marxist-Leninist movements and they continue to derive their inspiration from China and other authoritarian regimes, although more innocuous models such as Sweden, Taiwan, and Singapore are also often cited. The ideology functions essentially as a means and justification for maintaining power, but in some cases it also serves as a blueprint for governance. Whether these ideologies are chiliastic, utopian, or present some ultimate meaning is subject to interpretation and requires further exploration. Generally, the ideology is formulated in

a way that is not too offensive to Western norms, helping thereby to maintain the regimes' international appeal.

The ideological question is critical but may be the most elusive. Africa's dictators seldom enlist the soaring rhetoric of the *Communist Manifesto,* the frenzy of *Mein Kampf,* or the cultish didacticism of Mao's Little Red Book. But they can and do give long speeches, display some charisma, and make use of theoretical and nationalist arguments to justify their hold on power. Only Islamic radicalism compares to the old style of totalitarian ideology in its power to generate fealty to a chiliastic vision. Sudan, which has attempted to impose a fundamentalist Islamic ideology, will be shown to have been unsuccessful in its experiment to establish a totalitarian political order, however. Islamic jihadism has also been promoted by nonstate actors such as al-Shabaab in Somalia and Boko Haram in Nigeria. Sahafi and Wahhabi Islamic fundamentalists in Africa have been converted by their counterparts in the Gulf states of the Middle East. Although distinct from the rise of al-Qaeda, the Islamic State, and other terrorist movements, they share with them the attempt to establish a religious basis for government. Muammar Qaddafi's eccentric ideology espoused in his "Green Book" had totalitarian overtones, as well as some adherents in sub-Saharan Africa, but has faded with his demise. Ironically, the diffusion of armed Tuareg throughout the Sahel that accompanied the fall of Qaddafi has destabilized the subregion and opened the door to jihadists, such as al-Qaeda in the Maghreb and Boko Haram.

These groups' ideologies are certainly chiliastic, looking to God as the source of all meaning, political and otherwise, and could provide the basis for a monistic, mass-based movement, even though they have yet to gain complete control over the state. The ideology is also nihilistic, intent on destroying the current order in all its manifestations. Their use of terror is reminiscent of the methods used by totalitarian movements, and like the Nazi stormtroopers, Africa's jihadists more often resemble criminal enterprises than political movements. Jihadism may currently appeal primarily to an alienated fringe in some African countries, but as Hannah Arendt observed, in the atomization of society, totalitarianism finds fertile soil. Growing disaffection with governance across Africa threatens increasingly to nourish rebel movements and criminality. Mirroring this, many African leaders increasingly invoke the terrorist threat to justify repressive policies. Even in relatively open countries such as Kenya, the government denounces both Western interference and Islamic fundamentalism as a pretext to impose tighter controls on civil society critics and the media. The irony is that some of Africa's totalitarian governments have also used the threat of Islamic terrorism as a rationale to adopt repressive policies and have been recruited by the West in the fight against extremism. Be this as it may, a closer examination of six case studies is now in order.

Notes

1. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1958), 189.

2. Ibid., 195.

3. Goran Hyden, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 223, 225, 226.

4. Kenneth W. Grundy, "Is Totalitarianism Taking Over in Africa?" *Africa Today* 14, no. 3 (June 1967), 16.

5. Ibid., 13.

6. Juan J. Linz, *Totalitarianism and Authoritarian Regimes* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 131.

7. Peter Schwab, Designing West Africa, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 122.

8. Ibid., 127.

9. Ibid., 131.

10. Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 236.

11. Linz, 233–237.

12. Jackson and Rosberg, 213.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid., 214.

15. Marina and David Ottoway, *Afrocommunism,* 2nd ed. (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986).

16. Afrobarometer, 2019.

3

"The North Korea of Africa": Eritrea

The most clear-cut candidate for a totalitarian state in Africa is Eritrea, a country sometimes compared to North Korea, and for good reason. Unlike North Korea, however, Eritrea rarely gets much attention outside the Horn of Africa. Eritrea does not possess a nuclear bomb, and its population of more than five million is about a quarter the population of North Korea; but in many other respects the countries are similar. Eritrea is the same size as North Korea in terms of territory, with a history as bloody and tragic, and is today just as closed, repressive, and unpredictable. Eritrea was long dominated by, historically linked with, and ethnically akin to its giant neighbor to the south, Ethiopia. Having gained de facto independence from Ethiopia in 1991 and formal independence in 1993 after a 30-year war, Eritrea is now Africa's second youngest country after South Sudan, which in 2011 emulated it in breaking Africa's long taboo against changing colonial boundaries. Like both North Korea and South Sudan, Eritrea's nationhood was forged in war, and the country has long been oriented around conflict. Like North Korea, Eritrea is largely cut off from the outside world; much of the information about conditions in the country must be obtained from refugees who have fled; and sources must be kept confidential for fear of retaliation, including against relatives left behind. Foreigners are usually not allowed to travel outside the capital, Asmara, which contributes to the country rarely making international headlines. Despite these limitations, a thin but broad array of evidence can be assembled that is more than sufficient to confirm the Eritrean system to be totalitarian.

The foundations of Eritrea's totalitarian system can be found throughout its difficult history. The country has struggled against Ethiopian domination since medieval times. It was colonized by the Italians, who captured

Massawa with British help in 1885 but failed to extend their conquests into Ethiopia. The early Italian colonists in Eritrea were later implicated in a series of massacres, acts of terrorism, and other abuses tantamount to genocide. From 1897 to 1907, under the governorship of Ferdinando Martini, the worst aspects of colonialism were curbed, a railroad was built, and Eritrea emerged as a nation. After Benito Mussolini became fascist dictator of Italy, he transformed the Eritrean capital of Asmara into Africa's most modern city, a showcase of art deco architecture, which it remains today, as if frozen in time. It also became the base for Italy's African empire; from there, Italy launched its more successful assault on Ethiopia, which finally fell to the Italians in 1936. The Italians were defeated by the British in 1941 during the bloody battle of Keren, which helped turn the tide of World War II. Following 10 years of British administration, Eritrea was federated to Ethiopia by the UN in 1950. But the country was subsequently ignored by the international community, as the Ethiopian emperor, Haile Selassie, gradually absorbed Eritrea into Ethiopia, suspending the Eritrean constitution, political parties, and trade unions, discarding the flag in 1958, forcing the Eritrean Assembly to vote itself out of existence, and ending the federal status of Eritrea in 1962. An armed uprising led by the Muslim-dominated Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) soon began but eventually fell apart, to be succeeded by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) in 1970, which managed to gain control over nearly the entire country except Asmara by 1978. After Haile Selassie was deposed in 1974, however, the Ethiopian Derg dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam, with massive assistance from the Soviet Union, East Germany, and Yemen, managed to turn the tide in Ethiopia's favor. It was only after more than a decade of additional fighting and enormous sacrifice that the EPLF ultimately defeated the Mengistu regime.

Thus, after 30 years of war, the EPLF finally won the struggle for independence, which Eritrea declared in 1993 after a UN-monitored referendum was approved by more than 98 percent of the population. At independence, the EPLF transformed itself into the Popular Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) and remains the only legal political party in Eritrea. Isaias Afwerki had been leader of the EPLF for some 20 years and has been Eritrea's only president since independence. A constitution was ratified by the Constituent Assembly in 1997 but has never been formally implemented, and no national elections have ever been held. A war that broke out over a boundary dispute with Ethiopia in 1998 placed Eritrea in a permanent state of emergency, justifying the suspension of elections and the imposition of extraordinary security measures. The military culture and the leader who brought independence thus also brought a distrust of democratic values such as compromise, dialogue, individualism, and transparency. As the Eritrean scholar Gaim Kibreab has described it, "The seeds of tyrannical

rule and control-freakery were sown in the process of building a monolithic military organization during the war of liberation."[1]

All these struggles galvanized a spirit of self-reliance, discipline, and ideological fanaticism that gave rise to modern Eritrean political culture. These might have been virtues and might have provided a rationale for the government's policies, but ultimately they have been distorted in such a way as to stifle democracy. Marina Ottaway has argued that Eritrea, like Ethiopia and Uganda, had chosen state reconstruction and economic development over participation and democracy. The population, she noted, "is willing to accept government control without much resentment," but not indefinitely if it is not accompanied by economic growth. She speculated whether the "benevolent, top-down system" would degenerate into a "malevolent authoritarian one," which indeed it has. Despite Eritrea's "energetic, disciplined, and cohesive" leadership, Ottaway doubted the government had the human resources to successfully pursue "the ambitious model of the East Asian developmental state."[2] The judgment of Eritrea's subsequent course must be harsh, for the country sacrificed democracy in the name of national development and got neither. The irony that a nation suffering under the colonial regime of Mussolini's avowedly totalitarian ideology was liberated by a movement that in due course matured into one no less totalitarian in its practice is tragic and widely acknowledged. As one village elder is quoted to have said, "We have seen this system of governance before during the Italian period. We resisted the authority imposed on us by the colonial administrators at that time; this time it is our own kinsmen who do it; and we do not know what to do."[3]

The journalist Michela Wrong's poignant account of Eritrea's struggle, *I Didn't Do It for You*, narrates the legacy of centuries of exploitation, manipulation, and neglect by foreign powers. Her sympathetic portrayal of the Eritrean struggle and the unquestionably courageous and visionary role of its leader, Isaias, are nevertheless tempered by the disappointment of recent years, when the pathology of the regime became apparent. "The Eritrea I visit these days is not the country I knew," she laments.[4] Likewise, Dan Connell, another longtime Western sympathizer and one-time apologist who has written extensively about Eritrea's liberation struggle, was eventually compelled to acknowledge that the Eritrean dream had turned into a nightmare. His mea culpa published in 2003 at an African Studies Association conference marked a tipping point: "Dramatic and far-reaching changes in the postwar political situation in Eritrea have undermined the very popular democracy project that drew me into Eritrea so tightly and for so long. Prominent among them have been the closing of public political space, the shutdown of the private press, the arrest and indefinite detention of key figures from the liberation struggle, and the imposition of a coercive regime on the population at large."[5] In the end,

Isaias's assertion of increasingly absolute power betrayed the idealistic freedom struggle he led. Wrong and Connell have explained how this betrayal was a product of extraordinary historical, political, and social forces, but however much these former sympathizers might wish to do so, they cannot absolve him of his guilt.

My recent attempts to obtain a business visa to visit Eritrea have been unsuccessful due to my inability to secure an official invitation. Thus, like that of the UN Human Rights Council and most other outsiders, my research has been limited to exiled dissidents and second-hand sources. I visited Eritrea only once, in November 1992, and my notes reflect the cautious optimism that was abundant in those days. While there, I met with Yamani Gebre Mikael, the deputy foreign minister, who graciously welcomed me in his spacious but spartan office. Refreshingly unlike the comportment of most such dignitaries, he was dressed in a plain white T-shirt and was making use of a laptop computer, still a novelty in those days. It was barely six months before the independence referendum, which he said would be a great challenge for a poor country such as Eritrea to hold, but which was getting little international support. Donors had been insisting on their own terms, and the Eritreans had respectfully declined. Yamani said that the Eritrean government was unequivocally committed to democracy and civilian rule but would proceed as it saw fit. He said he considered principles such as the rule of law more important than superficial aspects of democracy such as electoral systems. No government officials were getting paid, except for food and housing and a monthly allowance of US$10. Many EPLF members were finding the demands of government more difficult than the simple discipline of their years in the field when all their needs were met, even if this amounted to only a plate of lentils and one set of combat fatigues. Another interlocutor during this visit advised me that there was little to criticize about the government, and that although autocratic tendencies did exist, these were probably not intentional. Some officials were mainly concerned about protecting their fiefdoms, but most were exceptionally idealistic. Human rights were respected, and the need for a stronger nongovernmental organization (NGO) sector was widely recognized, I was told.[6]

Consensus on Human Rights

That the Eritrean government is exceptionally closed and repressive is an assessment broadly shared internationally by analysts and policymakers. Freedom House gave Eritrea a generous 4-6 "partly free" score in 1998, which declined to a "not free" 5-7 in 1999 due to the suppression of civil society and political parties, further declining to a 6-7 in 2002 because of media suppression, and finally hitting the bottom with a 7-7 in 2010, where

it has stayed ever since, due to repression of religious minorities, government dominance over the judiciary, and the country's national service program, "which ties people to the state for much of their working lives." Freedom House now describes the PFDJ government as "harshly authoritarian."

Human Rights Watch, in its 2016 World Report, states that "Eritrea's citizens remain subjects of one of the world's most oppressive governments." In terse language, the report declares, "President Isaias rules without institutional restraint. No national elections have been held since self-rule in 1991. Eritrea has had no legislature since 2002. The judiciary is subject to executive control and interference. A constitution adopted in 1997 remains unimplemented. Public space to question government policy does not exist. No domestic nongovernmental organizations are permitted. The government owns all media."[7] Exactly as it has in previous years, the US State Department's 2015 Human Rights Report stated that "the government of the State of Eritrea is a highly centralized, authoritarian regime under the control of President Isaias Afwerki." The State Department's 20-page report enumerates a long list of ongoing human rights abuses, which it then expands on, including the following:

> Killings and disappearances; torture and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment; arbitrary arrest; executive interference in the judiciary; lack of due process and excessively long pretrial detention; politically motivated detentions; evictions without due process; infringement on privacy rights; restrictions on freedom of speech and press; restrictions on academic freedom and cultural events; restrictions on freedom of assembly, association, and religion; limits on freedom of movement and foreign travel.[8]

Monism

Eritrea's monistic conflation of party, government, judiciary, legislature, military, economy, civil society, media, and religion is supported by a host of evidence and outside assessments. One notable assessment, which happens to assert the accusation of totalitarianism, is *The Lasting Struggle for Freedom in Eritrea,* a comprehensive human rights report commissioned by the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights and written by the Norwegian researcher Kjetil Tronvall. He offered the following for consideration: "The current situation in Eritrea regarding democratization and human rights can only be described as an extremely totalitarian military dictatorship. The President is relying on just a handful of men to control the security and military apparatus in order to dominate and suppress the entire Eritrean population." In addition to citing the nonimplementation of the constitution and the monopoly of power by the PFDJ/EPLF, Tronvall itemized a long list of other indicators to support his conclusion, including the following:

- The government controls all mass media, the independent press has been shut down since September 2001;
- The government directly interferes with and controls the judiciary;
- Extrajudicial sentencing and killings occur regularly;
- There is widespread detention without trial of individuals associated with any kind of activity not prescribed or sanctioned by the authorities;
- Detainees are routinely tortured, and prison conditions are in general inhumane;
- Freedom of expression is severely curtailed, if it exists at all;
- Freedom of assembly is severely curtailed, prohibiting the gathering of more than a handful of people;
- Independent research and academic freedom are severely curtailed;
- The government restricts the development of an independent civil society. No independent human rights or civic rights organizations exist;
- Due to government priorities and mismanagement, there is escalating poverty and a sharp decline in economic activities;
- The government is nourishing a "political culture of war" and enforces a continuous mobilization of young men and women sustaining Africa's biggest army;
- The existence of an elaborate secret intelligence network, spying and informing on all sectors of society;
- Religious communities are restricted in the practice of their beliefs and "new" Christian churches are banned and their followers persecuted.[9]

As Eritrea is Africa's last remaining unapologetically single-party state, the case for its identification as a totalitarian system has not changed perceptibly in the years since Tronvall's damning indictment. The most recent reports from Freedom House, Human Rights Watch, and the US State Department confirm this. Not only are no other political parties allowed, but in monistic totalitarian fashion, the PFDJ exerts maximum control of all other aspects and branches of government, society, and the economy. In the liberation struggle, the EPLF succeeded in eliminating rival movements and internal dissent, centralizing power at the top of the party. The security apparatus sacrificed legal principles to pragmatism and opportunism to protect the party leadership. This informal governance style defined rights and duties largely based on the distinction between fighters and civilians. The *Tegadelti* comprised just 95,000 fighters in the liberation struggle but are accorded 50 percent of the seats in the National Assembly by Article 4(3) of Proclamation 37/1993. The *Hafash* are the "masses," the remaining civilian public. This informal governance phenomenon is exacerbated by Eritrea's failure to promulgate its constitution.[10] The president thus has great latitude to rule arbitrarily.

In addition to exerting total control over the political system, the government also dominates the legal system. All international human rights

reports describe the Eritrean judiciary as weak and prone to control by the executive. The president sometimes personally interferes in the courts' decisions. In addition to Eritrea's civil and military courts, there is a special court that operates in secret and is not enshrined in law that can sentence political prisoners. Within the civil court structure, the community courts handle minor cases and are administered by single elected judges, generally without legal training and relying on customary law. These community courts, however, may be the best providers of justice for the average Eritrean. The next level of courts, the Zoba, includes civil, criminal, and sharia benches. These courts hear cases by a three-judge appellate bench. The three-judge high court hears serious felonies including rape and murder. A five-judge high court serves as the Supreme Court and is the bench of last resort. The government appoints judges at its discretion, and there is no independent judicial service commission. Eritrea's military court rules in cases regarding members of the armed forces and is presided over by senior military officers. It has higher and lower levels depending on the seriousness of the crime, but neither level affords a right to appeal. Given the militarization of Eritrean society, with more than 300,000 people enlisted in the military, the military court cases can take on important political overtones.

Eritrea's special court was established by the president in 1996 and operates in secrecy. It has no known statutory basis but apparently focuses on corruption, government, and political cases. The judges are mainly senior military officials picked by, and accountable only to, the president. Decisions may be reached without reference to law, and the court can overrule existing court decisions. Trials are conducted in secret, and defendants have no right to legal representation. Judges serve as prosecutors, and defendants are kept incommunicado and may be detained indefinitely. Special court decisions are final, although in rare instances they can be appealed to the president. In addition, Eritrea's court system has been reduced in size and capacity over the years; no new private lawyers have been licensed since 2000, and no habeas corpus protection against arbitrary detention has been invoked since 2004.[11]

Eritrea's legislature is even less viable. As a 2013 report of the UN special rapporteur concluded, "Legislative functions accorded to the National Assembly by the unimplemented Constitution have been assumed entirely by the Government. The Ministry of Justice drafts and publishes laws in collaboration with other relevant ministries and the Office of the President; Eritrea is thus a country ruled by decree. The National Assembly has not convened since 2002."[12]

Over all of this presides the dictator. Wrong describes Isaias as "imposingly tall, fiercely intelligent, naturally austere. . . . His upper arm bore a scar in the shape of an 'E,' carved at a meeting at which three disaffected young

ELF members swore to create an effective revolutionary movement." In the early 1990s, he had caught cerebral malaria and nearly died, but he managed to recover and return from the hospital in Israel to a triumphal welcome suggestive of a personality cult. He had once declared, "The PFDJ is Eritrea and I am the PFDJ." He "kept his counsel and nursed his grudges long and hard," and he "could be gruff to the point of rudeness," Wrong said. "He was a single-minded, driven personality perfectly fitted to the role of running a guerrilla organization." She suggested that one factor for his dominance over his fellows was simply their physical fear. Not only was he tall, but he was a hard drinker who could lose his temper, once breaking a whiskey bottle over the head of a cabinet minister.[13] As referenced by Martin Plaut, in a dispatch dated March 5, 2009, the US ambassador to Eritrea, Ronald McMullen, describes Isaias as "an austere and narcissistic dictator whose political ballast derives from Maoist ideology fine-tuned during Eritrea's 30-year war for independence. He is paranoid and believes Ethiopian PM Meles tried to kill him and that the United States will attempt to assassinate him." The ambassador's assessment also documents how Isaias expects to live a long time, once berated the Chinese for embracing market capitalism, is a talented speechwriter who has a hot temper, holds grudges, and is thin skinned and hard hearted. More charitably, Isaias is absolved of nepotism, and—contrary to Wrong's portrayal—has not encouraged a cult of personality, appearing in the media in casual clothes and rarely traveling in a motorcade.[14]

Even one-party states hold plebiscites to legitimize their rule, but the only such popular exercise Eritrea has had was the referendum on independence held April 23–25, 1993. Although not fully comparable to some of the other electoral processes that will be examined in this study, because, for example, it occurred more than 20 years ago, the Eritrean referendum does warrant some consideration as a point of reference and for some premonition of what was to come. In 1992, a proclamation determining Eritrean nationality, including the expulsion of thousands of Ethiopian administrators, and a proclamation setting forth the referendum process, were published. The UN General Assembly approved a resolution that included the provision for a UN Observer Mission to Verify the Referendum in Eritrea (UNOVER), which sent more than 120 observers to Eritrea from 38 countries. More than 98 percent of registered voters, 1,156,280 persons, voted, of whom 99.8 percent voted in favor of independence. The UNOVER special representative certified that the process had been "free and fair at every stage," and Eritrea became a sovereign country on April 27. A US contingent of UNOVER organized by the African-American Institute (AAI) produced a report at the time that concurred with the mission's finding that the process had been free and fair and had gone very smoothly, despite some "lapses," understandable under the circumstances. Although the AAI delegation terms of reference stated that "there was no guarantee

that after the referendum there would be democratic governance in Eritrea," the mission maintained a working assumption that this would be the case. Civic education had been thorough, and citizen monitors were ubiquitous. The delegation noted, however, that "various EPLF organizations mounted active campaigns in favor of a 'yes' vote on the ballot. Often it was difficult to distinguish between the ERC's [referendum commission's] educational campaigns and those of the EPLF youth groups, women's groups and other organizations." The delegation advised that in the future such campaign activity around polling stations, which one member found intimidating, should be prohibited.[15]

An Absence of Civil Society and the Independent Press

Throughout this study, independent civil society will serve as an important proxy for the relative "political space," or social autonomy and democratic potential, in a country, versus the monistic dominance of the state over social life characteristic of totalitarian regimes. A long-standing critique of civil society in Africa has been that it is an artificial creation of foreign donors intent on imposing their hegemony on African polities. This is at least one of the rationales that governments have used to restrict foreign funding, impose onerous registration laws, issue denunciations in the state-controlled media and government statements, and pursue outright harassment, imprisonment, and sometimes physical elimination of activists. This has become a growing trend around the continent, but unsurprisingly, it is especially acute in the totalitarian states and their emulators. Before the advent of Africa's most recent "wave of independence," much of the work of African civil society was confined to the problems of economic development and nonpolitical associational life such as burial societies and sewing creches. Youth, women, and trade union organizations were typically state controlled. Some NGOs such as the Press Union of Liberia, the Law Association of Zambia, and the Babiker Badri Scientific Association in Sudan certainly existed for decades before. But it was not until the mid-1980s that a growing flood of international funding began to appear, such as that led by the Nordic countries and the Ford Foundation in South Africa, and soon included many other donors throughout the continent supporting NGOs that focused on political concerns such as human rights and democratic development. NGOs may be categorized in a variety of ways, such as service delivery, voluntary, grassroots, briefcase, international, and governmental (i.e., a government-organized NGO, or GONGO).[16] This study concentrates on a small but prominent group of what will be termed "advocacy NGOs," including organizations monitoring and espousing human rights, conducting election observations, providing civic education, protecting the environment,

fighting corruption, and defending the interests of women, youth, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) persons. Beyond the NGO sector, in what this study will simply call civil society, may be found the trade unions, professional and business associations, religious and traditional communities, and similar institutions that also play a vital role in the arena of "political space." The presence of advocacy NGOs, civil society, and the independent press contradicts the totalitarian project. Independent NGOs often function and even thrive in authoritarian environments, as will be shown, but they are the antithesis of totalitarianism.

It is not the purpose of this book to argue for the right of African NGOs to request and receive international funding, although that right has been recognized by the UN. As critics have argued, many African NGOs may in fact have difficulty sustaining themselves without international assistance.[17] They are often dominated by elites out of touch with the common people. They may be used by opposition politicians to further their agenda or consist of nothing more than an unscrupulous entrepreneur operating out of a briefcase to scam funds from gullible donors. It is true that NGOs are sometimes donor driven, and African NGOs may stand accused of advancing the West's neoliberal agenda. Advocacy groups may focus on the latest international fad, such as female genital mutilation or budget accountability. They may serve as vehicles for "soft power," cultivating goodwill for the donor nation, serving as a vehicle for benefactors to allay guilt, enabling donor governments to circumvent unsavory government partners. Some African NGOs spend a lot of time criticizing their government, make no attempt to be in sync with the official economic development plan, and espouse different priorities, perspectives, and ideologies than those espoused by the ruling regime. Corruption and unethical behavior have not been unknown in the NGO sector. Inflated egos and abrasive personalities abound. Competition over resources and political rivalries are common.

It is my strong contention, however, that thousands of foreign-funded NGOs, as well as even more non-foreign-funded CSOs, have made major contributions to the expansion of freedom and respect for human rights that has undeniably occurred across the continent over the past 30 years. In the absence of local resources due to poverty and sometimes politically restricted environments, the possibility of such NGOs emerging without outside assistance is small, and for them to become strong, even smaller. Notwithstanding neoliberal inclinations, the agenda of most foreign donors, both public and private, has usually coincided not only with that of the direct recipients of funds but with that of the citizen beneficiaries of their work in the countries concerned. This does not discount the fact that donors may be mistaken and misinformed, operate with ulterior motives such as security or commercial considerations, and cause almost as many problems as they

solve. Often the NGOs' agendas have coincided with those of African governments, especially those recognizing the rights of their citizens, but not always. A correlation has been well established, however, between the ability of NGOs and civil society in general to operate independently, including the right to receive foreign funding, and the relative level of freedom enjoyed by the citizens of that country.[18]

For this reason, Eritrea stands out. More thoroughly than any other government in Africa, the Eritrean regime has vanquished civil society. According to the 2013 report of the UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, no political or civic organizations or independent NGOs are permitted in Eritrea, except those affiliated with the authorities. No political parties or private associations are allowed. Public gatherings of more than seven people are prohibited without a permit, and any questions about or criticism of policies at government meetings can be grounds for arrest. Not a single international NGO is operating today in Eritrea.[19] Eritrea's last known independent domestic NGO, the Regional Center for Human Rights and Development, received a grant from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in 1992 to launch a newspaper supporting the new constitution. Directed by Paulos Tesfagiorgis, founding chairman of the Eritrean Relief Association, the EPLF's humanitarian wing, a close associate of Isaias, and one of the drafters of the Eritrean constitution, the group was nonetheless closed down by presidential order in 1993, and Paulos was confined to house arrest for three months. He now lives in exile. Wrong describes Paulos, once a stalwart of the regime, as "an asylum-seeker, doomed to a rootless existence spent sleeping on other people's sofas, negotiating the maze of foreign bureaucracies, dependent on the generosity of friends-of-friends."[20] He is a prime example of the waste of talent and potential that has hobbled the country. Paulos has since returned to the life of an activist, his hopes for Eritrea not yet extinguished.

Instead of having even a hint of independence, organizations such as the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) hold events and conduct projects strictly in accordance with the government's policies. The NUEW was established in 1979 as one of the EPLF's mass organizations and today states that it is "an autonomous non-governmental organization dedicated to improving the status of women." During the liberation struggle, the group organized and encouraged women to participate in the war, and it has since tried to raise their political consciousness through literacy campaigns, credit programs, English language lessons, and other skills trainings. Its mission is "to ensure that all Eritrean women confidently stand for their rights and equally participate in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres of the country and share the benefits." The group's website does not appear to be kept updated, however. It mainly

features the report of a workshop on "The Role of Women Workers in National Reconstruction" that seems to have taken place around the 30th anniversary of the organization in 2009. Characteristic of the presentations at the meeting, the president of NUEW, Luul Gebreab, cited the theoretical contributions of President Isaias Afwerki regarding workers and stated that "they all will be abided by [sic] these theories so as to assess the circumstances of Eritrean women workers" because of the "strong motive that is existed [sic] in the government and its allies to equip Eritrean women with modern technology and knowledge to facilitate productivity that is the principal driving force of national development."[21]

Eritrean civil society does exercise some independence in the large and growing diaspora, despite the harassment and threats against family members that continue even in exile. One prominent human rights organization is Human Rights Concern—Eritrea (HRCE), based in the United Kingdom. Led by Elizabeth Chyrum, the director, the group focuses on advocacy, lobbying, education, research, and documentation. Among other actions, HRCE submitted a report to the UN Human Rights Council's 18th Universal Periodic Review, for example, and, in contrast to NUEW, it maintains a website with current events, detailed reporting, and compelling videos documenting human rights abuses in Eritrea. For example, HRCE produced a report, "Slaves of Eritrea," on the use of conscripted labor by a Canadian company, Nevsun Resources, to build its mine in Bisha, located 150 kilometers from Asmara. Nevsun had been obliged to contract with Segen Construction, a subcontractor owned by the EPLF, which may have employed more than 800 conscripts at the site, who reportedly worked without helmets or shoes and with poor food and housing. Although the allegations could not be proven conclusively, HRCE effectively pressured the company and the Canadian government to pay greater attention to working conditions at the mine and investments in Eritrea in general.[22]

Another diaspora-based advocacy group demonstrates both the difficulty of challenging the regime as well as the innovation that such hardship can stimulate. Arbi Harnet ("Freedom Friday") was founded in November 2011, linking diaspora activists with underground activists within Eritrea. Its best-known initiative has been a robocall campaign that made thousands of calls on Fridays to random telephone numbers in the Eritrean phone directory with short messages about issues such as the refugee crisis and political prisoners. Those receiving the calls cannot be accused of subversion, since even high-level government officials have been targeted with the calls asking them to stop abusing their fellow citizens.[23] A campaign on behalf of a missing disabled prisoner and veteran freedom fighter, Idriss Abu Arre, placed posters on the main streets of Asmara. Programs on diaspora radio, an underground newsletter, online video features and protest music, and Nakfa Talks (a project that put messages on the local currency)

are among the creative initiatives of this group. If there are any glimmers of hope for Eritrea, it may well be due to such advocacy.[24]

Eritrea's control over the country's means of communications is as total as is possible in the modern world. In 2015, as it has in previous years, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CJP) declared Eritrea to be "the most censored country in the world," followed by North Korea. The last foreign reporter was expelled in 2007. The Ministry of Information directs news coverage, arranging interviews and telling journalists what they should write, including a lot of nice things about the president.[25] Eritrea has had no private media since 2001, when 18 journalists and 11 former government officials were detained incommunicado, eight of whom have since been confirmed to have died in custody. Currently 30 journalists are estimated to be in prison. Internet penetration remains weak, affordable only to a handful; all service providers must connect to the web through the government's Eri-Tel; and plans to introduce mobile internet were abandoned in 2011. Exiled radio broadcasts such as Radio Erena and Al Jazeera are frequently jammed. The government shut down state-owned Radio Bana in 2009 and detained 38 staff. Other journalists of state-owned radio stations have also been arrested since then. In 2013, Reporters Without Borders ranked Eritrea at the very bottom of its Press Freedom Index for the sixth year in a row, again edging out North Korea. In its submission to the UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review, Reporters Without Borders noted "the absence of any progress whatsoever in the situation of the media and journalists in Eritrea," calling the country "Africa's biggest prison for journalists." News gathering is extremely difficult due to "constant surveillance," according to this media watchdog. Since 2009, at least 34 Eritrean journalists have fled the country, and others have been arrested or killed in the attempt.[26]

Ideology

The central role of ideology in providing the framework for the Eritrean state has been reinforced by decades of war that contributed to the militarism, intolerance of dissent, and increasing centralization of decisionmaking. Isaias has long been committed to "guided democracy," a form of centralized control to develop the economy and unify and transform the society. As stated by Dan Connell, "Democracy in this view had more to do with participation (voluntary or not) than accountability. In the tradition of state-centered authoritarian socialism, they relegated political democracy to the status of a luxury." Connell traced the inspiration for the Eritrean system to Leninist traditions. "In Isaias's case (Eritreans traditionally go by first names), this was reinforced by training in China at the height of the Cultural Revolution, during which he received intensive exposure to Maoist

doctrine whose themes of extreme 'voluntarism' and populism continue to define his world view."[27] Ideological rigor could sustain the state only for so long, however, and foreign capitalists have been recruited to help keep the system going. Despite Eritrea's economic difficulties, the government expects the recent discovery of large deposits of gold to reinforce its ability to maintain control, while the regime is at the same time tightening the restrictions against the few international agencies still working in the country.[28] As one observer lamented, "A revolutionary struggle, declared and perceived as anticolonial and attuned to an emancipating world-revolutionary process, which won sympathy and credit among the Western left because it was both anticapitalist and anti-Soviet, thus turned into a state capitalist project controlled by a totalitarian dictatorship."[29]

Alex de Waal argues that most politics in the Horn of Africa can be boiled down to the pursuit of money and the power that comes with it. He describes the "political career of Isaias Afwerki as a story of ideological commitment mutating into political-business management." De Waal describes how the political economy of Eritrea originated with the Red Sea Trading Corporation, which secured weapons for the armed struggle and evolved into the Hidri Trust conglomerate, which monopolized all government contracts and shut out the private sector. The government also depended on remittances and the tax on the diaspora, as well as financial assistance from Libya and Saudi Arabia, for its efforts to counter Ethiopia, but the resources were too meager to enable Isaias to buy off challengers, such as the G15. Instead, he relied on violence and ruled by fear, playing the party and military against each other rather than allowing them to conflate. His life became much easier when Nevsun began to ship gold to Canada in 2011, however. Ethiopia's export income shot up from $13 million in 2010 to $457 million in 2012. According to de Waal, concerning the government's 40 percent stake, "there is little doubt that those revenues are personally controlled by the president."[30]

In fact, the Eritrean system may have transcended ideology. In a development reminiscent of Orwell, ideology has become completely internalized ("He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother."). In Washington, DC, from time to time, demonstrations in support of the Eritrean regime have drawn fervid crowds, whether due to concerns about relatives back home, ties to the embassy, or genuine belief in the system. But back at home, Eritreans have been beaten down so long and isolated so much that indoctrination is hardly necessary. The population no longer requires a justification for its plight, and political education barely goes beyond loyalty to the state. In a recent survey of Eritrean refugees, most of the respondents had little to say about the country's politics. Their main explanation for fleeing was to avoid indefinite conscription; any concern about a lack of freedom, democracy, or human rights, or even escaping poverty, was absent. They had very

little ideological training after Sawa, Eritrea's military training camp that all must attend, and no concept of what was happening in their government, such as the aborted 2013 coup attempt, Operation Forto. They did not see Ethiopia as a threat and could not explain why Eritrea needed such a large army. The forced labor by the conscripts included building roads, irrigation canals, farm work, and construction; and although the work was not too hard and the days were not long, the respondens complained the punishment for minor infractions could be frequent. The conscripts said the long marches seemed to have no purpose. According to the refugees, internal movement was becoming easier. Although there were still many checkpoints around the border areas, the shoot-to-kill policy was rarely exercised anymore, and it was easy to escape, they reported. The Eritrean refugees did not know how to use a cell phone and had little sense of the outside world or how they were perceived by outsiders.[31]

Another aspect of the regime that finds a counterpart in the functioning of classical totalitarian systems, if not their ideological rigor, is the phenomenon of onion-like layers of political and security control, much as Hannah Arendt described in the case of Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party. Within the party were the more militant stormtroopers, the SA; then the SS, an elite formation within the SA; and within that Heimlich Himmler created the shock troops, then the Death's-Head units, the Waffen-SS, and finally the Security Service and the Race and Resettlement Office.[32] Likewise, in the case of Eritrea, Isaias revealed the existence of the secret Eritrean People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) in 1994, which he said was a party within the EPLF that had functioned as a revolutionary vanguard, directing the wider organization. Although the EPRP was officially disbanded in 1989, the government continues to be run by an amorphous and shrinking group of people whose authority is dependent on the favor of Isaias. Arendt observed that it was not charisma or organizational acumen or even the use of violence that enabled Hitler and Joseph Stalin to rise but their devotion to questions of personnel, "so that after a few years hardly any man of importance remained who did not owe his position to them."[33] In Eritrea, the most remarkable instance of this occurred in May 2001 when, after the war with Ethiopia, a group of 15 leading members of the PFDJ, who became known as the G15, wrote an open letter to the party calling for reforms. Their letter decried "the advent of one-man dominance" but acknowledged that, "in fairness, the blame must also be shared by other members of the leadership to the extent that they did not object to the negative practices."

What followed were echoes of Arthur Koestler's doomed Rubashov in *Darkness at Noon,* as the revolution devours its young. Isaias hit back hard at this challenge to his authority. On September 18, 2001, 11 of the signatories were arrested. All were members of the PFDJ Central Committee, including three former foreign ministers and three army generals.

They are still being held incommunicado, and some may have died in detention. Other Eritrean officials, party leaders, relatives of the G15, and elders suspected of being sympathetic to the G15 were also arrested and continue to be detained incommunicado. Journalists and students were arrested as well.[34]

As Eritrea's Freedom House scores have shown, the country has progressively become more repressive ever since. "Western-style democracy" is not even given lip service. Multiparty democracy "is not the form of government for us," according to Yemane Gebreab, the PFDJ's political head and adviser to Isaias. "We are interested, chiefly, in governance based on citizenship, where citizens are treated equally. We are interested in basic fundamental rights and freedoms for our people. We want to build a political system that is suited to our own situation and that corresponds to the real needs and demands of our people. So we are in an experimental stage. We will continue to build this type of political system for Eritrea."[35]

The Mass Movement

The use of mass mobilization by the Eritrean system is also apparent. Mass membership organizations such as NUEW have already been noted, but going beyond such typical institutions, the Eritrean state's coercive employment of a huge proportion of the population is extraordinary. The International Crisis Group has observed, "National service puts large pools of labour at the state's disposal for commercial agricultural projects and the building of roads and dams; however, these are exercises in state control rather than significant contributions to economic development—many such projects are largely irrelevant."[36] Regarding the national service conscripts, Human Rights Watch stated that they are sometimes used for the personal benefit of military commanders and other officials and are often physically abused and tortured; additionally, female conscripts are sometimes sexually abused. Some conscripts who attempted to flee in 2016 were reportedly killed by guards. Their pay is insufficient to support their families, and this system of forced conscription is a primary motivation for them to flee the country. The Eritrean government had pledged to the EU in 2015 that new conscripts would no longer be held more than 18 months, but this policy was abandoned. The government promised to raise conscripts' pay instead, but Human Rights Watch reported that there has been no evidence that this has happened.[37]

Arendt proposed that "the concentration camps are the most consequential institution of totalitarian rule," stating that, in fact, they are "essential to the preservation of the regime's power." This is so not because the camps serve as punishment or provide economic benefits, she

said, but because they instill terror throughout the population and provide an often-sadistic training ground for domination.[38] In this regard, Eritrea has excelled. AI estimated that Eritrea holds at least 10,000 political prisoners. Hundreds of Eritreans have been arrested for being opponents or suspected opponents of the government, but AI has no evidence that any were ever charged with an offense, provided a lawyer, or tried. In most cases, detainees are never told how long their sentences are, and they may be held incommunicado for years, even decades. One such example is Mohamed Meranet, a judge from the city of Keren, who was arrested in 1991 on suspicion of having contact with Ethiopia and was last seen in 1997. Hundreds of Muslim teachers were arrested between 1992 and 1994 after Eritrea broke off diplomatic relations with Sudan and have since disappeared. Since then, other Muslims, former members of the ELF, the Muslim-dominated predecessor and rival to the EPLF, have also been arrested and disappeared. Since 2002, AI has documented cases of a singer, former employees of NGOs, businesspersons, soldiers, and journalists being arrested without charge and held incommunicado. Only four religions—Islam, Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity, and Lutheran Protestant Christianity—are officially recognized in Eritrea, and thousands of adherents of other religions, such as Pentecostals and Evangelicals, have been arrested, many held incommunicado. Between 1,500 and 3,000 are estimated to be held in detention, including more than 100 arrested in early 2013. The Jehovah's Witnesses have been especially targeted, since their religion prohibits the bearing of arms and they refuse to perform military service. They have been stripped of citizenship, and at least 157 have been arrested and detained. Even leaders of recognized churches have been arrested, including Abune Antonios, the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, who was 79 when he was arrested in January 2006 and has since been held incommunicado. He had reportedly protested the arrest of three priests whose church the government wanted to shut down.

The AI report also found that thousands of Eritreans have been detained for attempting to avoid conscription into national service, which is mandatory for all men and women 18 to 50 years old. National service is formally six months in the military and 12 months in some other government service but may be extended indefinitely, and some Eritreans have been conscripted for more than 10 years. All Eritrean children, some as young as 15, complete their final year of school at Sawa military training camp, conducting academic studies alongside military training. Conscripts are assigned to state and private projects such as construction and road building, work on agricultural farms, or work in government bureaucracies. As already noted, female conscripts have been subject to rape and sexual violence. Conscripts caught attempting to desert or avoid conscription may be beaten, tortured, and detained for one to two years incommunicado.

According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), some 3,000 Eritreans flee the country every month for Sudan and may be shot, according to official policy, or detained. Eritrean asylum-seekers who have been forcibly returned may be tortured and detained immediately upon their arrival in the country and are accused of treason. Egypt expelled up to 1,200 Eritrean asylum-seekers in June 2008, and 740 are still reportedly being held at Wi'a military prison camp. Family members of those who have fled may be fined or imprisoned in reprisal. When the minister of information, Ali Abdu Ahmed, defected on December 23, 2012, his brother, 87-year-old father, and 15-year-old daughter were all detained and have not been heard from since.[39]

The Eritrean gulag comprises an extensive network of as many as 200 large prison facilities, smaller high security prisons, prisons within military camps, and police stations. They may be well known or secret, purposefully built or makeshift, and some include the use of underground cells and metal shipping containers. Prominent political prisoners such as the G15 are held incommunicado and moved around from one prison to another; information about their whereabouts comes from former detainees or prison guards who claim to have seen them. They may be chained and held in solitary confinement. One prison that may have held the G15, Eiraeiro, reportedly has 62 cells that measure only 3 x 3 meters. Another prison, Adi Abeto, consists of several large halls in which hundreds of prisoners may be crowded at one time. At the island prison of Dahlak Kebir, temperatures can reach 40 degrees Celsius, and as many as 800 prisoners are held in eight sheet-metal buildings. These are just a few examples. Detention conditions can be horrific, overcrowded, unsanitary, damp, unbearably hot, or bitterly cold. Prisoners may be held underground with no light and no clothing, and covered with sores. Food is meager and poor quality, water unclean, toilet facilities inadequate, sickness pervasive, and medical treatment unavailable. Some detainees may be forced to do hard labor. Death in detention is common but rarely reported unless by information leaked from friendly guards or other informal methods. Beatings and torture can apparently be routine. A common torture is the notorious helicopter, whereby the victim's hands and feet are bound together behind the back and the person is made to lie on the ground face down, sometimes for days or even weeks at a time. This torture has many variations, and detainees may not survive.[40]

Terror

Of all the human rights reports about Eritrea, perhaps the most definitive document establishing the totalitarian essence of the regime is the *Report of the Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea,* published by the Human Rights Council of the UN in June 2015.[41] Although

not allowed to travel in Eritrea, members of the commission did manage to interview 550 refugees outside of Eritrea and received 160 written submissions. The nearly 500-page report details much of the history, structures, and abuses described previously and is frequently cited. Among its many contributions is its discussion of mass surveillance in Eritrea, about which it concludes that there is "a complex and multi-layered system to conduct surveillance of and spying on the Eritrean population, both within and outside the country, with the ultimate purpose of controlling it."[42] This system is used to instill fear and take such actions as arbitrary arrests, torture, and extrajudicial killings. Almost everyone is suspected of being a spy. The party, national security office, military intelligence units, and local government administration are complicit and ultimately report to the office of the president. Eritreans are expected to report on their neighbors and can be punished if they refuse to do so. "In Eritrea, you don't really trust anyone next to you," one witness said, a constant refrain.[43] In her examination of the "biopolitical" nature of the Eritrean state—that is, its drive to control not just the political life of citizens but the most personal mental and physical aspects of their human autonomy—ethnologist Tricia Redeker Hepner notes the abuses associated with the military service in Eritrea, including the policy of self-reliant development, resistance to internal division, and hostility to foreign influence, indeed, to any expression of dissidence. "It is through human rights abuses and other forms of repression that the government seeks to reassert totalizing sovereignty over the whole Eritrean terrain, from the minds and bodies of people themselves to the diasporic locations to which many have gone."[44]

Although the International Crisis Group (ICG) has opined that "the state cannot strictly be considered totalitarian, since it lacks the bureaucratic and technological resources to control its citizens quite so effectively,"[45] Connell has found that "longtime confidants refused to express criticism of the regime in public places, even in whispers, for fear they might be punished. Nor would they voice criticism over the phone or in emails, as they believed all electronic communication was monitored."[46] In other words, contrary to ICG's assessment, and however unsophisticated the Eritrean state might be, the state has been quite effective in imposing total control, whether with bureaucratic and technological means or with mass mobilization. Clearly, an Orwellian level of fear is at work in Eritrea, belying the ICG's estimation of the state's lack of technological capacity to impose totalitarian control. Like Tronvall, the journalist Martin Plaut is unequivocal in his assessment of the regime's surveillance prowess. "The Eritrean government's control over its population is pervasive, oppressive and totalitarian. The regime attempts to ensure that nothing escapes its purview. Internally its network of spies and informants is said to have extended to recruiting children who make their living by selling cigarettes and sweets on the streets. Abroad the regime's activities are equally vigilant," he finds.[47]

The Temptation

The flow of refugees from Eritrea to Europe has led to a reassessment of European policy. Denmark commissioned a fact-finding mission and report that minimized the human rights problems, justifying an end to the policy of granting asylum to Eritrean refugees. In 2012, the EU named a special representative for Eritrea, Alexander Rondos, whose goal was to improve overall regional stability and, by extension, relations between Eritrea and the EU. In July 2014, Italy's deputy minister of foreign affairs, Lapo Pistelli, visited Asmara, declaring Italy's determination to revitalize bilateral relations and "foster Eritrea's full reinstatement as a responsible actor and key member of the international community." However, in December 2014, a consortium of Eritrean advocacy organizations, including HRCE, issued a statement cautioning the EU to not be hasty in reestablishing relations with Eritrea. The human rights groups noted that past attempts at détente with Eritrea had been rebuffed by Isaias. The Eritrean government has learned that "if it remained obdurate European politicians and civil servants would, in time, give in to its demands. President Isaias was determining the agenda and had no intention of softening his stance on his people's democratic rights."[48] According to the UNHCR, between January and August 2014, 37,000 Eritreans had sought refuge in Europe, almost three times the 13,000 who did so during the same time period in 2013. They were the second largest group to arrive in Italy after Syrians, whose country, unlike Eritrea, is at war. The UNHCR said that 90 percent of the refugees in October 2014 were 18 to 24 years old and "told us they were fleeing an intensified recruitment drive into the mandatory and often open-ended national service." Outside of Europe, Sudan hosts 109,594 Eritrean refugees and Ethiopia shelters 106,859.[49]

Eritrea may once have entranced international admirers, but as Wrong and Connell demonstrate, it does so no more. In this regard, Eritrea may be regarded as something of an exception. Unlike some of the other authoritarian and totalitarian cases in Africa, Eritrea has gone beyond the pale, and credible apologists are hard to find. Some have recently urged, however, that it is time Eritrea should at least be brought in from the cold. Critics of Eritrea's chief enemy, Ethiopia, have expressed sympathy for Eritrea, which received negligible support for its claims to sovereignty over Badme, despite international arbitration in its favor after the conflict with Ethiopia. The country has also made some measurable progress in meeting the UN's Millennium Development Goals by reducing infant mortality from 150 to 50 per 1,000 births and reducing maternal mortality from 1,700 to 380 per 100,000 live births.[50] Bronwyn Bruton of the Atlantic Council, who met with Isaias in February 2015, has argued that, despite international sanctions and within the context of what she acknowledges to be a closed polit-

ical system, Isaias's government has nevertheless provided the population significant economic development. Among her claims are that Eritrea is misunderstood and unfairly treated due to Ethiopia's international clout; that Eritrea could help security in the region and will turn to China if the West does not improve relations and that some 50 foreign journalists have actually been allowed into the country, the UN Human Rights Council has toured a prison, and several foreign NGOs, including Finn Church Aid, have been allowed to reopen. Although Isaias "inarguably exerts dispropor-tionate control over national and civic affairs," she contended there are "differences of opinion" and that the government is "not monolithic and is certainly not uniformly evil, incompetent, or intransigent." Eritrea should not be singled out for criticism on human rights, since it is no worse than other governments in the region, she said.[51]

The Eritrean government and especially its partners have begun to realize the need to clean up their image. In a widely circulated Facebook posting from the US Embassy in Asmara, the chief of mission, Louis Mazel, reported on a visit of international diplomats to the Bisha mine, which he described as "a modern, well-run facility that currently employs 1,400 people, of whom 90 percent are Eritrean." He praised the mine for paying some of the highest wages in the country and meeting safety stan-dards equivalent to anything in Canada or the United States. The group of diplomats observed a human rights training session for the mine's secu-rity staff and was assured that all the employees and contractors had been demobilized from the national service. The mine's health clinic was reported to be state of the art, and the group was told that the company also conducts corporate social responsibility projects in neighboring com-munities, such as planting trees and repairing canals. "In sum," Mazel concluded, "I saw a Western mining company that is creating jobs, invest-ing in local people, mining responsibly, respecting human rights, acting as a good neighbor, and contributing to national development in Eritrea. I hope this will become a model for future mines operating in the coun-try."[52] Although not a direct endorsement of the regime, the missive does counter the prevailing narrative about Eritrea, hinting at a new apprecia-tion for public relations, at least by Nevsun if not the government. Never-theless, Mazel's enthusiasm also suggests the low bar of expectations diplomats have set for Eritrea.

Eritrea has isolated itself from the rest of the world, not trusting out-siders, and has few friends. Sanctions have been imposed by the United States for its support to Somalia's al-Shabaab terrorist group, and US rela-tions are also hurt by the imprisonment of four former US Embassy employees, travel restrictions on US diplomats, the expulsion of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), as well as the human rights abuses. The lingering tension over the Badme border dispute with

Ethiopia has compounded Eritrea's frustration within regional organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and the AU. Isaias was one of the few heads of state not invited to President Barack Obama's US-Africa Leaders Summit in 2014. Unlike other repressive regimes, the Eritrean government has seemed uninterested in improving its international public relations, but this may be changing. After another recent exploratory visit to the country, Seth Kaplan has asserted that it is inappropriate to call Eritrea "the North Korea of Africa" but proposed that "if Eritrea's political and socioeconomic model resembles any existing today, it is that of Cuba." Eritrea does not want to become democratic, but its highly egalitarian statist model has reduced extreme poverty and promoted national unity, he said. Kaplan admitted that Eritreans have suffered from human rights abuses and lack of economic opportunity. He suggested that Eritrea embark on a gradual, pragmatic reform such as that conducted by China, Vietnam, and Rwanda, which, he said, "all sought to open up in ways that promoted social cohesion, self-reliance, and national strength; all prioritized nation building and saw economic inclusiveness as essential to the process; and all sought local solutions and models to guide their decisionmaking processes and policies."[53] He identified economic sectors that might be developed, such as agriculture, mining, tourism, fishing, and trade, and urged the international community to reengage with Eritrea on the basis of respect and not as a target of "help."

Kaplan's prognosis for Eritrea echoes that of Marina Ottaway nearly 20 years earlier. Calling the country not as bad as North Korea and more like Cuba, and recommending a path like that of Vietnam and China, may offer some hope of relative normalization but leaves little prospect for democracy or greater respect for human rights. It suggests not a gradual opening but a consolidation of the totalitarian regime, perhaps with a more attractive, postmodern, attire. It might produce a somewhat higher standard of living for the people of Eritrea, but their freedom would remain distant, left for another day. Recent events in Eritrea's neighbor to the south have scrambled this prognosis, however, as the rationale for the totalitarian system there has crumbled. The sometimes perverse symbiotic relationship between the two nations will continue to be salient as this study turns to the far more consequential evolution of Ethiopia's autocracy.

Notes

1. Quoted in Kjetil Tronvall, *The Lasting Struggle for Freedom in Eritrea: Human Rights and Political Development, 1991–2009* (Oslo: Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights, 2009), 47.

2. Marina Ottaway, *Africa's New Leaders: Democracy or State Reconstruction?* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999).

3. Tronvall, *The Lasting Struggle for Freedom in Eritrea*, 58.

4. Michela Wrong, *I Didn't Do It For You: How the World Betrayed a Small African Nation* (London: Fourth Estate, 2005), 377.

5. Dan Connell, "Eritrea: Enough! A Critique of Eritrea's Post-Liberation Politics, November 6, 2003. https://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200311060876.html.

6. Yamani Gebre Mikael, Eritrean deputy foreign minister, and others in Asmara, in discussion with the author, November 13, 1992.

7. Human Rights Watch, World Report 2016, Eritrea. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/eritrea.

8. U.S. Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015, Eritrea. https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dlid=252679.

9. Tronvall, *The Lasting Struggle for Freedom in Eritrea,* 21–22.

10. Ibid., 39.

11. Ibid., 40–44.

12. Sheila B. Keetharuth, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea* (UN Human Rights Council, 23rd session, agenda item 4, UN General Assembly, May 28, 2013), 8.

13. Wrong, *I Didn't Do It for You,* 373–376.

14. Martin Plaut, *Understanding Eritrea: Inside Africa's Most Repressive State* (London: Hurst and Company, 2016), 221–224.

15. African-American Institute, *Eritrea: A Report on the Referendum on Independence: April 23–25, 1993* (New York: African-American Institute, 1993).

16. Susan Dicklitch, *The Elusive Promise of NGOs in Africa: Lessons from Uganda* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 4–8.

17. Ibid., 176.

18. Chloé Bailey, "Measuring Civil Society Space," *Mo Ibrahim Foundation Latest News,* October 25, 2016, http://mo.ibrahim.foundation/news/2016/measuring-civil-society-space/.

19. Keetharuth, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea,* 12–13.

20. Wrong, *I Didn't Do It for You,* 387.

21. National Union of Eritrean Women, "The Role of Women Workers in National Reconstruction," http://www.nuew.org/. (accessed 6/20/2014)

22. Matthew McClearn, Canadian Business, May 9, 2014. (Accessed at Human Rights Concern-Eritrea, "The Slaves of Eritrea," http://hrc-eritrea.org/the-slaves-of-eritrea.)

23. "Robocall revolution," The Economist, May 13, 2013. http://www.economist.com/blogs/baobab/2013/05/eritrea?fsrc=rss.

24. Arbi Harnet, "Arbi Harnet: Call to Action," July 23, 2012. http://asmarino.com/press-releases/1474-arbi-harnet-call-to-action#disqus_thread.

25. Committee to Protect Journalists, "10 Most Censored Countries: CPJ's New Analysis Identifies Eritrea, North Korea, Syria, Iran as Worst," May 10, 2012, http://cpj.org/reports/2012/05/10-most-censored-countries.php.

26. Reporters Sans Frontiers, *Contribution on the Situation of Media Freedom in Eritrea by Reporters Without Borders* (UN Human Rights Council—Universal Periodic Review, 18th UPR session, January–February 2014).

27. Dan Connell, "From Resistance to Governance: Eritrea's Trouble with Transition," *Review of African Political Economy* 38, no. 129 (September 2011), 420.

28. Ibid, 424.

29. Magnus Treiber, "Trapped in Adolescence: The Postwar Urban Generation," in *Biopolitics, Militarism and Development: Eritrea in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. David O'Kane and Tricia Redeker Hepner (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 108.

30. Alex de Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2015), 148–153.

31. Off-the-record discussion, Washington, DC, December 2015.

32. Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 368.

33. Ibid., 374.

34. Tronvall, *The Lasting Struggle for Freedom in Eritrea*, 63–67.

35. Merga Yonas Bula, "Eritrea Is Building Its Own 'Type of Political System,'" allAfrica, Deutsche Welle (Bonn), September 13, 2016, http://allafrica.com/stories /201609130773.html.

36. International Crisis Group, "Eritrea: The Siege State," 14, September 21, 2010, http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/ethiopia-eritrea /163%20Eritrea%20The%20Siege%20State.pdf.

37. Human Rights Watch, "World Report 2017," https://www.hrw/world-report /2017/country-chapters/eritrea.

38. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, 441, 456.

39. Amnesty International, *Eritrea: 20 Years of Independence, But Still No Freedom* (London: Amnesty International, 2013), 14–32.

40. Amnesty International, *Eritrea,* 33–43.

41. Human Rights Council, *Report of the Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea.* New York: Human Rights Council, June 5, 2015.

42. UN Human Rights Council, "Report of the Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea," 91, UN Human Rights Council, June 5, 2015, https://www.refworld.org/docid/55758bab4.html.

43. Ibid., 93.

44. Tricia Redeker Hepner, "Seeking Asylum in a Transnational Social Field: New Refugees and Struggles for Autonomy and Human Rights," in *Biopolitics, Militarism and Development: Eritrea in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. David O'Kane and Tricia Redeker Hepner (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 123.

45. Ibid., 7.

46. Connell, "From Resistance to Governance," 423.

47. Plaut, *Understanding Eritrea,* 197.

48. Human Rights Concern—Eritrea, "'Listen to Our Agony'—Responding to the Eritrean Crisis," December 2014. www.hrc-eritrea.org.

49. Adrian Edwards, "Sharp Increase in Number of Eritrean Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in Europe, Ethiopia, and Sudan," Briefing Notes, November 14, 2014, http://www.unhcr.org/5465feal1381.html.

50. The United Nations Development Programme in Eritrea, "People-Centered Development," February 2015. https://www.undp.org/content/dam/eritrea/docs/UNDP %20Eritrea%20Final.pdf.

51. Bronwyn Bruton, *Eritrea: Coming in from the Cold* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council Africa Center, December 2016).

52. Louis Mazel, "US Embassy in Asmara," Facebook, December 10, 2015, https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid.

53. Seth Kaplan, *Eritrea's Economy: Ideology and Opportunity* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council Africa Center, December 2016).

4

Rise and Fall of the Developmental State: Ethiopia

Ethiopia's totalitarian drift was especially disappointing because the country once held real democratic promise. Whereas Eritrea's democratic potential faded early on, Ethiopia made gradual progress toward democratic governance in the first decade or so after the fall of the Derg. After the 2005 elections, however, that came to a halt, and the political trajectories of the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments converged. The EPLF had allied with the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in the guerrilla struggle to topple the Derg regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam. The TPLF was the most militarily effective and dominant member of the coalition of ethnic movements that assembled to constitute the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Like the EPLF, the EPRDF gained international approval for its rhetoric about democratic governance and some initial steps in that regard after it first took power. Both the EPLF and EPRDF originally adhered to Marxist-Leninist ideologies, even though their common enemy, the Derg, had also espoused Marxism-Leninism. Although the EPRDF supported Eritrea's independence, the two former allies went to war against each other in 1998, ostensibly over a border dispute around the town of Badme, but also due to an assortment of historical, political, and economic grievances. Fighting over the border issue has continued to flare up sporadically, as recently as June 2016. This ongoing bellicosity has animated much of the political focus of the two neighbors, and both have used it to legitimate their respective regimes and their emergency powers, just as was the case in Orwell's symbiotic conflict between Oceania and Eurasia. Chapter 3 illustrated the results for Eritrea. Yet if Eritrea is considered the North Korea of Africa, Ethiopia resembles Africa's China. With a population of more than 100

million and a rapidly growing economy, Ethiopia's steady consolidation of a totalitarian system presented Africa with a far more compelling and powerful exponent of the new paradigm.

After independence, Eritrea never allowed opposition political parties, civil society, or an independent press and has become only more repressive over time. In Ethiopia, by contrast, the government expressed greater willingness to open up democratic space from the beginning, even if it was limited. It promulgated a new and innovative constitution, recognizing the rights of ethnic nationalities. Opposition political parties gained strength and credibility. Elections, though hardly free and fair, were getting better. A feisty, if not always responsible, independent press proliferated. Increasingly sophisticated NGOs advocated for human rights, women's equality, environmental protection, and a host of other issues. Civic education programs raised the awareness of citizens, overcoming low education standards, and encouraging citizens' political participation. From an outside perspective, many of the government's policies would seem to have been popular, as economic growth began to take hold. Tensions within the regime and the war with Eritrea were destabilizing and costly, yet Meles Zenawi, the head of state, prevailed.

It all started falling apart after the national elections of 2005, however. The election results would have given the opposition control of Addis Ababa and an unprecedented one-third representation in the Ethiopian Parliament. Not satisfied with these gains, and claiming that the process had been rigged, the opposition staged massive protests that were violently suppressed by the government, which killed 193 protesters and arrested 4,000. Alarmed by the unanticipated strength of the opposition, the government turned an abrupt about-face, following Eritrea's example to eliminate political opposition, silence the press, and control civil society. Hopes that the death in 2012 of Meles might lead to political liberalization were not realized during the successor government of Hailemariam Desalegn. Dramatic developments beginning in the early months of 2018, however, revived hopes that democracy might at long last be realized.

In the wake of Ethiopia's May 2010 elections, in which the EPRDF won all but two of the 547 seats in the Parliament after a campaign of intimidation of the opposition, Freedom House downgraded Ethiopia's status to a score of 6-6, from "partly free" to "not free." Freedom House also cited the clampdown on independent media and NGOs as reasons for this demotion. Elections in 2015 hammered the final nail in the coffin, leaving the opposition without a single representative in the Parliament. By 2016, Ethiopia had slipped to a downward-trending 7-6 score, still putting it ahead of Eritrea, Equatorial Guinea, and Sudan and grouping it alongside some of Africa's other dictatorships such as Burundi, Chad, and DRC (China and Russia also had this score). Ethiopia now displayed all the usual

attributes of a full-fledged authoritarian regime, including one-party control; increasing repression of the media, academic freedom, civil society, and trade unions; lack of an independent judiciary; and domination by the Tigrayan minority ethnic group. Private business was limited by rigid state control of economic life, and all land had to be leased from the state.[1] The US State Department's 2012 Human Rights Report stated that the most significant human rights problems in Ethiopia were restrictions on freedom of expression and association through politically motivated trials and convictions of opposition political figures, activists, journalists, and bloggers, as well as increased restrictions on print media. The report also noted the use of force against Muslim demonstrators and continued restrictions against CSOs. Arbitrary killings, torture, beating, abuse, mistreatment of detainees, harsh prison conditions, arbitrary arrest and detention, a weak judiciary, infringement on privacy rights, restrictions on academic freedom and freedom of assembly, restrictions on association and movement, corruption, and violence against women are among a host of other abuses described in detail by the State Department report.[2]

Historical Roots of Totalitarianism in Ethiopia

Just as Eritrea's totalitarianism can partially be attributed to the rigors of the lonely guerrilla struggle against Ethiopia as well as the legacy of Italian colonialism and fascism, so can the roots of Ethiopia's authoritarianism be traced to the country's centuries of feudal and monarchical rule followed by a communist military dictatorship and reign of terror under the Derg. Ethiopia's history resembles that of Russia, including the powerful role of the Coptic Church, the multiethnic expansion of the empire, its peasant economy, even its cultural iconography. The emperor Tewodros's defeat of Ethiopia's feudal lords in the 19th century is reminiscent of similar efforts by Peter the Great, and Menelik II's victory over the Italian invaders in the battle of Adwa compares to the tsar's defeat of Napoleon.[3] Gérard Prunier and Marina and David Ottaway note that only Ethiopia, of all the countries of Africa, attempted a radical transformation of the post-feudal order, an effort that ended in dictatorship and one of the most brutal experiments in socialism since the fall of Joseph Stalin. Africa's other revolutions, they contend, were essentially nationalist struggles, replacing one bourgeois elite with another, despite their Marxist-Leninist rhetoric and alignment.[4] Prunier also draws similarities between Ethiopia's post-feudal system and the absolutist monarchies of medieval Europe.[5]

As the Emperor Haile Selassie attempted to modernize Ethiopia after World War II, frustrations grew, a student movement began to agitate, and the army emerged as the country's best organized institution. Then, in

1972, famine struck Ethiopia, oil prices soon skyrocketed, protests broke out, and some army units began to form into committees, or "dergs," demanding both better pay and political reform. Leftist officers of the Derg seized power in June 1974 and soon formed the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), and on September 12, 1974, the PMAC overthrew Selassie, who died a year later under questionable circumstances. The PMAC dissolved the constitution and Parliament, started arresting counterrevolutionary officers, and summarily executed 60 members of the former political elite, including their own chairman, General Aman Mikael Andom. As the PMAC consolidated its control, it announced a 10-point socialist program and sent the nation's students to the countryside to give literacy classes to the peasants.

The "Red Terror" that ensued constitutes the defining moment of Ethiopia's totalitarian heritage. Three forces contended for power: the ruling Derg, composed of 109 military men of various ranks and branches; the EPRP, with roots in the international student movement, the trade unions, and the bureaucracy; and the All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement, or "Meison," a weaker organization also rooted in the international Ethiopian student movement. The PMAC continued to drift to the left, abolishing feudalism and nationalizing all rural land as well as some urban properties and industry in March 1975. It developed a tactical alliance with the EPRP and Meison to gain their political and ideological support, expand its social base, and appropriate their programs. But the EPRP and Meison argued over the transition to socialism, popular sovereignty, and the question of nationalities. They both subscribed to the Maoist theory of a national democratic revolution led by a vanguard party first seizing power and then establishing socialism, but Meison opportunistically advocated critical support of the PMAC, whereas the EPRP called instead for the formation of a provisional people's government not dominated by the military. With regard to the nationality question, which continues to resonate in Ethiopia to this day, the EPRP argued for the right of nationalities to secede, but Meison contended that this right applied only within the limits of Ethiopia's sovereignty.

Exacerbated by personality conflicts, the two rivals eventually fell out. While united with other groups in the government's Provisional Office for Mass Organizational Affairs, of which Meison's ideologue, Haile Fida, was chair, Meison steadily squeezed power from the EPRP. But the EPRP retaliated, launching a campaign of assassinations in the capital in September 1976. Its big mistake was a failed assassination attempt against the vice chairman of the PMAC, Major Mengistu Haile Mariam, who was then in the process of winning a power struggle within the PMAC. Mengistu had just founded a new party, the Abyotawi Seded (Revolutionary Flame), including members of the Derg sent to the Soviet Union for political educa-

tion. When this alignment with the USSR was resisted by some members of the PMAC, Mengistu and his allies killed seven of them, including the chairman, General Tafari Banti, and seized complete control on February 3, 1977, becoming chairman of PMAC, as well as head of state and commander of the armed forces.

A day after assuming power, Mengistu vowed to "beat back White Terror with Red Terror," recalling the struggle of the Russian reactionaries versus the Bolsheviks and Stalin's subsequent hijacking of the revolution.[6] With the EPRP as the main target, the Terror began on March 23, 1977, in Addis Ababa and soon engulfed the entire country. It was supervised by Mengistu but inspired and coordinated by Meison. Under the code name Operation Mentir, a variety of militias and Revolutionary Guards, or "Abiyot Tibekas," conducted house-to-house searches for EPRP members and their families, free to harass, torture, and kill, and often simply settling personal scores. Bodies were left along the side of the road with placards labeling them anarchists or counterrevolutionaries. Thousands disappeared without a trace, and estimates of the total casualties vary from 5,000 to 250,000. But Meison became the next target of the Terror, beginning in August 1977 after the Somali invasion, when Mengistu's Seded came to regard Meison as a threat. In the course of a year, nearly the entire Meison leadership was jailed or killed. Other leftist groups were also wiped out, leaving Seded alone in power. Once again, the revolution had eaten its own.[7]

In a flip-flop, Ethiopia became a client of the Soviet Union shortly after Mengistu came to power, when the United States expressed concerns about the regime's human rights abuses and the Soviets dropped their former client, Siad Barre of Somalia, who had invaded Ethiopia in an effort to reclaim the Ogaden and who subsequently switched sides to the United States. Under Mengistu, Ethiopia adopted many of the trappings of a communist state, with Mengistu's picture hanging alongside those of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Vladimir Lenin across the country. The East Germans provided assistance in setting up Ethiopia's security forces, modeled after their own notorious Stasi. With urging from the Soviets, Mengistu moved slowly to create the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, but on September 11, 1984, it was finally inaugurated at an event lavishly celebrated in Addis with hard-line Politburo member Grigory Romanov along with Erich Honecker of East Germany and leading Communists from Cuba, Vietnam, and North Korea.

Mengistu's efforts to apply socialist economics proved disastrous, however, as grain production dropped, exports plummeted, and military expenditures ballooned. The Derg's land reform had initially had some success but soon began to fail. Famine broke out in 1982 and ravaged the country, drawing international attention. As noted by Paul Henze, "Hope rose among both Ethiopians and foreigners that under the pressure of the crisis Mengistu might ease his pursuit of war in the north and moderate his

Stalinist extremism."[8] Instead, as Stalin had moved the Crimean Tatars, Mengistu addressed the famine by attempting to resettle troublesome northerners in the south and west, and tens of thousands died. Mengistu's villagization program moved 12 to 15 million people from around the country into collective farms, making them easier to control. Finally, in 1987, Ethiopia became the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the last such communist state ever to be established, outliving the communist regimes that had nourished it into existence.

The Soviets were wasting nearly $1 billion a year in Ethiopia, but by 1990, Mikhail Gorbachev had had enough and announced that military aid would end. Meanwhile the EPLF and TPLF started to cooperate and achieve military success against the regime. Ideology and political theory played a significant role in their struggle. While the EPLF aimed to build a total society in the war zone, the TPLF/EPRDF conducted a Maoist Peoples' War, not holding an entrenched line, but living among the people.[9] By gradually moderating their Marxist-Leninist rhetoric, they gained support from the United States. The Ethiopian army grew increasingly demoralized, and a failed coup attempt led to the execution of 12 generals, generating further demoralization. In an effort to hang onto power, Mengistu was compelled to announce perestroika-like reforms, but these failed to take hold. Negotiations between the government and the rebels brokered by the United States made little progress. The military situation deteriorated rapidly, prompting Mengistu to flee to Zimbabwe on May 21, 1991, apparently on US advice. As a peace conference convened in London on May 27, the Derg army completely collapsed, and the EPRDF forces entered Addis with little resistance. Meanwhile, the EPLF effectively took over Eritrea. Meles arrived in Addis on June 1 and promised a new era of peace and democracy, with a broadly representative government and free-market policies.[10] Mengistu's army was disarmed and demobilized or absorbed into the EPRDF forces, which became the national army, the bureaucracy was paid on time and continued to function as it was wont to do, and the country was at peace.[11]

The revolution had deeply traumatized Ethiopian society. Just off Meskel Square in Addis, the Red Terror Martyrs' Memorial Museum commemorates the killing and torture, replete with skulls and bones, photos, testimonies of victims, and displays including instruments of torture. The museum sells a book, *The Day of the Martyrs*, that compiles some of the personal histories and trauma Ethiopians experienced.[12] Although the Mengistu regime survived 13 bloody years, the two years of Red Terror that began Mengistu's rule, with the regime besieged by the Eritreans, Somalis, and an array of guerrilla movements within Ethiopia, shocked the society and established the context, if not the paradigm, for all that would follow. Indeed, such efforts as the Martyrs' Memorial Museum have proceeded with

great caution because of the uncomfortable parallels some might draw between the Derg and the government that vanquished it. For example, in an effort supported by the NED, the Ethiopian Red Terror Documentation and Research Center attempted to preserve the victim files that had been kept by the Derg during that era. These had been haphazardly stored in a government archive and were in great danger of being lost, but the work to preserve them had to proceed in the face of suspicion and bureaucratic obstacles, and eventually the center was forced to close down. The historical truth was too dangerous. The legacy of the one-party state, the Marxist-Leninist ideology, the *kebele* and *woreda* local government structures, the resort to torture and mass violence, and the control and fear these imposed have been slow to dissipate and too easily resurrected. In the end, the trials of former officials of the Derg resulted in 56 convictions for genocide, including 25 tried in absentia. Meles commuted the death sentences to life in prison, and 16 of the prisoners were later released in 2011.

Ideology in Ethiopia

The role of Marxist-Leninist ideology in inspiring the Ethiopian revolution, the Derg, and the Red Terror, as Gebru Tareke emphasizes, was "intrinsic." The Marxist civilians behind the Terror were "convinced of the justness of their cause, they were determined to remake the world." Despite the inspiration they shared, each faction "saw itself as the custodian of the revolution and power as its entitlement," resorting to violence to settle the dispute.[13] Ideology was less important for the military, which was primarily interested in monopolizing power. But to the extent that Mengistu had made an effort to impose a totalitarian system, the Ottaways are correct in assessing, at the time that they wrote, that he had failed. They argued that in Ethiopia, "Marxism-Leninism may be increasingly interpreted in an authoritarian fashion and the Derg ever more dictatorial, but conditions still favor uncontrolled, and even excessive, participation." The conflict, they said, is "one between ideology and existing conditions."[14]

The EPRDF government had removed the communist monuments that once festooned the country, but ideology was still at work in Ethiopia. Freedom House, Human Rights Watch, the US State Department, and many other groups have cited the increasingly authoritarian character of the Ethiopian state. But the EPRDF's strong emphasis on ideology is the first indicator to raise the suspicion that the country was becoming totalitarian. Ethiopia presents a clear example of the power of ideology to drive the policies and establish the legitimacy of a regime. The Derg espoused a totalitarian ideology with chiliastic pretentions, as the quote by Gebru Tareke illustrates. This clashed with reality, both the changing international context as

well as the social conditions on the ground in Ethiopia, and came to naught. Likewise, the EPRDF has devoted great attention to ideology, but whether it aspires to "remake the world" as the Derg did must be uncovered in the more nuanced terminology now in use. As was the case in China, which has maintained a growing presence and influence in Ethiopia, the role and content of ideology in Ethiopia has changed over time. Before assuming power, the TPLF had embraced Maoism and Albanian socialism in opposition to the Derg's USSR-friendly politics, but after gaining power, the TPLF soon began to articulate a more pragmatic and democratic ideology, including free-market reforms. Shortly after the war with Eritrea in 2001, hardliners in the TPLF attempted to assert themselves and press Ethiopia's advantage against Eritrea, but they were outmaneuvered by Meles, who advocated more moderate policies. According to Alex de Waal, Meles's Marxist-Leninism "was not about building a socialist society now, but a question of developing the country's political economy to establish the class basis for development and democracy." Meles advocated openly building a capitalist society.[15] His relative liberalism proved to be short lived, however. In fact, after 2005, when the elections did not turn out the way they were supposed to, the government revived its ideological efforts. Turning his attention from Eritrea to Ethiopia, Kjetil Tronvall described some of these efforts:

> [Prime Minister Meles] authored a number of booklets used to reinvigorate and re-ideologize the party apparatus and to inspire and guide cadres in fulfilling the power ambitions of the party. For instance, in a booklet called *Democracy and Democratic Unity* used in the massive, countrywide teacher training ideology seminars conducted in early 2006 to "explain" the 2005 election result and the following crackdown, and make corrections for the future, it is explicitly stated that the Ethiopian people have a "clear choice between dependency and anti-democracy forces (utilizing tools of chauvinism and narrow nationalism) and revolutionary democracy (peace and developmentalism). . . . No Ethiopian can stand on middle ground or be neutral."[16]

Regarding the legal and organizational underpinnings of the state, in addition to the new, restrictive laws on media, NGOs, and prevention of terrorism, Tronvall found that "the development of an omnipresent and all-embracing totalitarian state and party structure carefully limits the space in which opposition forces can organize." Local administration councils had been expanded from 600,000 members to 3.5 million, and the EPRDF membership had risen from 760,000 in 2005 to more than five million in 2013. In addition, Tronvall observed that although the brutality of the state had declined in the past few years, it had been displaced by the "new 'soft' co-optation tactics used instead by the totalitarian state."[17]

Ironically, the evolution of the TPLF and EPRDF's theory of revolutionary, or *abyotawi,* democracy from its Marxist-Leninist roots in the

1970s to a model incorporating significant liberal democratic elements reflects a pragmatic instrumentalization of ideology consistent with the totalitarian practice as described by Hannah Arendt and other political scientists. It is not so much about the content of the ideology as it is about its usefulness in structuring and maintaining control, a postmodern adaptation of the totalitarian paradigm. Meles and Abay Tsehaye were founders of the Marxist-Leninist League of Tigray (MLLT), another example of an inner onion layer of control that guided the ideological development and advancement of revolutionary democracy. The MLLT membership grew to around 1,000 senior members of the TPLF, and its program focused on the transition to socialism rather than the war against the Derg, which the TPLF program pursued. In addition, at this time the party introduced a Maoist system of self-criticism, *gemgema*, which provided a means to eliminate those with alternative views.[18] With the fall of the Derg, in the first decade of the EPRDF's rule, a tentative shift of power from the party to the government took place, as Western donors encouraged liberal political and economic reforms, and the EPRDF's ideological theory mellowed accordingly.

After the 2005 elections, the government rediscovered its penchant for ideology, portraying the opposition parties as enemies of revolutionary democracy and neoliberal traitors, and using ideology to drive the rebuilding of EPRDF party structures and membership. Revolutionary democracy contrasts the rights of individuals with the collective rights of nations, but it also appropriates the use of a constitution and elections to demonstrate the democratic credentials of the ruling party. Assessing this ideological malleability and the resilience of the authoritarian state in the context of modernization, Jean-Nicholas Bach concluded that in Ethiopia "the remaining ideology is by essence totalitarian."[19] This is also evident in the continuing reliance on mass organizations such as the women's and youth associations, the recruitment of an elite vanguard of party members to educate and monitor the masses, and the vilification of rivals, whether foreign or domestic. According to Bach, despite the fact that the theory has accepted that capitalism is necessary for development, the theory still advocates the dominant role of the state and the subservience of the market to the guiding principles and priorities of the EPRDF. Bach suggests that *abyotawi* democracy has lost its "original utopia" but remains a symbol, "a powerful discursive and political tool, rather than a genuinely revolutionary programme."[20]

Meles articulated his vision of "the democratic developmental state" in an unfinished master's dissertation written in 1998 (not for quotation, it states), titled "African Development: Dead Ends and New Beginnings."[21] Although his main critique was of neoliberal economic policies and the rent-seeking so prevalent in much of Africa, he also addressed the issue of

democracy, about which he expressed some ambivalence. "Studies have shown that stable long-term coalitions which stay in power for a long period but do so by democratic means can provide the needed continuity and stability of policy" to establish a democratic developmental state. He also suggested that "the most likely scenario for a state that is both democratic and developmental to emerge is in the form of a dominant party or dominant coalition democracy." He took a pragmatic approach to democracy, averring that "in an age of the ascendancy of democracy ethnically diverse African countries cannot continue to exist unless they have some democratic legitimacy." He allowed that "democracy facilitates" national consensus for the developmental agenda.[22] Reflecting on the dissertation and discussions with Meles over the years, de Waal observed that the conquest of poverty was Meles's consistent aim from the beginning to the end of his career. "Marxism-Leninism was, for him, not a dogma but a rigorous method for assembling evidence and argument, to be bent to the realities of armed struggle and development." As reported by de Waal, Meles argued that liberal civil and political rights have little meaning in a context of poverty and chaos, and that a strong state is a prerequisite for human rights.[23]

A version of the dissertation was published in the proceedings of an international conference that took place in 2010. In it, Meles refined his views, stating that the developmental state derives its legitimacy from, and has an ideological commitment to, accelerated development, and all the key actors voluntarily subscribe to its hegemony. In addition, the developmental state must be autonomous politically, institutionally, and technically to implement its policies effectively.[24] Meles made it clear that the autonomous developmental state must be able to make and implement policy "regardless of the views of the private sector" and must be able to guide the private sector through incentives and disincentives; it must be able to "discipline, encourage, and cajole it" to do as desired.[25] Another characteristic of the developmental state is the need to "achieve broad support for its development agenda," which is "an exercise that requires appropriate behavior on the part of millions of individuals." Social capital must thus be developed through civic engagement in mutually beneficial horizontal networks. Coercion alone cannot sustain the cultivation of social capital, but to be successful, "the development agenda must be hegemonic." Meles noted that most developmental states have not been democratic and that building a national consensus does not require democracy.[26] Developmental states emerge due to political and social processes created by social and political action, Meles contended. History has shown, he concluded, that "state intervention has been critical in the development process."[27]

Despite its emphasis on the *dirigiste* role of the state, such an economic and social program would not appear to be too radical or far from the mainstream international discourse, let alone the blueprint for a totali-

tarian order. Meles cited Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea as models for such development. Intriguingly, in Meles's dissertation, he referred to the "democratic developmentalist state," whereas in his later conference paper he used the phrase "developmental state." "Democracy" is a term Meles may have used differently than in the sense of "liberal democracy," yet in his writings later in his career, he chose not to use the word at all. In any case, the rationale for an authoritarian political regime is clearly present in his conference paper, and subtle totalitarian clues can also be drawn in his emphasis on the autonomy of the state from society, the mobilization of the masses, and the need for a hegemonic or all-encompassing ideology. De Waal notes that the ideological focus on growth and developmentalism emanated from Meles's office, was conveyed through an often hidebound civil service, and found its fullest expression in the mass organizations holding hundreds of workshops and reaching tens of thousands of party activists. Meles sought to promote a new vocabulary, with "rent-seeker" the favored term for condemnation and "developmental capitalist" taking on positive connotations.[28]

Prime Minister Hailemariam gave a speech at a conference sponsored by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, held in Addis Ababa in November 2013, that was an early example of the narrative that maintained the continuity between his government and that of Meles. Like Meles, Hailemariam's discourse both revealed and concealed, defending the government's repressive policies but cloaking them in democratic and nationalist rhetoric. The secret to Ethiopia's economic success, he claimed, was its unflinching commitment to democracy. Democracy is not a matter of choice, he said, but a categorical imperative. Gone, however, were the days of taking prescriptions from elsewhere. The foundations of democracy were representation, participation, accountability, and transparency, which were challenged by bad governance and rent-seeking. He noted that the AU peer review mechanism was a forum for governments to learn from one another and to prevent extra-constitutional means of change. Hailemariam said the greater role of civil society, youth, and women was a positive trend. But he said there was little role for alien conditionalities and hectoring about which route to take to democracy based on purely ideological differences. He said the goal should be to complement African governments' efforts, offering criticisms, but avoiding the pitfalls of indulging in naming and shaming. If the debate can be steered to incremental change, it will achieve a lot, he concluded. In other words, Mo Ibrahim's admonitions regarding democracy are fine as long as they do not interfere with national sovereignty. "Western-style democracy" is not necessarily appropriate for Ethiopia or other African countries, Hailemariam made clear.[29]

As was the case for Eritrea, Ethiopia's ideological project has met with success. In Eritrea, the indoctrination has effectively transcended the

individual's capacity to think and act politically and is hardly even conscious anymore; in Ethiopia, the determined emphasis on political education has been able to shape the consciousness of the majority of citizens to largely support and conform to the government's prescribed ideology. An impressive demonstration of this is evident in an Afrobarometer survey published in May 2016. So counterintuitive were the results that the authors are at pains to explain the anomaly. In effect, 81 percent of the Ethiopians responding to the survey considered the country to be democratic or a democracy with only minor problems. The authors admit that Ethiopia is an exceptional case in which the assessment by international experts does not coincide with popular notions. The study found that most Ethiopians gave a very positive assessment of the country's political and economic development, regarded the 2015 elections as free and fair, and said that the executive respects the constitution and legislature and that few officials are corrupt. Majorities said the country was headed in the right direction, the economy was improving, and the government has managed it well.

Deeper analysis by the Afrobarometer researchers helps one to appreciate the social and political context conducive to Ethiopia's totalitarian system. They suggest that "uncritical citizenship"—that the Ethiopian respondents were the least likely in Africa to criticize their government—was one factor for the unusual responses. Likewise, Ethiopians' concept of democracy, human rights, multiparty competition, the courts, the legislature, and independent media was poor. Ethiopians define democracy instrumentally, in terms of material goods and effective governance, rather than intrinsically, according to its protection of individual freedoms and political processes. Afrobarometer also cited the facts that Ethiopia is the most rural, has the lowest level of formal education, and has the lowest media penetration of any of the 35 African countries it has surveyed. Ethiopian respondents with more education and communication capacity were more critical of the government and had a better understanding of democracy. Interviewers were able to detect fear of political intimidation and suspicion of the interviewers' motives. According to the Afrobarometer researchers, the legacy of feudal monarchy and Leninist one-party rule has caused citizens to imbibe "a top-down ideology of guardianship by which a paternalistic elite promises to provide material welfare in lieu of guarantees of political liberty." It is not just that Ethiopians have a limited understanding of democracy, "the concept has been redefined for them," so that "Ethiopians remain subjects rather than citizens."[30] Nevertheless, as open to interpretation as the Afrobarometer survey results are, the overwhelming expression of popular support for the regime and its version of democracy is striking, especially given the wave of antigovernment protests that ensued about the same time the survey was conducted.

Monism and the Repression of
Political Opposition in Ethiopia

The conflation of state, party, government, legislature, judiciary, military, police, civil society, religion, the media, education, and the private sector has proceeded to such an extent in Ethiopia that the monistic criterion for identifying the country as having become a totalitarian state is also abundantly met. The regime's success in eliminating autonomous domestic challenges to its power is a necessary condition for the consolidation of totalitarian control. Ethiopia's political opposition has been systematically decimated through imprisonment, exile, economic pressure, and intimidation since the 2005 elections. The EPRDF is a coalition of four regional parties, dominated by the TPLF and also including the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), and the South Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement. After the 2010 elections, the opposition ultimately held only one representative in the 547-seat lower house of Parliament. The government and legislature thus became completely controlled by the EPRDF. The judiciary, likewise, although officially independent, has rarely deviated from ruling party directives.

Ethiopia's 2015 elections further established the government's total domination of the political process. The EPRDF won 100 percent of the seats in Parliament, including the one token opposition seat. Rather than being embarrassed by this clear demonstration of the absence of democracy in the country, the government doubled down on its propaganda, declaring the elections to have shown the world the overwhelming popular support it had. Shortly before the elections, then-US Assistant Secretary of State Wendy Sherman praised the process as democratic. President Barack Obama, during his official visit shortly after the elections, declared the elections to have been democratic as well. A subsequent meeting he held with a group of upset Ethiopian activists seems to have changed his mind, and in a speech the next day at the AU, which is headquartered in Addis Ababa, he modified his position, calling for African leaders to respect term limits and remarking, "I have to proclaim, democracy is not just formal elections. When journalists are put behind bars for doing their jobs, or activists are threatened as governments crack down on civil society—then you may have democracy in name, but not in substance."[31] Once again, the exigencies of realpolitik can be seen to consistently blur the official position of international partners, but the evidence of what a democratic travesty Ethiopia's elections were was hard to ignore.

The experience and perspective of imprisoned dissidents under totalitarian regimes, such as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn or Andrei Sakharov in the case of the former Soviet Union and Aung San Suu Kyi, the celebrated female

political prisoner elected president of Burma, often provide a window on the psychology of the totalitarian system. Birtukan Mideksa, the former leader of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy party opposition in Ethiopia, has been compared to Aung San Suu Kyi. Imprisoned from December 28, 2008, to October 6, 2010, following the 2005 elections, Birtukan's critical view of the regime derives from her experience as a judge in the courts, a prisoner in the jails, and a popular political leader.[32] She eventually found refuge as an exile in the United States. The evolution of Ethiopia into a one-party state was a process that began at the top, she explained to me in an interview. She shared that Meles's dissertation on the developmental state had increasingly come to be presented as the ideology of the EPRDF. Meles was no longer concerned about hiding the repressive activities of the government or the deliberate marginalization of the opposition, for if the opposition came to power, it would be the end of the whole system. Although Meles cited Singapore as an example for Ethiopia, the internal dynamics of the EPRDF were obscure. She said it was clear that Meles was consolidating his personal power while expelling any competition within the party. Singapore is simply a system presumably more palatable to Western donors. Since 2005, Meles had become no longer willing to take risks with democracy and dictated even minor details of the economy, such as individual price caps, delegating little responsibility to others. The signs of a cult of personality were growing, such as his portraits hanging everywhere and rumors about the power of his wife. Even the letter Birtukan was forced to sign to obtain her release from prison was apparently drafted by Meles personally. In short, he was a control freak (like Isaias!), she concluded.

The mass mobilization of the population characteristic of totalitarian regimes has also increased in Ethiopia, Birtukan observed, as shown by the millions of people recruited to support the Renaissance Dam project, including forced contributions by civil servants. The enormous party apparatus whereby millions of party loyalists are responsible for monitoring non-party members throughout the country is another indication. Before 2005, if an Ethiopian did not challenge the regime, chances are the person would be left alone, she said. Now, everyone will be checked, whether through the local administration, a credit association, or an aid project; apathy and opposition are actively discouraged. One will not be left alone, but will be approached, whether by family or friends. The system seems somehow democratic with its outreach and persuasion. But the individual does not have an option of saying no. Birtukan admitted that the Derg was worse. Then, political opposition could mean death. But such coercive acts are no longer needed. The people have returned to their psyche of repression. The sense of terror has developed through the decades, and not enough was done to make it disappear. After the elections of 2005, Ethiopians have returned to their shell. The government's

control of the media is almost total. When Birtukan was in prison, she could only occasionally watch the government-run ETV, which is nothing but propaganda, "a real punishment!" she joked. The government has moved increasingly to control civil society and religious issues, "creating more problems for tomorrow." The government is not democratic internally; in fact, it is destroying itself, she warned.[33]

The Unity for Democracy and Justice (UDJ) party was once Ethiopia's strongest opposition party. In a meeting with UDJ party leaders in their modest office in Addis, they claimed a meagerly paid staff of three and 16,000 members. UDJ holds a general assembly and has held demonstrations and meetings protesting government repression along with the Blue party, which is a recent splinter. It issues human rights reports, publishes an online newspaper, and provides aid to many of its members who are in prison, including its vice president, Andualem Aragie, who has a life sentence. After a demonstration on September 29, 2013, 150 members were arrested and many were beaten. Yet the party is struggling peacefully and legally, they insisted. The dictatorship does not fight the opposition just with propaganda, but with prison and by taking away jobs. The leader of the party, Negasso Gidada, chaired Ethiopia's constitutional commission and helped enshrine international human rights law in the Ethiopian constitution. He was a former president of Ethiopia. He said Ethiopia's 72 parties may be too many, and efforts have been made to bring them together. UDJ is the main party of four in the Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum (Medrek), the leading opposition coalition, and building on this, a new coalition combining 10 parties was formed in late 2013.

The EPRDF has assumed the burden of building a multiparty system while denying the opposition parties the freedom to do so themselves, Negasso observed. The opposition parties must get permission from the government to hold meetings, contrary to the constitution, and must pay for hotel rooms, unlike the EPRDF. Meles said demonstrations cannot be held because there are not enough police. In the regime's "one-to-five" system, the one must take the five to the voting station and make sure they vote for the EPRDF. Parties get state funding according to their percentage of the vote; thus, EPRDF gets 99 percent, Negasso said. UDJ and the Blue party have been accused of contact with the armed struggle, leaving them open to terrorism charges. Ideologically the UDJ is a liberal party, favoring a free market and individual freedom in a federal, but not ethnic-based, system. It favors the unity of the country but recognizes the right of ethnic parties to organize. UDJ does not deny that the government has made progress but calls for a greater emphasis on human development, Negasso said. The EPRDF is a member of the Socialist International, made up of predominantly liberal democratic parties, but the party also has close relations with the Chinese Communists.[34]

Another political opposition leader, Merera Gudina Jefi, has been an associate professor of political science at Addis Ababa University and leader of the Oromo Federalist Congress and Medrek. He was dismissed from the university faculty after a career of 25 years. Although he said that Ethiopia's totalitarian drift is not yet consolidated, his assessment is that it is nonetheless far advanced. Simply put, in his view, Ethiopia is a one-party state. An opposition exists but will not be allowed to take power and is denied political space, meetings, and offices. He noted that from 2005 to 2010, the EPRDF had grown from 750,000 to five million, creating a huge parasitic class. Party members must pay 10 percent dues, attend political meetings, and get out the vote. The one-to-five system is extending control even more. Monitoring and reporting on fellow citizens is conducted at the local government levels of *kebele* and *woreda*, as well as at the central level. Despite some resistance, 250,000 freshman university students must take two weeks of political education each year or get dismissed. It is difficult for them to get a job unless they join the party, he said. The political education text that is used extols revolutionary democracy, the developmental state, and the legacy of Meles.

According to Merera's analysis, Ethiopia is now dominated by a military security structure led by a group of four or five men. At the same time that the government is viciously attacking the US State Department's Human Rights Report on Ethiopia, it gives the Pentagon everything it wants. It uses the anti-terror law against everyone opposed to the regime. Meles, Merera told me in 2014, was a good student of Joseph Stalin and Mao Zedong, adept at cheating friends and enemies for a political cause. He reneged on his promises of negotiation with the opposition after the 2005 elections, shifting the blame to the elections board. The EPRDF is building its business empire, especially in construction and engineering, and the gap between the rich and poor is widening. The opposition is fragmented. The EPRDF wields more power than the Derg under Mengistu did, Merera said.[35] On November 30, 2016, Merera was arrested upon his return to Ethiopia from a meeting of the European Parliament in Brussels, where he had testified about human rights abuses in Ethiopia. He remained in solitary confinement at Maekelawi prison, known for torture and inhumane conditions, until the release of its prisoners in 2018.

Negasso and Merera's ethnic group, the Oromo, is the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, making up 35 percent of the population, and the region of Oromia covers 30 percent of the country's landmass, including the area around Addis Ababa. A report published by AI in October 2014, based primarily on testimony from 176 refugees, asserted that in Oromia "the government's intolerance of dissent is particularly potent," because the government assumes the size and nationalism of the Oromo must pose a political threat. AI could not determine the number of political prisoners, but one estimate

suggested that 25,000 Oromo were imprisoned on the accusation of support-ing the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), which the Parliament designated as a terrorist organization in 2011. Although the OLF had originally been allied with the EPRDF in the guerrilla war against Mengistu, it left the transitional government in 1992 and thousands of its fighters and supporters were sub-sequently arrested, driving the group into a low-level armed struggle against the government. The OPDO, the official Oromo party member of the EPRDF, is considered to be weak and unpopular; and despite its banning, the OLF may retain popular support. Other Oromo political parties, such as the Oromo People's Congress and the Oromo Federalist Democratic Move-ment, are still officially legal but have been decimated by harassment and arrests. The strength of the OLF has withered considerably, however, and the AI report speculated that the government uses merely the pretext of OLF support to silence Oromo dissent. AI estimated that since 2011 at least 5,000 Oromo political prisoners have been arrested.[36]

What is most striking about the AI report is the totalitarian impulse it unveils that was behind these arrests. The large quantity of detailed testimony by the AI witnesses is compelling in this regard. Students were harassed, sub-ject to surveillance, and arrested for actual or suspected political opinions or participation in peaceful political protests. Hundreds of Oromo have been arrested for participating in cultural celebrations or for singing or writing about their culture. A wide range of ordinary citizens have been arrested based on suspicion alone, declining to join the ruling party, or being associ-ated with suspect family members. Even members of the government-friendly OPDO who do not toe the party line have been arrested, accused of supporting the OLF. As one witness testified, "For this government, being Oromo is a crime."[37] Most of those arrested were held without charge or trial, sometimes incommunicado, sometimes for several years. Many were subject to various forms of torture. Some suspects have been extrajudicially exe-cuted. Neither international nor independent domestic groups have been able to monitor prison conditions, and the government-controlled Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has demonstrated a lack of independ-ence, whitewashing allegations of abuse. The Ethiopian government called the AI report "inaccurate and far from the truth" and the findings "not reflec-tions of the reality on the ground." It said there has been no targeting of a cer-tain group and no pattern of violations.[38] Despite these denials, comparison with Stalin's USSR, when entire ethnic groups were criminalized and shipped off into exile or concentration camps, is warranted, although the repression has not occurred on the same scale. Similar persecution of Ethiopia's Somali and Anyuak populations has also taken place.

This government policy of repression of the Oromo has backfired, how-ever, leading to what has become the greatest threat to the EPRDF's domi-nance since the 2005 elections. The capital district of Addis Ababa is situated

in the middle of the state of Oromia. The government's efforts to modernize Addis, through an initiative called the Integrated Development Master Plan, involved expansion of the city's borders into Oromo territory and the usually uncompensated displacement of farmers. This sparked protests beginning in 2014, but these greatly intensified in November 2015 when authorities decided to clear a forest and football field in Ginchi, a small town not far from Addis. Surprisingly, the government backed down and canceled the master plan in January 2016, but fury at the government's mass arrests and killing of demonstrators in these protests only grew, and the protest eventually spread to 400 locations throughout the region and beyond, most significantly to the Amhara region, not known before for its sympathy for the Oromo. Human Rights Watch estimated that 400 people were killed, thousands injured, and tens of thousands arrested, including many young students. Security forces arrested protesters and conducted night raids on the homes of students. They also arrested Oromo community leaders and cultural figures, and many detainees were reportedly tortured and raped.[39]

The protests gained international attention during the Olympic Games in Rio in August 2016 when an Oromo athlete, Feyisa Lilesa, crossed his arms above his head at the finish line, expressing solidarity with the protesters by using their gesture symbolizing their being handcuffed by security forces. He later requested asylum in the United States. Then, during another massive protest on October 2, 2016, at the annual Irreecha festival in Bishoftu, just south of Addis, security forces fired tear gas into the crowd, causing a stampede in which 50 people were killed after falling into a deep ditch.[40] The government declared a six-month state of emergency on October 8, and by February 2017, the government was claiming the unrest had been quashed. According to the Ethiopian Communications Minister, Negeri Lencho, 11,000 people had undergone training after a first wave of detentions, of whom more than 8,000 had been released, but an additional 12,500 were still being held from a second wave of detentions. The minister said some were simply protesters who were unhappy about a lack of good governance and development opportunities, while others were hardened criminals. He accused terrorist groups intent on violent regime change of inciting the uprising through social media, justifying the government's restrictions on ICT.[41] Although the state of emergency stifled dissent for some time, unrest gradually began to bubble up again, ultimately proving irresistible.

Repression of Civil Society in Ethiopia

In addition to the destruction of the political opposition, the steady evisceration of civil society and the independent press since 2005 helped clear the way for Ethiopia's march toward totalitarianism. As Juan Linz observes,

"The destruction or at least decisive weakening of all the institutions, organizations, and interest groups existing before a new elite takes political power and organizes its own political structures is one of the distinguishing characteristics of totalitarian systems compared with other nondemocratic systems."[42] By the time the EPRDF seized power from the Derg in 1991, Ethiopian civil society had largely been wiped out, although numerous international relief NGOs had reentered the country in response to the great famine in the late 1980s. In its early years in power, the government allowed some space for NGOs to register and conduct a range of advocacy activities. According to an EU study, 120 rights-based NGOs operated in Ethiopia in 2008. Active throughout the country, these NGOs provided civic education, conducted women's rights programs, promoted youth participation, monitored human rights, trained paralegals, and advocated on environmental issues, among many other activities. Some had become increasingly bold in criticizing the government. A coalition of NGOs led by the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO) , as it was then known, had attempted to mount a domestic election monitoring effort in 2005. This effort was initially denied permission by the government but later won court approval. In the aftermath of the elections, the government became seized with the presumed danger posed by an unbridled civil society, which in the absence of strong opposition political parties now seemed to have taken over their role. New restrictions and harassment were steadily mounted, culminating in legislation passed in 2009 (the Charities and Societies Proclamation) that has become a model for similar efforts to rein in civil society throughout Africa and around the world.

Ethiopia's Charities and Societies Proclamation (known as the CSO Proclamation) severely curtailed the work of advocacy NGOs, so that only a few were still active. A subsequent EU mapping study published in 2014 found that operational CSOs in Ethiopia increased from 964 in 2008 to 1,364 in 2014, but that this growth was limited to organizations involved in development activities and service delivery, while those working on rights issues declined. "The rights advocacy CSOs with on-going projects are very few and their impacts on the democratisation process, human rights, and good governance remain extremely limited" due to regulatory restrictions and self-censorship, the report stated.[43] Those advocacy groups that survived had opted to receive no more than 10 percent of their total budget from foreign sources. NGOs and international organizations that refrain from advocacy on most issues may still receive foreign funding. Another regulation in the proclamation that is hindering NGOs requires that no more than 30 percent of the CSO's budget may go to administrative expenses and that the rest must go directly to the beneficiaries. Again, this requirement is not impossible for service delivery groups, such as health or agricultural programs, but for groups that conduct training and civic

education it presents a huge challenge since salaries, rent, transportation, and related expenses constitute most of their budget and are considered administrative costs, whereas only minor items such as workshop refreshments are considered program expenses. Moreover, the penalties for noncompliance are severe, including up to five years in prison. The EU has pushed back, negotiating a deal whereby its funds are counted as local and setting up a civil society fund governed by a committee that includes both government and nongovernmental representatives to allocate the resources. The World Bank has set up a similar fund focusing on accountability. This has benefited some NGOs, as long as their work is deemed harmless by the government. USAID, the American development agency, has refrained from this model, citing an unwillingness to allow an Ethiopian government representative to participate in programmatic decisionmaking, but it is thus left providing little support to Ethiopian NGOs advocating for human rights. Some groups have come to rely much more on volunteer labor, the value of which can be calculated as local contributions.

A premier example of civil society's plight is seen in the difficulties experienced by the EHRCO (to be distinguished from the governmental EHRC), whose members may be justified in believing that the legislation specifically targeted it. Established in 1991, EHRCO was Ethiopia's first human rights NGO. Founded and led for many years by the venerable Professor Mesfin Woldemariam, EHRCO is composed of a diverse array of intellectuals, professionals, and businesspersons. Its periodic human rights reports gained a reputation for reliability and comprehensiveness as the organization matured,[44] although the government characterized the group as "Amharic chauvinists." Despite the government's initial pledges to respect human rights, as well as the human rights provisions in the 1995 constitution, the government refused to cooperate with EHRCO. Long denied official registration, which restricted most foreign funding, EHRCO's all-volunteer staff was largely confined to Addis Ababa in its early years. Nevertheless, the organization did receive a grant of $24,500 from the NED in 1994 to support four branch offices to monitor human rights, organize seminars, and distribute public information on human rights.[45] After EHRCO was finally given legal personality in 1998, many other foreign funders began to support its work, and the organization grew rapidly, expanding its branch offices and hiring full-time staff. EHRCO still accused the government of intimidating staff, and after the 2005 elections, this intensified, as staff were detained arbitrarily on charges including treason and genocide. Nevertheless, EHRCO managed to operate at a "high capacity."[46]

According to EHRCO, however, "the passage of Proclamation 621/2009 by the House of Peoples' Representatives in late 2009 marked a seismic shift in official government policy towards national and international NGOs in general and HRCO [the new name for EHRCO] in particular," succeeding in

"nearly destroying a once vibrant human rights community in Ethiopia." The initial 2007 draft "allowed for byzantine prison sentences for trifling administrative infractions" and met considerable resistance from the international community as well as Ethiopian civil society. Although some of the worst provisions were eventually removed, "the CSO Proclamation is an active assault on CSOs operating in Ethiopia," HRCO declared.[47]

Limitations on funding were especially debilitating. No more than 10 percent of the budget could come from foreign sources for NGOs engaged in children's rights, gender issues, the rights of the disabled, conflict resolution, human rights, democratization, and promotion of the rule of law. Foreign funders were considered to include all governments, agencies, and companies, as well as international agencies and groups and individuals residing abroad. In addition, all domestic income-generating activities had to get approval from the Civil Society Agency (CSA), tacitly undermining such efforts. As noted earlier, the provision requiring that at least 70 percent of a CSO's budget be allocated to program activities, leaving only 30 percent for administration, and the severe fines for any violation were equally difficult to comply with. The CSO Proclamation also allowed the CSA to enter the premises of any CSO without a warrant and search the property, take original documents, and interrogate employees. The proclamation established a General Assembly of CSOs with the power to change the rules or dissolve any member organization. It also established Sector Administrators, government agencies with the power to supervise and control NGOs. If an organization failed to comply with any of the regulations, the CSA could suspend or revoke its license, but HRCO contended that "the complexity and number of obligations set out in the proclamation make it nearly impossible for CSOs to adhere to all the provisions," providing the government with "a powerful tool to arbitrarily dissolve organizations."[48]

The direct impact on EHRCO was hard. The required re-registration in 2009 took more than 40 days rather than the anticipated four hours, despite EHRCO's strict efforts to meet all requirements. Article 69 of the proclamation required that if an organization's name suggests it is country-wide, it must have representation in at least five states, which EHRCO could no longer prove since most of its branch offices were closed due to lack of funding. Hence, after 18 years going under the name of EHRCO, the organization in 2009 had to change its name to the Human Rights Council, HRCO, and its old name (or at least the acronym) was handed over to a governmental body. Although groups had assurances from government officials that funds received before re-registration in 2009 could be used during a one-year grace period, the CSA froze all of HRCO's funds in four Ethiopian banks, including a grant from the NED, stating in a letter that HRCO could not re-register and retain assets it had acquired from foreign funding. After failing in an appeal to the CSA, HRCO took the case to federal court.

HRCO contends that efforts to raise funds domestically were hindered by the proclamation's requirement that all donors must be identified and that the potential for government reprisal thus discouraged donors.[49]

HRCO cut its staff from 58 employees with 12 branches in most regions of the country in 2008 to 12 staff working at reduced salaries in three branches and the head office in 2012. Internet time was slashed to 30 minutes a day, and the telephone budget was a pittance. The blow to HRCO's institutional capacity forced the group to close down its branch and membership affairs department, its communications and external relations department, its advocacy and human rights education unit, its legal support unit, and its planning and project development service unit. The burden of what was left of these activities was spread among remaining staff. HRCO's flagship operation, the monitoring and investigation of human rights violations, was formidable, having documented and investigated more than 9,000 cases of human rights abuses and issuing 34 regular and 117 special reports since its founding. This aspect of HRCO was preserved and remains active. The human rights education unit, however, was forced to disband, and related activities were discouraged by the government, despite HRCO's outreach to increase government participation in such activities. HRCO deployed 1,550 domestic observers for the 2005 elections and issued alternative reports on the process, and it estimated that its civic and voter education programs reached 500,000 citizens. When HRCO re-registered, the government removed the voter education and observation programs from its statute. HRCO's Hawassa and Bahir Dar Research Centers are still visited by thousands of community members each year, but they were also under threat of closure.[50]

Other NGOs re-registered as nonadvocacy groups and continued to conduct programs seeking to empower grassroots constituencies, especially women. Even this was tricky. There seemed to be greater space to do such work at the regional level than at the national level, although the law was ambiguous. NGOs went out of their way to engage local authorities and the police in their programs in an effort to increase the receptiveness of the authorities to their work and demystify it. This included, for example, groups conducting activities such as management training, highly valued by government officials, who could also be invited to make presentations or be given awards. Trainees got accredited from the courses and could get pay raises due to their participation. Yet, according to the law, such groups could not charge participants a fee for the training, which would discourage participants anyway. The survival of some NGOs depended on the sheer stubbornness and persistence of staff and their dedication to the mission of the organization. The Charities and Societies Agency was limited in its capacity to go after NGOs to enforce the legislation, but there was always the worry that this could change. Organizations had to reveal their funding sources, which got due attention by the authorities. The law was like a

sword hanging over the heads of civil society; whenever the government wanted to crack down, it could summon it, but the provisions were so complex and draconian that everyone was left in a state of uncertainty and fear.[51] It was a high-stakes game. Although the government justified the proclamation as necessary to prevent foreign meddling in domestic politics and to increase the accountability of NGOs, in fact it was widely understood to be a thinly disguised effort to crush dissent or, even worse, to eliminate any autonomous civil society. CSOs knew their efforts, as innocent and supportive of the government as they appeared on paper, were really considered tantamount to attempts to circumvent the law and its true intent.

Other stratagems that activists devised to resist this new legal regime included avoiding the CSA altogether and operating as private or commercial entities. Much activity also depended on personal connections and unofficial tolerance of NGO activities. One initiative started a "Judge Judy" program on national television and published a magazine promoting civil society, legal aid, and training. The Chamber of Commerce engaged in public sector–private sector dialogues that resulted in some significant policy reforms such as ending the restrictions on exports of grain. Such activities took a carefully nonpolitical approach and attempted to appeal to the pragmatic side of the authorities. These surviving reservoirs of social autonomy could soften the resistance of sympathetic authorities, or they could gradually acquiesce to the consolidation of a totalitarian state.

NGOs sometimes demonstrated great courage in persisting and preserving some political space in an extremely repressive environment, yet they were up against great odds, and their efforts seemed meek when pitted against the formidable power of the state. No group openly criticized the government. In fact, groups had to describe most activities in terms of how they were supporting the government's policies. One of the dangers NGO leaders feared was that participants in programs would ask difficult questions that might imply some criticism of the government, in which case the NGO leaders' answers had to be oblique. The growing weakness of civil society took a toll on human rights and free expression in Ethiopia. Groups could no longer conduct prison visits or investigate incidents of human rights abuse, as EHRCO once did. The muted response, if not complete silence, of human rights organizations in the face of blatant violations of press freedom that soon arose must be attributed to fear of government reprisal.[52]

Repression of the Independent Press in Ethiopia

The independent press in Ethiopia was covered by its own restrictive media legislation and was also nearly silenced. Newspapers, such as the

Reporter and *Feteh*, once attempted to assert some independence, but the criticism of government was subtle and the self-censorship obvious. Ethiopia's anti-terrorism legislation proved to be an even more powerful tool of repression of the press than the media legislation was, and its use in the sentencing of journalists and political activists to long terms in jail for remarkably mild expressions of dissent compounded the fear. The authorities claimed the legislation was copied directly from the British, but its implementation was harsh and sweeping.

In a typically paradoxical fashion, Ethiopia hosted an international conference of the African Media Initiative (AMI) in November 2013. Although the organizers were aware that the government would use the event to lend legitimacy to its media environment, the government was also obliged to allow some critics from outside to attend, and it provided a platform for a handful of courageous independent Ethiopian journalists and bloggers to express their opinions. The conference had been criticized due to Ethiopia's poor press freedom record, and as it happened, most of the panelists in the workshop on press freedom were gentle in their criticism of Ethiopia, speaking about challenges in various other countries, such as South Africa, Tanzania, Kenya, and Mali. Amare Aregawi, dean of the Ethiopian press, noted some of the positive aspects of the Ethiopian government's laws regarding press freedom but also noted that much is left to be done in implementing the laws. He criticized the disorganization and politicization of the opposition press, as well as groups such as the CPJ, which he said honor those who have never been journalists and just want a quick way to get asylum abroad. Zerihun Sebhatu, a media entrepreneur and former NED partner who supported the government, called for a more contextualized approach to press freedom, criticizing Francis Fukuyama's "hegemonic neo-liberal template."

The question and answer period permitted a more vigorous debate, including a local blogger's strong criticism of the repression in Ethiopia and a defense of CPJ's criticism of Ethiopia by the CPJ's Tom Rhodes, who would not ordinarily have received a visa for Ethiopia. The International Press Institute (IPI) issued a press release at the conference calling for the government to free imprisoned journalists and change repressive laws. In a censorship workshop that focused on media councils, criminal libel laws, and other laws restricting the press, the Ethiopian government press representatives made the usual case about the need for journalists to be more responsible and support the government's development agenda. In striking contrast, James Kiazolu, a former president of the Press Union of Liberia, asserted the need for journalists to challenge governments' attacks on the press. On balance, although the conference did provide the Ethiopian government with a public relations opportunity, it also allowed a direct and public engagement with the government on press freedom issues.[53]

Journalists in Ethiopia have had to be very careful; they have faced prison, harassment, and financial hardship. But a handful have persevered, continuing to publish despite the difficulties. Many of these journalists have migrated to an online format, which is less expensive and more secure and is often managed from abroad. One journalist said that in two and a half years in the business, she had encountered many challenges in publishing a monthly newspaper, including a difficult bureaucracy for registration and financial problems. Most advertising for such papers comes from businesses such as international hotels that do not have to worry about the government. The government will not make direct threats, but the journalist had received threatening anonymous emails. Both the government and the opposition have a for-us/against-us mentality, and it is difficult for a journalist to just do his or her job. The journalist I spoke with gave terrorism as an example. Terrorism may be a genuine threat, but the government uses it for its own purposes. To say terrorism is a threat invites attacks from the opposition; to say the government has impure motives brings down the wrath of the authorities.[54] The space for independent journalism has thus declined. Ethiopia's youth are no longer given an alternative. Only one way of thinking is allowed, the journalist lamented.

Journalists also suffered under article 3 of the 2009 anti-terrorism law. In 2013, CPJ documented the cases of seven journalists held in Ethiopia's jails. Woubshet Taye, deputy editor of the *Awramba Times*, since closed down, was sentenced to 14 years in prison in January 2012, accused of planning terrorist attacks in collusion with Eritrea and an unnamed international terrorist group. CPJ considered his arrest and conviction to be in reprisal for his criticism of the government, and the government had rejected his appeals for pardon. Reeyot Alemu, a freelance journalist who wrote a column critical of the government in the independent weekly *Feteh*, since closed down, was likewise accused of terrorism and sentenced to 14 years. Her sentence was subsequently reduced to five years, but her deteriorating health led the UN special rapporteur on torture to issue a report determining her rights had been violated. Eskinder Nega, a prominent online journalist, was sentenced to 18 years in prison in July 2012, accused of terrorism. Five days before his arrest, he had written a column criticizing the government for misusing the anti-terrorism law against journalists and dissidents. Yusuf Getachew, editor of *Ye Muslimoch Guday*, since closed down, was arrested in October 2012 and charged under the 2009 Anti-Terrorism Law. He had been writing about protests by Ethiopian Muslims over government interference in their religious affairs. Solomon Kebede, the managing director of *Ye Muslimoch Guday*, was also arrested and charged with terrorism.[55]

In August 2014, Reporters Without Borders protested the case of three journalists and six bloggers denied bail after five months in prison, since the anti-terrorism law precludes bail. The three journalists, Tesfalem Waldyes,

Edom Kassaye, and Asmamaw Hailegiorgis, and the bloggers, all members of the Zone 9 Collective, Atnaf Berhane, Mahlet Fantahun, Befekadu Hailu, Abel Wabella, Natnail Feleke, and Zelalem Kibret, were accused of contacting and receiving finance and training from Ginbot 7 and the OLF. They each faced up to 15 years in prison. "The Ethiopian government is clearly trying to gag the media," Christophe Deloire, the Reporters Without Borders secretary-general, declared. The journalists and bloggers "have been held for nearly five months without being given the least guarantee of due process. The prosecution still has not said what precisely they are supposed to have done to justify the charges. We call for their immediate release because they have no place being in prison."[56]

Tesfalem, one of the journalists released just before Obama's visit, spent more than a year in prison without being charged. He said the grounds for his imprisonment were an email he had received from the OLF and a 2001 press release he received from Ginbot 7, a diaspora group the government considered to be terrorist. Another reason may have been criticism of the government's policies that he made at the AMI conference. His arrest shortly followed the AMI's publication of the conference report that included his remarks. Conditions were bad in the remand prison where he was held most of the time. The cell was packed with more or less 100 other prisoners with just one small window for light, and also came with bedbugs and poor food, which was fortunately supplemented by food he received from friends and relatives. His release along with four others was a complete surprise, and no explanation was provided, although Obama's impending visit obviously had something to do with it. Since he was released, he said he continued to live in fear, feeling that he is constantly monitored. He said he avoids his friends so as not to endanger them. The government claims journalists have nothing to fear and are just running away for material gain. But the government actually encourages them to go. Tesfalem had a chance to leave Ethiopia but chose to return instead, only to be imprisoned. However, he could no longer pursue journalism, his passion.

The bloggers' lawyer affirmed that the only evidence against the Zone 9 bloggers was the 2001 press release received from Ginbot 7 (before it had been declared a terrorist organization) and an email received from the OLF that had not even been replied to. The bloggers had been calling for people to stand up for their rights, so the government accused them of trying to instigate a Ukrainian-style "color revolution." Not only were charges against the bloggers not dropped, but the bloggers could not even be released on bail. Further, the trial was adjourned repeatedly. The first two adjournments were due to witness statements not having been transcribed and not enough time for preparation. The third and fourth adjournments had no real justification, and even the judge expressed exasperation about the delay. The

Ethiopian judiciary suffers a larger problem of general slowness, the lawyer complained. In addition, the judiciary is subordinate to the executive, especially when the government feels under threat. During the 2015 elections, the courts ruled that the opposition leader should be freed, but this did not happen because the prison warden simply took the court order home. The Supreme Court suspended the order 10 days later. This was the first time such a breach of rule of law had occurred. Judges are appointed by the executive, but they are no longer reviewed, and the nominations are frequently of political officials. The Zone 9 bloggers were all accused together on the same charges; those that were not released had all complained of torture and were more outspoken while detained. The government prefers to charge journalists with terror, not for their writing under the press law. Tesfalem had been accused only on the basis of four or five articles he had edited. The government had accused the bloggers' lawyer of getting involved in politics when he said that the free press was threatened in Ethiopia due to the case, but the lawyer countered that his only motive was to ensure that the rights of Ethiopian citizens were protected. He had worked as a public prosecutor and taught a human rights course at a private university. He does not comment, he said, on nonlegal issues. The lawyer also represented some Anyuak defendants who were accused of terrorism. The Gambella region, home to the Anyuak, was explosive, and many people in jail there needed representation; they have been accused of terrorism just because of their ethnicity. After the CSO proclamation, people have been left defenseless, the lawyer said. Freedom of expression and human rights go together.[57]

With the advent of the internet and massive national security eavesdropping, it is no longer tenable to dismiss African governments as being incapable of the technological control associated with totalitarianism. Although Ethiopia has had one of the lowest internet connectivity rates in Africa at 1.5 percent and mobile phone penetration of 24 percent as of 2012, it has also implemented the most draconian controls on internet freedom. According to Freedom House, Ethiopia is the only country in sub-Saharan Africa to implement nationwide internet filtering. The government has a monopoly on Ethio Telecom, Ethiopia's only telecommunications company. The government's deep packet inspection technology for censorship was discovered in 2012 when it blocked Tor, which helps people communicate anonymously online. Two government internet projects, WoredaNet and SchoolNet, have linked district governments and high schools, respectively, but have also increased the government's broadcasts of political messages to teachers, students, and district administrators. Internet access has been blocked or slowed at sensitive times such as during the Muslim protests, although poor service in general could also be due to corruption and bureaucracy. Investments by the Chinese in the Ethiopian telecommunications sector have heightened fears

that some of the technology provided will be used for repression, such as surveillance cameras and satellite jamming equipment. Freedom House has also documented extensive and increasingly sophisticated blocking of independent online news media, websites, and blogs. Ethiopia passed the Telecom Fraud Offences law in 2012, which banned Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) such as Skype and Google Voice, as well as other advanced communication applications.[58]

A suit filed against the Ethiopian government in 2014 by the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) at the US District Court of the District of Columbia illustrates Ethiopia's capabilities. EFF's client, Mr. Kidane, an American citizen of Ethiopian birth, discovered sophisticated spyware, FinSpy, produced by Gamma Group International, on a laptop in his home in suburban Maryland. The Ethiopian government had been recording his Skype calls and monitoring his web and email usage, which was reported back to a server controlled by the government, all in violation of US law. The Ethiopian government in its response did not deny that it had been spying but asserted that the activity had taken place in Ethiopia beyond the reach of US law and that the government reserves the "discretion" to conduct such activity.[59]

Thus, as is the case throughout the world, although communications technology provides activists and ordinary citizens greater means to make their voices heard, getting around government restrictions on print and broadcast media, it can also serve as a tool for surveillance and control. The Ethiopian government has, at least, made a concerted effort to use communications technology for its own purposes of totalitarian repression. In the end, however, it could not contain the constant innovation and persistence of journalists, bloggers, and ordinary citizens both in the diaspora and within the country to communicate and organize.

Repression of Academic Freedom

For decades, the university, academic freedom, and the student movement have been an important arena of political contestation in Ethiopia, and both students and faculty have traditionally been at the vanguard of ferment and revolt. As already described, students led the uprising against the Emperor Haile Selassie in the 1960s, ideologically inspired by Karl Marx, Che Guevara, Mao Zedong, and Frantz Fanon. In the spring of 1974, students and intelligentsia organized into two Marxist-Leninist groups with European and North American origins, the EPRP and Meison. They had called for the military government of the Derg to become midwives of a "people's government." In the Zemecha campaign, some 6,000 university students and 50,000 secondary school students traveled into the country-

side to drive the Derg's radical land reform policy and organize peasant associations. As the students became more radicalized, the EPRP and Meison began attacking each other, and the violence escalated into what became the Red Terror, eventually leading to the consolidation of the Derg's power and Mengistu's ascendance.[60]

The universities remained a recruiting ground for the government but also became increasingly problematic. Student EPRDF members were graduating from the university with no job prospects. Some years ago, the government had assigned them to making cobblestones, and they rebelled. Yet they are much better off than the rural lumpenproletariat, noted one observer.[61] Merera told me that thousands of Ethiopian students are currently undergoing two weeks of mandatory political training emphasizing EPRDF ideology. He attended some of the training as a faculty member of the university and reported that it was "promoting the political agenda of one party. They are telling trainees that the opposition is fragmented and [is] not capable of leading this country." He said, "My guess is, the EPRDF is trying to set the agenda for the coming elections. They are wary of the young and the academic community." Looking for the silver lining, Merera speculated that "the continued and repeated bashing of liberal democracy might bring the unintended result of spurring support for proponents of the same ideology." Another former lecturer at the university is reported to have commented that "higher learning institutions in Ethiopia are under direct influence of the state" and that "the struggle between policymakers, university top management and academicians will continue to define the fate of institutional autonomy of higher learning institutions in Ethiopia."[62]

Outspoken academics such as Merera have been at risk of losing their jobs. Another example of a casualty of the decline of academic freedom in Ethiopia is Dagnachew Assefa, an internationally respected professor of philosophy, who was dismissed from the University of Addis Ababa for his political views and is now forbidden to speak publicly anywhere. Citing the political philosopher Arthur Oncken Lovejoy when we met, Assefa made the case for academic freedom in Ethiopia, which applies universally. It includes the right to pursue research and publish, the right to free discussion in the classroom, the right to critique the administration intramurally, and the right to critique the government extramurally. By contrast, in Ethiopia, teachers can be fired if they do not show up for political meetings, and their teaching method is imposed by the government. Analyzing the totalitarian role of ideology in Ethiopia, Assefa asserted that the regime has elevated development to the supreme good, and everything else must be sacrificed for it, including freedom. Meles, after all, once said democracy is just a bedtime story, a fiction. (Meles said this in the context of the relationship of democracy to economic development.) The government, Assefa

asserted, is determined to reach midlevel development to give it legitimacy. For the regime, the question is poverty, and the answer is development. But unlike in the Soviet Union, the Ethiopian government is more concerned with domestic consolidation than imperialist expansion. Its attention to ethnicity has helped preserve the union, but the crushing superiority of the army is what is really keeping the country together. In the aftermath of Meles, the army is going off on its own and has no respect for Hailemariam, he said. The security is also branching out. The governors and party bosses are feeling more power.[63]

Think tanks are in short supply in Ethiopia, but the Forum for Social Studies is an independent, nonpartisan, membership-based think tank, the first in Ethiopia. It seeks to provide an alternative to the top-down policy-making that has prevailed in the country. Its research has included studying the large-scale land acquisitions, issues in higher education, and urban public services. Such public-private interaction is difficult, but as long as the Forum has been considered nonpolitical, the government has participated in some of its dialogues. Government officials will not make public statements but appreciate the discussion. The Forum's research must be seen as aligned with government priorities, and government media provides some coverage. Ethiopia has done well with words, but not with deeds, a member of the Forum concluded.[64] Its restrictions on academic debate have hindered policy innovation.

Mass-Based Organizations

The mass movement, including mass-based organizations, is another hallmark of a totalitarian system evident in Ethiopia. As in so many other respects, the EPRDF's predecessor laid the basis for its successor. The Derg had established the Commission for Organizing the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia in 1979, which included eight departments, one of which was devoted to mass organization affairs. This included the single, government-controlled All-Ethiopia Trade Union (AETU) and the All-Ethiopia Peasants' Association and created the Revolutionary Ethiopian Youth Association, Revolutionary Ethiopia Women's Association, and a number of professional associations, all mainly financed by the government. All other CSOs were suppressed. In classic totalitarian fashion, the Derg's mass organizations served essentially as transmission belts for the government, imposing government policy and mobilizing popular acquiescence, if not enthusiastic participation.

After the fall of the Derg, Ethiopia's transitional charter recognized freedom of expression and association, opening up the space for political parties and CSOs. Always under suspicion, civil society nevertheless flour-

ished for a while, but the mass-based organizations maintained much of their old character, sometimes inheriting the buildings and office space of their Derg predecessors. The present-day Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) has played the same supportive role of the government as AETU did; neither it nor the regionally-based women's and youth associations have autonomy from the government and are often largely dependent on it for financial support. A study of mass-based societies (MBSs) in Ethiopia conducted by the Forum for Social Studies and Atos Consulting identified 16 MBSs in Ethiopia, including four university student groups, two coffee and cotton groups, two disability associations, one youth group, one women's group, and one taxi-owners group, as well as 103 professional associations, such as for teachers, health workers, scientists, and cultural bodies. Groups such as the Women's Association of Tigray and the Tigray Youth Association claimed 650,000 and 400,000 members, respectively, and the Amhara Women's Association and Amhara Region Youth Association claimed 600,000 and 844,144 members, respectively. Most members, it was admitted, were not active, and many of the MBSs were found to have weak financial, human, and organizational capacity. Like community-based organizations, the MBSs have been compelled by the Charities and Societies Proclamation to scale back any human rights or democracy advocacy, usually due to the 10 percent restriction in foreign funding. Even voter education under the guidance of the Electoral Board during the 2010 elections was limited. However, according to the study, the MBSs had a more productive relationship with the Ombudsman and Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission in conducting training and educational campaigns against corruption and with the (governmental) EHRC on gender-based violence programs. Further, the Ethiopian Teachers Association reported greater autonomy because of its reliance on member dues. Tellingly, however, the report concludes:

> Unlike other CSOs, MBS[s] are generally organized with the support and facilitation of the government. Their structures follow the organizational patterns of government institutions, and they maintain close working ties with the relevant sector ministries/bureaus. For this reason, they find themselves (perhaps inadvertently) under the oversight of the concerned government bodies, which tend to view them as their executive arms rather than independent entities. The nature of their organization and operation therefore limits their freedom to exercise their mandates, and can expose them to pressure to compromise their interests and roles.[65]

Many people I spoke with noted the rapidly growing membership of the EPRDF, in large part due to the "one-to-five" community mobilization program. An example of the success of this program occurred during the 2010 elections, when the party machinery, working through the *kebeles*

and youth organizations, was effective in delivering the vote to the EPRDF even in the former opposition stronghold of Addis Ababa. Despite this success, as Marco Di Nunzio has observed, the ability of the opposition to gain 40 percent of the vote demonstrates that an opposition is still very much alive. The government had attempted to increase service delivery through local administrations, including a $300 million small-scale enterprise fund that was to reach 1.2 million beneficiaries. After the 2005 elections, it had also established leagues as the mass youth and women's wings of the party, and forums, which were meant to connect local government administration with communities and promote government policy. But members of these structures were expected to work hard to deliver results during the elections, with each member convincing at least 10 friends, neighbors, or relatives to vote for the ruling party. They would also have to turn out bodies for campaign rallies. Not all of these cadres expressed a lot of enthusiasm about this duty, some mainly just seemed to be interested in access to whatever material benefits were available. In the end, participating in rallies and voting for the EPRDF were regarded as a "game of appearances." Some feared reprisal for dissent, as occurred after the 2005 elections, and some would mock the ruling party even as they attended rallies; but much of the population simply acquiesced to EPRDF rule, seeing no alternative.[66]

The experiences of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Ethiopia's large Muslim community, and a growing Protestant movement are also indicative of the EPRDF's efforts to control Ethiopian society. Under the emperor, the Orthodox Church had reigned supreme; under the Derg, all religions were denounced and persecuted; while under the EPRDF, religious pluralism was initially embraced, and the 1994 constitution guaranteed religious freedom. Once again, however, in the wake of the 2005 elections, religious institutions joined political parties and civil society as objects of suspicion for the government. The ascension of Abune Paulos, who served as patriarch of the Orthodox Church from 1992 to 2012, was perceived as having been orchestrated by the EPRDF to assure the church's compliance. Likewise, ostensibly to counter the growing influence of Salafi fundamentalists, the government intervened in Ethiopia's Islamic Affairs Council to favor a moderate Sufi order, the Al-Ahbash. This move was met with protests every Friday from January 2012 to August 2013, including one incident in which police killed 10 demonstrators in the town of Assasa. The government's repressive actions, including the arrest and trial of the protest leaders, have largely quelled the protests. The government's ability to maintain control over competing ethnic and religious interests has also been aided by economic incentives and sanctions. According to one source, however, everyone in the churches and mosques was praying for the end of the regime.

Economic and Military Power

Ethiopia's economic structure is dominated by government parastatals, yet small businesses abound, at least in Addis, hinting at a rising middle class. Although it is difficult to imagine that there has not been some trickle-down economic benefit from all the international investment and construction that can be seen everywhere, many Ethiopians complain about inflation, unemployment, and the increasing divide between the rich and poor. International development experts praise the new dams and sugar plantations as visionary and signs of progress, while critics point out the massive displacement and environmental destruction. The World Bank documented that Ethiopia has averaged 10.8 percent annual growth from 2003/4 to 2014/15, mainly due to services and agriculture. Poverty had fallen from 55.3 percent in 2000 to 33.5 percent in 2011. Primary school enrollment has quadrupled, child mortality has been halved, and access to clean water has doubled over the past two decades.[67] Yet the system is overwhelmingly top-down, and it is difficult to assess any policy in the absence of democratic accountability. Brittleness and contradictions abound. As a minority-dominated regime strives for legitimacy, it has been under greater pressure to perform than a democratic government would be. Repression, combined with economic development and "good governance," has become the recipe for its survival.

According to one Ethiopian analyst, no matter what the obscure political trajectory of the government may be, in the aftermath of Meles, the ascendency of the military is the most outstanding political phenomenon in Ethiopia. Established in 2010, the Metals and Engineering Corporation (METEC), a military-controlled corporation similar to Iran's Republican Guard, has gained control over 20 companies, including the electoral mechanics, parts of the Renaissance Dam, a drone project, and the new light rail. Thus, the military definitely has an impact on politics and is increasingly visible. It is immune from prosecution, the analyst said. Hailemariam is not assertive, and the balance of power is changing fast. He must therefore defer to the real power, the military. The foot soldiers are mainly Oromo and Amhara, but the officers are largely Tigrayan. Surprisingly, the Ethiopian auditor general had criticized the army. But now, the army is shielded from such scrutiny.

According to another interlocutor, most Ethiopians have withdrawn from politics however much they might resent the current system. A cab driver confided that no one speaks his or her mind except at home or in a car; another confidante suggested that it is dangerous to speak one's mind even at home. The EPRDF has constructed a very strong state through the *woredas*, *kebeles,* and lower levels of governance and control. The party now has six million members and completely dominates the state. Although the state may not yet be fully totalitarian, the vestige of a political opposition that remains

is not credible. Under Hailemariam, the EPRDF was still dominated by the TPLF. Although there were only a few Tigrayans of the 23 cabinet ministers, and the lower level civil service was also becoming more diverse, the mid and upper levels were still Tigrayan, and the army and intelligence had hardly changed at all. The Tigrayan elite felt pain when Meles died, but not the Tigrayan people. Meles had been a micromanager, but in the absence of a single powerful leader, there was no more focus on the details. The party has some ideologues, but most of the leadership are not intellectuals. Thus, there is not a lot of scope to engage the government at an intellectual level; it is tanks versus think tanks. Ethiopians disagree about everything as a nation.[68]

In this context, some Ethiopian activists suggested that something is better than nothing. They must take advantage of what little space exists, and although they take risks, they also want to stay out of jail. Various NGOs, trade unions, and business organizations were established by the government with little credibility, but over time these fronts have overshadowed or co-opted the legitimate groups. Genuinely independent civil society has withered away. It therefore becomes necessary to identify alternatives. The trade union federation may be a government-controlled body, but it still offers a vehicle for civic education by enterprising trade union activists. The courts are weak and judges underpaid, but they can still render justice in nonpolitical cases. The tension between the regional and national governments also occasionally offers some space for political autonomy. Contrary to the assertions that Ethiopia has an authoritarian political tradition, strong democratic traditions existed at the local level and can be revived. One such popular traditional institution, the *siqee*, empowered women to play a leading role in the democratic resolution of disputes. Indeed, as Merera suggested and the Ottaways found at the time of the Derg, it may be going too far to categorize Ethiopia as a full-fledged, consolidated totalitarian system. Small pockets of political autonomy survive; much of the population has simply withdrawn from politics, dissenting privately. In some ways, the system manages to be relatively benign; as long as it is not threatened, it delivers the economic goods, at least. But it also seems unsatisfied with this; it needs more control, more party faithful, more police. It may espouse democracy, but it knows that real democracy would spell its doom, if for nothing else but ethnic resentments. In the meantime, some activists have become resigned to the system in place. In their words, Ethiopians just wait.[69]

Succession and the Future

Meles's illness and death at the relatively young age of 57, announced on August 20, 2012, raised grave concerns about succession and sustainability. Yet the ascension of Hailemariam to replace Meles proceeded smoothly, in

accordance with the constitution, even though Hailemariam's actual power within the EPRDF was far more limited than Meles's had been. Hailemariam belonged to a minority ethnic group and was regarded as a technocrat. Assessments at that time declared there were no "reformists" within the government, only political factions, such as one lining up behind Meles's wife and another behind Bereket Simon, the powerful communications minister. The prediction then was that at some stage the party would begin to eat its own. Before it was known that Meles was dying, he had stated that he would not run for reelection, and countering the fears of chaos and violence that would ensue with his departure, he prepared the way for his heirs. Older leadership was systematically retired and replaced by a younger, well-educated new generation. Building on this, in the wake of the Oromo protests, Hailemariam appointed a new cabinet that included more technocrats and replaced much of the old guard, although all still had strong affiliations with the EPRDF. Having successfully suppressed yet another uprising for the time being, while conceding little, the regime demonstrated impressive resilience.

This stability has brought many rewards. The Ethiopian government has received generous international support, considering its unsavory track record on democracy and human rights. The international community could be forgiven for being misled by the democratic rhetoric in the early years of the EPRDF, but this can no longer be an excuse. Since 2005, each US State Department Human Rights Report has been more damning than the previous one, but the Ethiopian government has paid little regard. It knows the report has no impact on policy.[70] Although human rights issues are sometimes raised in private meetings, the discussion is done in the mildest way. The outstanding example of this occurred before the 2015 elections, when US Assistant Secretary of State Wendy Sherman praised the Ethiopian government for its democratic progress. Aid officials assert that economic growth is the best route to democracy, and although such officials will speak out about the need for democracy, they have done little to help. The opening that diplomats had hoped for after the 2010 elections never happened; if anything, repression increased, as the convictions of the prominent journalist Eskinder Nega and the other political activists revealed.

The elections in May 2015 produced even less opposition representation, underscoring not the government's interest in democratic opening, but its determination to show its power and ability to control. Despite the fact that all of the Ethiopian opposition claims to be pro-American and would not threaten American interests, the opposition gets little sympathy in the United States. The United States has attached itself firmly to the regime in place, despite predictions of collapse. Some Ethiopian activists have said they feel betrayed by the United States. They admire America's democratic ideals but realize that the United States does not apply those ideals to Ethiopia. Even the EU and World Bank have been tougher on Ethiopia than

the United States has been. Under these circumstances, some activists have said, it is difficult to imagine a nonviolent transition.

International development experts and scholars in Addis whom I interviewed over the years generally concurred with the notion that Ethiopia had become a totalitarian society, but with some ambivalence. One contact described the country as a communist dictatorship dressed up in developmental state jargon. The model is moving away from that of modern China, which had seemed to be opening. Instead, Ethiopia is becoming something more akin to the China or Soviet Union of 50 years ago. The current leadership, this analyst said, are unreformed Marxists, and Meles's "Revolutionary Democracy" probably remains the best description of the EPRDF's ideology. Some accusations against the regime remain without sufficient data or documentation to back them up, such as whether party membership is required to enter the university or get a civil service job. There may be some bias in favor of party members, and many Ethiopians certainly join the party with this expectation, but it may not be official policy. The notion that there should be one party member for every five citizens has a new corollary that there should be one policeman for every 10 citizens. The government calls this "community policing," but in practice, it only instills greater fear and suspicion. How the state can afford such a huge apparatus is mind boggling. Party membership may not be taken seriously by all, but party members do attend several meetings a week, pay dues, and undergo intense indoctrination.[71]

In a more charitable view, according to one international development official, Meles's legacy indeed lives on with the policies of revolutionary democracy. In his analysis, at this stage, full democracy would be messy and could divert the government. The government will rule on its own terms. The NGO bill may have been promulgated too hastily, with unintended consequences. Still, there is space for conversations to address headaches such as the 70-30 provision in the CSO law. Many new people are coming in, but the ideology, loyalty, and party indoctrination ensure that everyone knows the talking points. Some elements of the judiciary retain some independence, but civil service is a party factory. At the community level, there can be some demand for accountability. There is a lot of gray; what is happening in one place may be different from what is happening in another. The villagization in Gambella was poorly planned and less than adequately implemented. Some communities have refused to participate, but they were not punished. There have been no forced removals or systematic abuse, this official asserted, despite bad behavior on a sporadic basis. Most of the land concessions have been in uninhabited areas, although nearby communities have experienced tension due to highlanders moving into the south. The official admitted that violence has sometimes occurred, as in the case of Verdante, where the local Majong community burned down

a center. Likewise, South Omo was a nasty environment—local security forces were killed, and the retaliation was excessive. Communities may have legitimate grievances, but the situation is complicated, he insisted. Under the circumstances, international agencies are training police and providing legal aid at the university, helping prevent violence with training on resource management, and aiding with capacity building for disability organizations, anti-female genital mutilation (FGM) programs, and artisanal communities. Agencies can even consider election support, work with the government to improve service delivery, and help find ways to improve daily lives by increasing participation and demand. But if the government is pushed too hard, doors close.[72]

Although most international observers in Ethiopia that I spoke with thus admitted that Ethiopia was a closed system, this persistent ambivalence generated complacency. They betrayed little notion about how bad the political situation was, where the country was heading, or whether it was anything to worry about. One observer remarked that Ethiopia seemed oddly similar to China, except the business environment and press were more open in China. The observer noted that the poor, rural areas of Ethiopia are very different from Addis, and removed from politics. The echo chamber of Addis is the hotbed of opposition. Another observer posited that Ethiopia is a competitive authoritarian system, even though no one can really compete against the ruling party. There are the trappings of a democratic system, but the opposition is fractured. Prime Minister Hailemariam was low key and in the process of consolidating his power. The Parliament was becoming more assertive. The government can mobilize the population, sponsoring massive rallies, such as one that had recently been held in Meskel Square to protest intolerance. The one-to-five rule assigning one party cadre to monitor five others is not necessarily a means of authoritarian control, but it can be an effective way to deliver health care as well as ensure voter turnout. One cannot say the government does not care about the people. After steady development for 10 years, Ethiopia may soon be ready for democracy, but Westerners are impatient. The previous totalitarian regime of the Derg had forced people back to their primal identities, and only ethnic federalism was possible. With time, the government and opposition may gradually begin to feel more comfortable sitting down together to discuss economic policy and democracy.[73]

With so many excuses, the hypocrisy begins to feel palpable. US policy toward Ethiopia during the Obama administration included democracy and human rights as one of four "pillars," but the other pillars—security, development, and trade—were easier to manage. International organizations must maintain access or they will get nowhere, the argument goes. Modest, if not cosmetic, changes are encouraged. For example, modifying the electoral code so that it is no longer a first-past-the-post system might allow more opposition representation in the next elections. Likewise, the

Anti-Terror Law was reasonable; it just needs better implementation. The government is justifiably worried about Ginbot 7 due to its past experience with guerrilla movements, even if the group is militarily inconsequential and the government's heavy-handed crackdown on dissidents only exacerbates tensions. It is necessary to know how to talk to the government: One cannot talk about the opposition; one must use the right euphemisms.[74]

Like the AMI conference, the Ibrahim Governance Weekend held just a day later at the AU headquarters in Addis highlighted the contradictions, as well as the doublespeak, of both the Ethiopian government at the time and the international community. Mo Ibrahim is a Sudanese entrepreneur and billionaire who has used his wealth to promote democracy and human rights in Africa. The Ibrahim Index of African Governance and Mo Ibrahim's annual award to an African head of state who has stepped down from office after democratic elections are respected efforts to improve African governance. Holding his Governance Weekend in Addis, despite Ethiopia's low scores for democracy and human rights in his own index, provided an opportunity to engage the government on these issues but also risked legitimizing the government's repressive behavior. In suitable fashion, the conference opened with musical stars such as Bono, Youssou N'dour, and Angélique. The AU president, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, mainly limited her remarks to Africa's new growth potential, the importance of women, and a plug for more attention to maritime issues. She also paid tribute to the vision of Ahmed Sékou Touré, one of Africa's worst dictators, as described earlier in this book.

Two panels at the Governance Weekend were held in "Davos-style" talk-show format and brought together six prominent experts each, all of whom made astute observations about issues such as Africa's youth, the impact of social media, the continent's development potential, economic integration, and freedom of movement. Mo Ibrahim, one commenter at the conference remarked, once avowed that if he were CEO (chief executive officer) of Africa, he would fire all the current managers. This was not suggested in the case of the Ethiopian hosts of the conference, however. Indeed, the inherent contradiction of the conference was that it was a gathering of the very managers and elites who are a big part of the problem. References to corruption were oblique observations about governance and rent-seeking, not the wholesale kleptocratic looting going on throughout much of the continent. Youth were described as a rather abstract demographic challenge, or a technologically savvy basis for economic growth, but barely registered as a political force growing frustrated and restive in the streets, recruited by politicians for their militias or struggling with poverty and unemployment. There were notes of caution, but the general tenor was upbeat, which felt good but, like the beautiful new Chinese-built conference rooms of the AU, seemed incongruent with the reality outside, as one commenter at the conference could not help but observe. Praise for Ethiopia's economic develop-

ment failed to note its status at the bottom of the Mo Ibrahim Index's ranking for participation (aka democracy) and human rights.[75]

Ethiopia is an important country in Africa; its more than 100 million citizens give it the second largest population on the continent, and its status as the home of the AU increases its influence within Africa and internationally. Although not quite the Orwellian hellhole that its sister nation to the north, Eritrea, is, Ethiopia still exhibits many of the same totalitarian attributes, including mass arrests and torture. The AU is not the same club of dictators that the Organization of African Unity was two decades ago, but the developmental state framework and ideas such as the repressive NGO legislation, anti-terrorism legislation, and press controls pioneered by Ethiopia have been imitated by neighboring Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and other governments around the continent. Meles's legacy lives on, and although his immediate successors lacked his charisma, they had yet to contend with the post-totalitarian decay that ultimately brought about the collapse of the former Soviet empire. Ethiopia's electoral process held little democratic credence, human rights violations continued, and whatever group controlled the EPRDF showed few signs that it was ready to relax its relentless drive for social, economic, and political power.

Yet dissidents and protests persisted. Digital communications have served as an instrument of surveillance, propaganda, and control, but they have also allowed courageous bloggers and exile activists to get their messages out to those who can manage to find internet access, even if it is often limited. International pressure, as circumspect as it was, kept probing for opportunities. The EU's success in negotiating an innovative funding mechanism for Ethiopian civil society is a laudable example. Due to the Cotonou Agreement, the Ethiopian government officially considered EU funds to be national support not restricted by the CSO proclamation, since the government could maintain a formal role in how the funds were allocated. The EU's democracy fund proved to be a life-saver for the Human Rights Council. The EU has been closer to the Human Rights Council than the United States has been, as the group made clear in a report on the occasion of Obama's visit. But the US Embassy has since been paying more visits. The council had been infiltrated by the government, and suffered some administrative headaches, but it had addressed this and managed to survive with the help of some local donors. With the EU support, the council now has a new board of directors, and the offices were being renovated when the author last visited. The council will be able to expand dramatically the number of human rights monitors deployed throughout the country, just as it was able to do more than a decade ago. HRCO still had to provide reports to the government and maintain strict accounting, but it accepted this responsibility. Similarly, many NGOs in Ethiopia attempted to adapt, regularly engaging the government. This required a

nonconfrontational approach, the use of evidence-based data for advocacy, and the cultivation of personal relationships.

Despite the sense after the 2015 elections that the government had reinforced its power and that prospects for democratic change were bleak, cracks in Ethiopia's totalitarian edifice continued to appear. As the Oromo protests demonstrated, large reserves of autonomous resistance remained throughout the country. The security forces responded with some brutality, and the government was able to restore control, but the system could no longer be considered impregnable. The authorities' lip service to democracy placated the need for a more serious dialogue; but the power of the internet to penetrate the country, despite the government's best efforts to stop it, inevitably enlightened the public. The foreign investment, the economic growth and urbanization, and Ethiopia's growing power in the region and on the continent required adaptation, but as China shows, this need not coincide with dramatic political liberalization. Unlike the Derg, the EPRDF's totalitarian drift was not quite so ugly; the ideology has been "postmodernized" and softened, the mass movement had become less coercive, the monism ostensibly more diverse. There is no longer a bipolar world, and the EPRDF had been pragmatic and skillful in cultivating its partnerships. As far as the international community is concerned, a few massacres and thousands of political prisoners barely register in the fight against terrorism and stemming the tide of immigration. It would have seemed that if the economic growth and relatively good governance continued, then the majority of the Ethiopian population might eventually surrender to the heavy hand of the state.

Or not. On April 3, 2018, Abiy Ahmed was inaugurated amid great fanfare as Ethiopia's first modern Oromo leader and a reformist. Any country, democratic or authoritarian, may be ruled by a charismatic leader, but totalitarian regimes tend to rely on them, at least to get started. Meles qualified as charismatic, but his successor, Hailemariam, barely managed to establish his authority before being compelled to step down. Abiy's youthful charisma has charmed many, but he has been a part of the military or OPDO/EPRDF, including deputy director of the Information Network Security Agency, for most of his adult life. His appeals for democracy and reconciliation have raised expectations, but Meles had risen to power amid similar hopes, and the democratic rhetoric of Meles and Hailemariam, as this brief study has shown, soon proved empty. Ethiopia could now be entering its post-totalitarian phase, if the monistic control is loosened and the ideological drive and mass mobilization efforts are scaled back. Despite the olive branch Abiy has extended to the opposition, the EPRDF remains the sole political party wielding power, while the TPLF and the security forces will continue to assert their influence within the EPRDF. In such a post-totalitarian order, moving beyond the tyrannical leader and his bureau-

cratic successor, the question, to return to the Russian paradigm, is whether Abiy will prove to be a transitional Gorbachev, a revolutionary Yeltsin, a revisionist Putin, or, most likely, something altogether new. More than five years after Meles's death, emerging from a protracted contest within the EPRDF, Abiy pronounced in his inaugural address, "We look at political parties outside of EPRDF as competitors rather than enemies, as brothers who have alternative ideas and who love their country, and as collective citizens."[76] The new leader's words offered a glimmer of hope.

A Postscript

Less than a year later, both the power and the vulnerability of Ethiopia's astonishing democratic reforms were becoming evident. In February 2019, the iconic Charities and Societies Proclamation was ditched and a new law was drafted by a working group that included human rights activists. The Council of Ministers gave its assent. Other working groups and commissions had been established to revamp the old repressive laws and reform the structures of government. Ethnic conflicts had broken out around the country, suddenly generating at least two million internally displaced persons (IDPs), the most in the world at the time after Syria. At first, the government had been reticent in its response, but gradually it began to display its resolve with force, and somehow the IDPs soon returned home and a relative calm was restored. The Ethiopian state had demonstrated its resilience and strength. The EPRDF was firmly in control; it was the same party in name, but a different regime. A brief postscript is thus necessary.

Jima Dilbo Denbel is director general of the newly renamed Civil Society Agency. "Charities and Societies" had been deemed too condescending. The agency is undergoing fundamental reforms. The new law will allow foreign funding to advocacy groups, as long as it is lawful. Registration will be simplified and may be possible to do online. Groups will no longer have to provide the agency with their proposals. The administrative versus program breakdown will be changed to 20-80, but the definition of administrative expenses has been broadened. A civil society council will be established to develop a self-regulation system and code of conduct. The power of the CSO agency will be more limited, with the authority to suspend, but not cancel, activities. The board of the agency will be half government and half civil society, plus one. The agency will also administer a civil society fund. Funding that was frozen for some organizations will be released. Old staff of the agency are being let go, and new staff will be brought in. Although the relationship between the agency and CSOs had been hostile, it is changing. More groups will be brought under the purview of the agency rather than the foreign ministry. When I presented my business card to Jima, he smiled,

noting that NED's name would have raised concerns a year ago, but no longer. NED is welcome to work in Ethiopia, he said. CSOs will play a significant role in building the new democracy the government wants.[77]

Another reformer in the attorney general's office concurred. The best minds of the country have been pulled together to guide the reforms, he claimed. The CSO agency needs retraining and reorientation. The previous head has passed away, and the old cadres have seen NGOs as enemies. It needs an overhaul. Beyond the proclamation, the law's directives are even more restrictive and need to be dealt with. The government must make sure the reform translates into implementation. Groups should be automatically re-registered, and registration should take no more than half an hour. A new filing system must be adopted, and the staff will not be able to resist. He said he had seen the Kafkaesque rows and rows of battered paper files in the CSO Agency office. The level of corruption in the agency has been "interesting," he said with a knowing smile. The agency staff used to become trustees of seized NGO assets, which tended to disappear. Engaging with the larger democratization process, the CSO working group has been the most productive and effective, but the working groups may be running out of energy. There needs to be a reset of the process to get the momentum going again. It has depended mostly on the goodwill of volunteers. Support—technical, moral, and financial— is needed. Resistance to reform has been ineffectual, and the attorney general can dismiss anyone who is not with the program.[78]

If mass movements once served as an instrument of totalitarian control in Ethiopia, that is the case no longer. Kassahun Follo became president of the CETU a couple of years ago. CETU has 650,000 members in eight geographic branches that do not correspond to the government's ethnic national states. It uses only one working language, Amharic, and its members come from every ethnic group, making it demographically a small Ethiopia. The country may be divided ethnically, but not CETU. It does not matter where the members are from, they are all workers. In recent years, the CETU has gradually asserted its independence. Kassahun had allowed the independent teachers association to meet at the CETU headquarters despite threats from the previous government. He demanded the government provide a written order forbidding the meeting, and the government backed down. Now CETU no longer has a problem with the government, and it is free to do whatever it sees fit. A new labor law is being finalized with the Council of Ministers that includes day care and paternity leave. Some employers are resisting. There are also efforts to raise the minimum wage. Under the previous government, labor law reforms had been rejected; CETU had thus mobilized its members to go on strike, and the government again backed down. The government had accused Kassahun of supporting the Oromo uprisings, which he denied. CETU has been successful in gaining the right to organize in the

industrial parks, despite efforts by employers to keep trade unions out. A Korean company has agreed to let 8,000 workers organize and gave them a 200 birr ($8) monthly raise. The investment commissioner was not happy, but the Koreans have created a good example. The Chinese have been more difficult and have fired workers for attempting to organize. The current minimum pay is just $45 a month; something closer to $85 to $100 would be more fair, Kassahun suggested.[79]

I had a reunion with Merera in his office at Addis Ababa University and asked him to explain the apparent demise of Ethiopia's developmental state. It was only after the 2005 elections that Meles brought in the big idea of the developmental state, he explained. This had given the Communist Party of China legitimacy. But although the EPRDF was definitely totalitarian, it could not get the same legitimacy as the Chinese due to Ethiopia's diversity and the many sectors that were resisting. The structures were there, such as the one-to-five system, but the EPRDF could not control a population of 100 million. The upward reporting was not always implemented, although some said this did not matter, since cameras were always watching anyway. The *kebele* councils increased from 600,000 to six million, the party membership increased from 700,000 to five million. The talk was there; the cadres were talking, but the opposite was happening; instead of tightening control, the government was losing it. The democratic centralism was there, but it was paralyzed. Concerning the ideology, it was never important, he said; it was the intention to control that mattered.

When the Derg took over, the Marxism was good for control, even though the military was more used to the feudal system. Liberal democracy had lost out long ago with the aborted coup in 1960. At that time, some fled to China or the Soviet Union, but most of Meison's leaders were educated in France or the United States at the time when the children of the West were revolting against "the establishment." Merera was among them, although he avowed that he was but a foot soldier. They wanted change, it was the fashion. Fanon, Che Guevara, Mao, and Ho Chi Minh were the heroes. The Russians did not come until after the revolution. Mao's methodology was important for organizing the peasants, which was why the TPLF was more successful. Sebhat Nega was the intellectual star of the TPLF, while most of the others, including Meles, had just secondary educations. The Maoism was mixed with Tigrayan nationalism. The TPLF defeated the Derg but failed to achieve political victory and was always a minority, thus its tendency to overcontrol and overcentralize. The rhetoric was empty. It espoused the right to secession but was pitted against huge political groups that had little power militarily. It tried to buy and sell to control the structure, like the British strategy of indirect rule, but lost legitimacy with the local population. It raised the ethnic card, which was dangerous when there were larger groups. The economically dominant Gurage were displaced by

the Tigrayans, who made enemies and were in conflict with everyone. Whatever good things it did, the TPLF regime did not get credit due to the perception of ethnic bias. The ideology was not important; the regime tried to push it, but in terms of empowering the people, the people asked, "Where's the beef?" They criticized the Derg but behaved the same way. The people were moved off the land, their livelihood was not improving. There was nothing to the developmental state.

Lenin said that revolution comes when the ruling class cannot rule the old way and the people refuse to be ruled by them any longer. In addition, social media allowed greater political communication, especially among the youth. At one point, the control of technology was working for the regime, but then it fell into the hands of the youth, who could communicate internationally, despite the efforts of the regime to stop them. When Merera was released from prison, he tried to keep a low profile, but people soon got word of his release via social media, and by the time he got home, he was celebrated by the slaughter of three cattle and many sheep. The regime had lost the mandate of heaven, the people had liberated themselves. It had failed to deliver freedom, development was limited, prices were not controlled, and ordinary citizens did not benefit.

As for the future, Merera warned that the EPRDF is fragile. Abiy (whose name means "the prophet") has lured the Amhara, but the party has lost its Oromo base. Now there are nearly 100 political parties, perhaps 50 of which are Oromo. Realignment could occur, and Merera is advising Abiy to balance his support. If the EPRDF plays a bad game, it could lead to balkanization. The TPLF needs to come on board rather than resisting the reforms, which would be foolish. But criminals must be prosecuted. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission could be a model. Ethiopia's regional arrangement should be reversed; ethnic federalism has become too divisive. Ethiopian unity and national equality need to be accepted by all. There should be no more secession, but pro-unity forces cannot deny group rights. In the next 10 to 20 years the regional arrangement should be democratized. Democracy has a chance in Ethiopia, Merera felt. The ethnonationalist forces are disarming, and the OLF just wants a better space. In terms of democracy, Ethiopian culture is not so bad. The ways of resolving conflict in traditional Ethiopian culture are not far from democracy. The central problem of Ethiopia is the elite struggle for power. The Amhara believe they created Ethiopia and want to come back. For the Oromo, democracy means separation. The Tigrayans say they should stay in power. The other elites are more modest. But the youth are not connected with any of them. Democracy has to be accountable. That is the way forward.[80]

All the journalists have been freed. Woubshet, Reeyot, Eskinder and many of the others are back to work. A new and more liberal press law is in the final stages of drafting, and the Ethiopian press is reviving. The inde-

pendent online publication *Addis Standard* has gotten more than one million hits, the staff told me, and will soon return to a print edition as a monthly magazine. Social media targets the youth. A change in the media law is anticipated. *Addis Standard* covered the IDP crisis despite its sensitivity. Most of the nearly two million IDPs have indeed returned. Everyone these days is trying to get attention, so people like journalists. Some 30,000 civil servants were purged in Oromia and replaced by younger recruits. *Addis Standard* strives to be objective, which is hard. Most media coverage is mediocre, not in line with the reform, and feeding off of rumor. No one is afraid to talk anymore, and on social media, everyone is an activist with 1,000 "friends." Fake news thus spreads like fire; some is big and dangerous, much of it is marginal. Social media awareness is not well developed, and Facebook is considered authoritative. There is a gray line between hate speech and free speech, but laws are mechanical.

The proposed hate speech law cannot gauge intention, and it could be a slippery slope. The Telegram app has become popular and has a feature that is a good way to counter fake news; it has end-to-end encryption, is fast, cheap, and secure. It is used mostly in Eastern Europe and Ethiopia. People are more comfortable on social media than mainstream. *Addis Standard* has to maintain its reputation; it is tempting to report breaking news, but one must be careful. Ethiopia has six or seven radio stations, two broadcasting in English, and 10 television stations, many of which are religious-based. Fana radio and ETV are government supported but reasonably independent and more popular than they used to be. Ethiopia has only one printing press, which is run by the government, but the CEO has been removed, and it has become better. Ethiopia still has only one internet provider, but the sector is expected to be privatized soon, and Vodafone is coming as well. Penetration is still low, with only 20 million subscribers. Ethiopia has no more imprisoned journalists, which has been lauded by Freedom House and the CPJ. Daniel Bekele, a former human rights activist, should head the Human Rights Commission, and Birtukan Mideksa is heading the electoral commission. Is all this too good to be true?[81]

I met with Biniam Abate, executive director of HRCO. The organization is developing a plan of action and is likely to put together a civil society coalition to conduct election monitoring and civic education. Leadership that had fled into exile are returning and will help rebuild the organization. Human rights monitoring will continue to be a priority. He was concerned about abuses surrounding the IDP situation, but most do seem to have returned home, where they will still need assistance. He was delighted that Bekele would be heading the Human Rights Commission. Now that HRCO has begun to reestablish its offices around the country, it will be able to officially reclaim its old name, EHRCO. In fact, he said, the staff had never stopped using the old name.[82]

Notes

1. Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2011: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties," October 2011, http://freedomhouse.org/template .cfm?page=363&year=2011.

2. US Department of State, *Ethiopia 2012 Human Rights Report* (Washington, DC: US Department of State, 2012), 1.

3. Richard Pankhurst, *A Social History of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa University: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1990).

4. Marina and David Ottaway, *Afrocommunism*, (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1986), 128.

5. Gérard Prunier, "The Ethiopian Revolution and the Derg Regime," in *Understanding Contemporary Ethiopia: Monarchy, Revolution, and the Legacy of Meles Zenawi,* ed. Gérard Prunier and Éloi Ficquet (London: Hurst and Company, 2015), 209–218.

6. Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

7. Gebru Tareke, "The History of Ethiopian Revolution and the Red Terror," in *Documenting the Red Terror* (Ottawa: Ethiopian Red Terror Documentation and Research Center, 2012), 41–56.

8. Paul B. Henze, *Layers of Time: A History of Ethiopia* (London: Hurst and Company, 2000), 309.

9. Alex de Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2015), 159.

10. Henze, *Layers of Time,* 308–333.

11. De Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa,* 160.

12. Wolde Amanuel Gedion, *The Day of the Martyrs* (Addis Ababa: Banawe Printing Press, 2010).

13. Gebru Tareke, *Documenting the Red Terror*, 41–56.

14. Marina and David Ottaway, *Afrocommunism* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986) 156.

15. De Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa,* 163.

16. Kjetil Tronvall, "Briefing: The Ethiopian 2010 Federal and Regional Elections: Re-establishing the One-Party State." *African Affairs* 110, no. 438 (2011), 123–124.

17. Ibid., 132.

18. Sarah Vaughan, "Revolutionary Democratic State-Building: Party, State and People in the EPRDF's Ethiopia," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* (February 22, 2012), 625–628. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2011.642520

19. Jean-Nicholas Bach, "Abyotawi Democracy: Neither Revolutionary Nor Democratic, a Critical Review of EPRDF's Conception of Revolutionary Democracy in Post-1991 Ethiopia," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* (February 22, 2012), 647. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2011.642522

20. Ibid., 653.

21. Meles Zenawi, "African Development: Dead Ends and New Beginnings" (October 23, 2012). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240615548_African _Development_Dead_Ends_and_New_Beginnings/

22. Ibid.

23. Alex de Waal, "The Theory and Practice of Meles Zenawi," *African Affairs* (December 5, 2012), 8. http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org/

24. Meles Zenawi, "States and Markets: Neoliberal Limitations and the Case for a Developmental State," in *Good Growth and Governance in Africa: Rethinking Development Strategies,* ed. Akbar Noman, Kwesi Botchwey, Howard Stein, and Joseph

Stiglitz, 34, Oxford Scholarship Online, 2011, https://www.oxfordscholarship.com /view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199698561.001.0001/acprof-9780199698561-chapter-5.

25. Ibid., 35.

26. Ibid., 36.

27. Ibid., 37.

28. De Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa,* 168–169.

29. Ibrahim Governance Weekend notes, Addis Ababa, November 2013.

30. Robert Mattes and Mulu Teka, "Ethiopians' Views of Democratic Government: Fear, Ignorance, or Unique Understanding of Democracy?" (Afrobarometer Working Paper no. 164, May 2016).

31. Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama to the People of Africa" (Addis Ababa, July 28, 2015). https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office /2015/07/28/remarks-president-obama-people-africa.

32. Birtukan Mideksa, in discussion with the author, October 2011.

33. Ibid.

34. Negasso Gidada, in discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, November 2013.

35. Merera Gudina Jefi, in discussion with the author, Washington, DC, September 2014.

36. Amnesty International, "*Because I Am Oromo," Sweeping Repression in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia* (London: Amnesty International, 2014), 15–20.

37. Ibid., 20–22.

38. Ibid., annex, 6.

39. Human Rights Watch, "Such a Brutal Crackdown: Killings and Arrests in Response to Ethiopia's Oromo Protests," June 16, 2016, https://www.hrw.org /report/2016/06/15/such-brutal-crackdown/killings-and-arrests-response-ethiopias -oromo-protests.

40. Jason Burke, "Ethiopia: Many Dead in Anti-government Protest at Religious Festival," *The Guardian,* October 2, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016 /oct/02/ethiopia-many-dead-anti-government-protest-religious-festival.

41. John Aglionby, "Ethiopia Hails Success in Quashing Wave of Anti-government Unrest," *Financial Times,* February 1, 2017. https://www.ft.com/content/2f50133a -e85d-11e6-893c54a7f539.

42. Juan Linz, Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes, 68.

43. Gebre Yntiso, Debebe Haile-Gebriel, and Ali Kelkilachew, *Non-state Actors in Ethiopia—Update Mapping, Final Report* (Addis Ababa: European Union Civil Society Fund II and Civil Society Support Programme, February 2014), 81.

44. Ethiopian Human Rights Council. *Democracy, Rule of Law and Human Rights in Ethiopia: Rhetoric and Practice*. Addis Abeba: The Ethiopian Human Rights Council, 1995.

45. National Endowment for Democracy, "Annual Report 1994," 38. (Washington, DC: National Endowment for Democracy, 1994)

46. Human Rights Council, *The Impact of the CSO Proclamation on the Human Rights Council* (Addis Ababa: Human Rights Council, July 2011), 2–3.

47. Ibid., 3.

48. Ibid., 6.

49. Ibid., 9.

50. Ibid., 14.

51. NGO activist, in discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, July 18, 2012.

52. Yordanos Abebe, "Ethiopia's Alleged Terrorists: Vocal Bloggers and Independent Journalists," October 21, 2014, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/ethiopias -alleged-terrorists-vocal-bloggers-and-independent-journalists/

53. African Media Initiative conference notes, Addis Ababa, November 9, 2013.

54. Discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, November 8, 2013.

55. Committee to Protect Journalists, "2013 Prison Census: 211 Journalists Jailed Worldwide," December 2013, https://www.cpj.org/imprisoned/2013.php.

56. Reporters Without Borders, "Press Release," August 21, 2014, www.rsf.org.

57. Discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, October 2015.

58. Freedom House, "Freedom on the Net 2013: Ethiopia," http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2013/ethiopia.

59. Nate Cardozo, "EFF to Ethiopia: Illegal Wiretapping Is Illegal, Even for Governments," October 20, 2014, https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2014/08/eff-ethiopia-illegal-wiretapping-illegal-even-gove....

60. Randi Ronning Balsvik, "A Quest for Free Expression: The Student Movement in Ethiopia and the Red Terror," in *Documenting the Red Terror: Bearing Witness to Ethiopia's Lost Generation* (Ottawa: Ethiopian Red Terror Documentation and Research Center, 2012), 32–39.

61. Discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, July 18, 2012.

62. Mikias Sebsibe, "Scrutinizing 'the Training' Behind Closed Doors," October 7, 2014, http://thereporterethiopia.com/index.php/in-depth-politics/item/2587-scrutini.

63. Dagnachew Assefa, in discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, October 2015.

64. Meeting with members of the Forum for Social Studies, Addis Ababa, October 2015.

65. Ezana Amdwork and Ayalew Gebre, *Mass Based Societies in Ethiopia: Prospects and Challenges, Final Report* (Addis Ababa: Development Assistance Group Ethiopia, March 2012), 46.

66. Marco Di Nunzio, "Do Not Cross the Red Line: The 2010 General Elections, Dissent, and Political Mobilization in Urban Ethiopia," *African Affairs* (July 8, 2014), 1–22. http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org/

67. World Bank, "The World Bank in Ethiopia," http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ethiopia/overview.

68. Ethiopian analyst, in discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, November 2013.

69. Ethiopian activists, in discussions with the author, Addis Ababa, July 18. 2012.

70. Ibid. Discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, July 18, 2012.

71. American expatriate in discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, July 18, 2012.

72. American expatriates in discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, November 7, 2013.

73. Ibid. Discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, November 7, 2013.

74. Ibid. Discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, October 2015.

75. Ibrahim Governance Weekend notes, Addis Ababa, November 10, 2013.

76. Kichuu Info, "Full English Transcript of Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's Inaugural Address," April 3, 2018, https://kichuu.com/abiy-ahmeds-inaugural-address/.

77. Jima Dilbo Denbel. Discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, February 2019.

78. Staff of Attorney General's office. Discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, February 2019.

79. Kassahun Folo. Discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, February 2019.

80. Merera Gudina. Discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, February 2019.

81. Staff of Addis Standard. Discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, February 2019.

82. Biniam Abate. Discussion with the author, Addis Ababa, February 2019.

5

A Postmodern Totalitarian Paradise: Rwanda

Paul Kagame, the president of Rwanda, is justifiably proud of his country's political achievements, the way the country has healed "the deep-seated wounds of a shattered society in need of both justice and reconciliation." The trauma Rwanda endured in the course of 100 days of genocide is still tangible more than 25 years later, and its impact on the political system is unmistakable. Challenging outside critics who advocate for greater democracy, Kagame responds, "It was precisely a system of pluralistic politics that played a major role in the genocide, as newly formed parties with shared extremist ideology outperformed the former one-party state in mobilizing the population to commit mass murder." Nevertheless, "Rwandans do have a voice in their own affairs," he claims, citing the country's adoption of a system of decentralization, *imihigo*, and the high turnout in the 2010 elections that proved the government's popularity.[1]

Rwanda's government has delivered in the face of daunting challenges. President Kagame points to the reintegration of two million former *génocidaires*, the lifting of one million citizens out of poverty in just five years, the million tourists who visit each year, universal health insurance, the rapid declines in child and maternal mortality, and Rwanda's provision of the fifth largest peacekeeping contingent to the UN. The country's social and economic development is based on political development and on strong institutions and policies emphasizing consensus-building, national unity, and accountable public institutions, he has said. "A strong capacity for popular mobilization at all levels of society was also essential, as we worked to transform mindsets. Everyone matters. Each citizen needs to be convinced of the direction for change, and each

one must be afforded the opportunity to offer input to the process," according to Kagame. "The *Gacaca* system we established to try genocide cases was able to hear two million over ten years" but was discussed extensively across the country before being implemented, despite foreign objections. "Inclusive politics and accountable governance are the reasons why Rwanda is not just secure, but stable," he asserted.[2]

Despite Rwanda's economic success and apparent "good governance," the political system displays many totalitarian features. But in contrast to the crude Orwellian version of totalitarianism exemplified by Eritrea and to a lesser extent by Ethiopia, Rwanda's political system more closely resembles the superficially benign Brave New World version, a perfect example of what Larry Diamond has termed *postmodern totalitarianism*. The functionality obscures the repression.[3] The focus on a planned economy is the essence of both Meles Zenawi's and Paul Kagame's "developmental democracy." It is also consistent with totalitarian rule.[4] President Kagame has acknowledged the occasional resort to authoritarian measures, and the usual repressive indicators are readily found for Rwanda. To cite Freedom House, in the case of Rwanda this includes dominance by the ruling party, the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF); control of the media and civil society; a lack of academic freedom and freedom of assembly; and a nonindependent judiciary. Freedom House gave Rwanda credit for its *gacaca* courts, its efforts against corruption, and the high percentage of women represented in the Parliament. In 2016, Rwanda scored a 6 in Freedom House's ranking of civil liberties, downgraded from a 5 in 2015, and it scored a 6 in the political freedom category, situating it in the same class as Angola and Cameroon (as well as Iran).[5]

The US State Department's Human Rights Reports have corroborated this assessment, emphasizing the government's harassment, arrest, and abuse of political opponents and human rights advocates. The reports have also cited disregard for the rule of law among security forces and the judiciary, restrictions on civil liberties, and support of rebels in the DRC. The 2013 report summarized: "Other major human rights problems included arbitrary or unlawful killings both inside and outside the country, disappearances, torture, harsh conditions in prisons and detention centers, arbitrary arrest, prolonged pretrial detention, and government infringement on citizens' privacy rights. The government restricted freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and association."[6]

Filip Reyntjens has diagnosed Rwanda's political governance system, and although he refrains from using the word *totalitarian,* his findings clearly correspond to the criteria for totalitarianism established in this book. He concludes that the RPF "wanted full and total power from day one" and achieved this through physical control of territory; through political control demanding loyalty not just from elites but from rural popula-

tions as well, and enforced by violence if necessary; and through "a shrewd communications strategy aimed at keeping the international community at bay." In pursuing a monistic project, he finds, the "regime was able in a short time to establish total control over state and society." Preferring to classify Rwanda as a "strong case of hegemonic authoritarianism," Reyntjens finds Rwanda's elections "do not perform any meaningful function other than consolidating a dictatorship," not even meeting the minimum requirements for electoral authoritarian regimes. In fact, contrary to other authoritarian regimes, where protests are occasionally heard, the RPF's physical and, on occasion, violent control succeeded in avoiding any publicly aired contestation, at least domestically.

Gradually eliminating dissent, the regime "established full physical, political, administrative, and judicial control over the country's territory and its population." According to Reyntjens, political and civil society have been emasculated, if not completely eliminated. The independent press suffered a similar fate. Further, the regime's use of terror is well documented. Reyntjens condemns the RPF, in the wake of the Congolese holocaust, for "some of the worst violations of international humanitarian law committed during the late twentieth century." Even mild criticism from the international community "was treated furiously and with disdain. Manipulation and deceit were shamelessly used. It was a risky but successful tactic." A powerful ideological and mobilizational program is also at work. In building a utopian society, according to Reyntjens, "the regime believes that it is possible to legislate unity and modernity into existence, to create a new Rwanda and a new Rwandan." He cites the obligation of ordinary citizens to send their children to school with shoes and uniforms, to dig latrines, use mosquito nets, and to comply with numerous other bureaucratic hassles. Furthermore, he faults this social engineering for being "both top-down and aimed at control." The government's actions are also "heavy-handed, radical, and immediate, and they are informed by a strong sense of entitlement among RPF elites." He acknowledges the regime's technocratic and economic success. He also credits the regime for its successful management of information and imposition of its own version of truth, and he repeatedly castigates the international community for its duplicity. "Rwanda is not an average African dictatorship," he avers. "It is a place where everything is excessive: violence during and after the genocide, human rights abuse, repression and terror, exclusion, entitlement and lack of it, resentment and rage, fast and radical engineering, good bureaucratic and flawed political governance, distance between narrative and between the spoken and the unspoken, ethnic antagonism." At the center of it all, he notes, is Kagame, who "is certainly a man with vision and ambition" but is "probably the worst war criminal in office today."[7]

Genocide

Genocide must always be associated with totalitarianism, just as Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, and Pol Pot are. Although political scientists do not consider genocide to be a necessary feature of totalitarianism, and it is barely present in the literary accounts, Rwanda and the totalitarian system that has evolved there cannot be understood outside the context of genocide. In fact, two genocides must be considered. The first great Rwandan genocide, and the best known, occurred in 1994, and was brought to an end by the current regime just before it came to power. Nearly 800,000 Rwandans, mostly Tutsi, as well as some moderate Hutus, were killed in just 100 days, many at the hands of neighbors wielding nothing more than machetes. The second genocide, which began in 1996, was even more deadly, and lasted much longer.

Genocide is a form of mass terror that targets groups or classes of people rather than individuals for destruction. As Hannah Arendt noted, although genocide was not even understood as a crime until after the Holocaust, the extermination of entire peoples has occurred since antiquity.[8] Terror is often associated with totalitarian systems, but its virulence varies, and it may also occur in nontotalitarian systems. Likewise, some totalitarian systems, such as in Cuba, are not associated with genocide. Yet the link between genocide and totalitarianism is not coincidental. Juan Linz asserts that "systematic, large-scale, formally organized, imposition of penalties, including death, without even the semblance of an adversary procedure and in the absence of an emergency situation, has been characteristic of totalitarian systems."[9] Moreover, the "most striking characteristic of terror under totalitarianism" is the "moral self-righteousness with which it is justified." This is apparent in the Rwandan genocides and is a feature of the current government ideology. Arendt was direct: "Terror is the essence of totalitarian domination," she insisted.[10] For all the other evil attributes of the regimes of Hitler, Stalin, and Pol Pot, the perpetration of genocide stands out as their most outstanding feat of terror. Unfortunately, such genocidal terror has been no stranger to Africa.

The Germans colonized Rwanda around the turn of the century, and it was taken over from them by Belgium after World War I. The Belgians introduced official distinctions between Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa, which had before that been primarily social distinctions, reflecting the racist attitudes prevalent among Europeans at the time. Since Rwanda's independence from Belgium, violent conflict between the Tutsi minority and the Hutu majority has flared periodically, causing thousands of deaths and creating flows of refugees, including a large settlement of predominatly Tutsi refugees in Uganda to the north. Some of these refugees assisted Yoweri Museveni to take power in Uganda in 1986 and later formed the RPF and its military wing, the Rwanda

Patriotic Army (RPA), which led a guerrilla war against the Hutu-dominated regime of then-president Juvénal Habyarimana. Habyarimana had seized power in Rwanda in 1973 and established a one-party government under his party, the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND), modeled after the Chinese. All Rwandans were required to be members of the party, and among other means to impose its dominance, the party organized weekly communal labor meetings, *Umuganda,* as well as indoctrination meetings, or *animation*. Parallel state and party structures helped control the population, and most social organizations were also controlled by the MRND. Initially the party had enjoyed popularity, but eventually Rwandans became disenchanted and began to disengage from the regime and seek alternative social organizations, which Timothy Longman credited for providing the population with "relief from the totalizing project of the party-state and its attempt to control every aspect of social, political, and economic life."[11] This culminated in demands for a national conference in 1990. Although the Habyarimana government was thus forced to open up to multiparty politics in 1991 and civil society was blooming, the regime was also militarizing in response to the RPF threat and becoming more coercive as its legitimacy was challenged. The RPF had been negotiating with Habyarimana, and the Arusha Accords, a peace agreement, was signed on August 4, 1993. But on April 6, 1994, before the agreement could be implemented, Habyarimana's plane was shot down, providing the rationale for hardliners and extremists competing within the regime to unleash a campaign of mass extermination of all Tutsis and their sympathizers. Alison Des Forges has called it "one of the defining events of the twentieth century." Her nearly 800 pages of documentation of the genocide, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, written on behalf of Human Rights Watch, is the most comprehensive and authoritative history of the Rwandan genocide.[12]

The totalitarian elements of the genocide Des Forges described are abundant. For example, the mass mobilization of the population was done through the tradition of communal labor, *Umuganda*, while the government provided a moral legitimacy that obscured the evil in which thousands of ordinary citizens were to join. Reminiscent of the Nazi experience were the race hatred fueling the Hutu Power ideology; the stormtrooper militias such as the Interahamwe; the plotting of extremists such as Colonel Théonest Bagosora and Ferdinand Nahimana; virulent propaganda such as spread by the *Kangura* newspaper and Radio Télévision Libre des Milles Collines; the manipulation of language and use of code words such as "work," "tools," and "cockroaches" to mean the Tutsi; the relatively small number of cadres who organized and led the initial stages of the genocide; and the onion-like web of political and military hierarchies, such as the *akazu*, led by Habyarimana's wife. Des Forges dismissed ancient tribal hatreds, poverty, and overpopulation as possible causes of the genocide

and laid the blame squarely on "the deliberate choice of a modern elite to foster hatred and fear to keep itself in power." The relentless horror of massacre after massacre, in Gikongoro, Nyakizu, Butare, almost everywhere, and the personal testimony of so many victims and perpetrators attest to the stupendous trauma that Rwandans endured. Des Forges also documented abuses by the RPF, which, although on a smaller scale than those committed by the *génocidaires*, included numerous massacres and assassinations during the genocide and its immediate aftermath, such as the massacre at Mukingi and the killing of the Rwandan Catholic archbishop. The RPF acknowledged that it had committed some atrocities within Rwanda during the war, such as the killing of 8,000 IDPs at Kibeho, but explained the atrocities as the collateral damage all too common in a civil war. A report by a UNHCR mission led by Robert Gersony estimated that between 25,000 and 45,000 persons had been killed by the RPF in such incidents, but the report was suppressed. Des Forges also documented with precision the timidity and complicity of the international community, including the United States, France, and the UN, in allowing the genocide to occur. In its brief time in power, Bagosora's regime slaughtered some three quarters of the Tutsi population before the RPF mobilized to defeat the genocide militias and government troops, the Forces Armees de Rwanda (FAR). For a time, the *génocidaires* were effectively protected by the French Opération Turquoise in southern Rwanda before the RPF pushed the génocidaires, along with hundreds of thousands of non-combatant refugees, into neighboring Zaire.

We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families, by Philip Gourevitch, is a more literary account. Gourevitch struggles to understand why the genocide happened, the psychology behind it, and the implications for Rwanda's future. Among his many informants, one proposed that "Rwandan culture is a culture of fear," another identified obedience to authority, another that Rwandans are "an uncommonly suspicious people," and another, that the Rwandans passively accept death. Gourevitch made a strong case that Habyarimana's MRND government "had calcified into a mature totalitarian order" when it claimed 99 percent of the vote, turned out mass rallies supporting the government, and made the population perform communal work. He observed that a copy of a movie version of *Mein Kampf* was found in the ruins of Habyarimana's home after the RPF takeover. Under pressure from France, Habyarimana announced in June 1990 that Rwanda would transition to multiparty democracy, but this raised more dread than hope, as Habyarimana had afforded some protection to the Tutsi minority, while others in the MRND who would break away to form competing parties harbored a more extreme Hutu Power ideology, even calling for a "final solution." "The Hutu Ten Commandments" was a popular document, rivaling *Mein Kampf*'s anti-Semitism in its vitriol against Tutsis,

but Habyarimana regarded it as evidence of Rwanda's freedom of speech. However cynical Habyarimana's motives were, a democratic opening threatened those in power. What is so troubling about the Rwandan genocide, as Arendt has identified in the case of Eichman, is how ordinary men and women can get caught up in the rhetoric, follow orders, look the other way, abandon morals, collude and scheme, all the while apparently heedless of the disastrous consequences, as if nothing could be more normal and, even, banal. Gourevitch's analysis built on that of Arendt. "Genocide, after all, is an exercise in community building," he said. "A vigorous totalitarian order requires that the people be invested in the leaders' scheme, and while genocide may be the most perverse and ambitious means to this end, it is also the most comprehensive." Rwanda's genocide was a product of order and meticulous organizing; Hutu ideology was called "the logic" for a utopian salvation.[13] Gourevitch also found that lack of technology was no obstacle to genocide or, by extension, to totalitarianism. The people were the weapon; everybody was implicated.

Gourevitch is more sympathetic to the RPF than Des Forges is, but like Des Forges, he is scathing in his indictment of the international community. "The West's post-Holocaust pledge that genocide would never again be tolerated proved to be hollow, and for all the fine sentiments inspired by the memory of Auschwitz, the problem remains that denouncing evil is a far cry from doing good," Gourevitch lamented. Over time, the historical memory of the genocide has become a matter of contention. It is clear that the UN, and the United States in particular, failed to respond appropriately. After having been stung by the Somali "Black Hawk Down" fiasco, the Clinton administration wished to avoid any further African military entanglements. It thus resisted any description of the genocide as a genocide, which would have compelled intervention and might have saved tens of thousands of lives, lobbying instead for a withdrawal of UN troops. Clinton, and US administrations ever since, have thus sought to allay their guilt by favoring Kagame's Rwanda. But Des Forges sought to remain objective. She, and others who have described episodes of RPF reprisals against Hutu refugees, are dismissed by the current RPF government, which accuses those who suggest that both Hutu and Tutsi were innocent victims, and that both sides committed crimes, of promoting genocide ideology.

The second genocide was perpetrated by the current RPF regime after it came to power. Gerard Prunier documents the catastrophe thoroughly in *Africa's World War*.[14] To deal with the threat of *génocidaires* who had fled over the border into massive camps in the country then known as Zaire, the RPF invaded Zaire in 1996, in alliance with Zairian rebels led by Laurent Kabila. The RPF and its allies chased the RPF's enemies across more than 1,000 miles of forest, mercilessly slaughtering some 600,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees—including many *génocidaires*—and barely leaving a trace.

They killed an estimated 1.7 million Congolese as well. Unlike the first genocide, this one was barely noticed by the international community, and, to the extent that anyone was aware, it was considered a sad, but just, punishment. No memorials have been built, a UN investigation was suppressed, and there has been no accountability, no trials. The invasion culminated in the fall of the Mobutu regime, the installation of Kabila as the new president, and a new name for the country, the DRC. In fact, the conflict that traces its origins to that invasion continues to this day and had killed a further estimated 5.4 million Congolese from 1998 to 2007, albeit mostly from starvation and disease.[15] Human beings have not been wiped out on such a scale since World War II. By this calculation, in the course of the two genocides, 8.5 million have perished.

Genocidal terror was an instrument of members and allies of the Habyarimana government to seize and wield power. It not only created massive death and destruction, but it generated widespread revulsion, which led to the international trial and conviction of many of the government's leaders, as well as the implication of two million Hutu in the genocide who faced justice in Rwanda's *gacaca* system. This legacy of genocide, the trauma experienced by the entire nation, the total elimination of the previous government, and the accession to power by force of the RPF, were all foundations for what would be the new regime, whether totalitarian or democratic. But the massive death the RPF sowed in Zaire, the will to power, the ruthless spirit of vengeance, and the moral certainty of its cause present a mirror image of the same totalitarian mindset that drove its predecessor.

Ideology

Unsurprisingly, the ideology espoused by the RPF government is the polar opposite of Hutu Power, advocating instead for national unity and the dissolution of ethnic identity. The new RPF government moved quickly to end the national identification system of the former government that forced Rwandans to identify themselves by ethnic group. What has emerged in its place is a kind of anti-genocide ideology that has left little room for questions about the relationship of one ethnic group to another and has led to little room for questions about the government, period. The Rwandan government invests a lot in political education, both domestically and internationally. But in addition to the anti-genocide fervor, it combines a technocratic model of the authoritarian developmental state, much like that of Ethiopia. The imitation and mutual admiration between the leaders of the two governments was evident during a visit by Kagame to Ethiopia on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the TPLF. "You have maintained a principled commitment to self-reliance in all forms; economic, political

and above all intellectual," Kagame said about Ethiopia.[16] Although not on the same enormous scale as in Rwanda, Ethiopia experienced its own Red Terror before the advent of the current government, as has already been discussed. The two governments have thus found much in common, but their solutions to the ethnic question look quite different. Ethiopia has reinforced ethnic identity through its ethnic federalism, claiming to put all groups on an equal basis, while Rwanda has sought to diminish ethnic identity. The irony is that both regimes have, in fact, been dominated by a relatively small ethnic minority.

In Rwanda, as is often the case whether a country is a dictatorship or a democracy, the constitution guarantees all the rights of association and assembly, freedom of speech and information, freedom to form trade unions and to strike, the right to property, freedom of movement, equality before the law, privacy, asylum, education, and health, among others. What is unique in the Rwandan constitution is the prominence of provisions regarding the genocide. The preamble begins, "We, the People of Rwanda, 1.) In the wake of the genocide that was organized and supervised by unworthy leaders and other perpetrators and that decimated more than a million sons and daughters of Rwanda; 2.) Resolved to fight the ideology of genocide and all its manifestations and to eradicate ethnic, regional and any other form of divisions; 3.) Determined to fight dictatorship by putting in place democratic institutions and leaders freely elected by ourselves." Title One, Chapter II, Article 9, then concludes, "The State of Rwanda commits itself to conform to the following fundamental principles and to promote and enforce the respect thereof: 1.) fighting the ideology of genocide and all its manifestations; 2.) eradication of etic, regional and other divisions and promotion of national unity . . ."

Any visit to Rwanda must include a tour of the Kigali Genocide Memorial. It is a somber and compelling place, reminiscent of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem or the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, but on a somewhat smaller scale. While Ethiopia's Red Terror Martyrs' Memorial Museum is relatively unassuming, the Kigali Genocide Memorial occupies a central place in the capital city. It tells the entire history of the genocide, from colonial times through the buildup, slaughter, and aftermath in gruesome detail, including piles of bones and skulls, and with video testimonies. The exhibit labels betray some bias in the account, with no mention of the Hutus massacred both in Rwanda and Zaire, but there is plenty of documentation to prove the ugly racism, reminiscent of the worst Nazi propaganda, of the Hutu Power movement, including the complicity of the Catholic Church. The exhibit also harshly shames the international community, including the United States, for dithering and failing to intervene, and especially indicts France for aiding the *génocidaires*. Some 25,000 bodies are buried in a mass grave outside the memorial.

One section of the memorial is devoted to the other genocides and mass killings that have occurred throughout history, all shameful in their own way. What the memorial achieves, along with smaller memorials scattered throughout Rwanda, is the establishment of a powerful counter-ideology to that of Hutu Power, one that is both tangible and ubiquitous and that drives home the refrain, "Never again." It provides a coherent, unifying national narrative that, ironically, requires the shaming of the majority of the population. What differentiates the Rwandan experience from most of the other genocides the world has experienced is the extent to which the killers and the victims still live side by side more than 20 years later. The German experience of national shame may be comparable in some respects, but there are few Jews remaining in the country that the average German would encounter on a daily basis. Not so in Rwanda.

For many years, Anastase Shyaka headed the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB), which has been given responsibility over Rwanda's NGOs. More recently, Shyaka has been elevated to become minister of local government. He has been an effective and articulate spokesperson for the government and its ideology. In a characteristically frank discussion about Rwanda's authoritarian system, he acknowledged that "Rwanda is not paradise, and has big challenges," but he argued that the West has misunderstood the country. Democracy in Rwanda can improve, but consociational or consensual democracy was required in Rwanda after the genocide, and social cohesion must be restored. Every citizen belongs to the government, he told me. Conflictual democracy as practiced in the United States could lead to a breakdown in order and a return to genocide. He said that the government is not hindering civil society or the media, but by their own assessment, they are weak. He considered only the Institute for Research and Dialogue for Peace (IRDP, discussed later in this section) and Transparency International to be serious NGOs. In his view, civil society and the media simply have not had much to offer the government. The Kenyan media, he said, is much stronger than Rwanda's and is threatening to take over. Rwanda now has 40 press organs, and Kagame holds monthly press briefings.

The media sector has been reformed and now regulates itself, thanks to help from IREX (formerly the International Research Exchange Board), an international media NGO. State media is being transformed into public media and will be independent of the government. A freedom of information bill will soon be passed, he assured me. The government has decentralized, and 30 percent of the budget goes to the regions. It was no accident that the RPF got 95 percent of the vote in the last elections; Rwandans, he said, have reason to love the government, which has brought them reconciliation and power sharing. Kagame is very results-oriented, committed to the people and delivering beyond their expectations security, reconciliation, and development. He has put up high standards and catalyzed his movement. Shyaka

went on to say that although Kagame is inspirational, it is also the party and the people who are with him that account for Rwanda's success. Singapore is not Rwanda's model; Rwanda will find its own democratic path, as long as openness does not conflict with development. The opposition parties are weak because they have no alternative policies to the government and are just ethnic-based. Shyaka said they need to be developed, and a series of new laws has steadily opened the space for opposition political parties. Recognizing the importance of civil society, the RGB even manages a small grant fund to bolster Rwandan civil society.[17]

At a later public meeting at the Atlantic Council in Washington, DC, Shyaka elaborated on the RGB's new "I Am Rwandan" campaign, aided by a PowerPoint presentation. He explained that as the "one stop center for governance matters in Rwanda," the RGB promotes principles of good governance, including private and public decentralization; monitors governance practices and quality of services; conducts governance research to inform public policy reform; documents and assesses local initiatives; registers NGOs and political parties; coordinates media development and reforms; and advocates policy nationally and internationally. He described the key pillars for Rwanda's nationbuilding as confronting the genocide legacy through justice and reconciliation; building national security and national security institutions, including integration of the defeated FAR; accountability and equality; and homegrown initiatives for rapid growth. "We put togetherness above diversity," he stressed, noting the persistence of "divisionism" and the fear that politicians could mobilize another genocide. Yet he also noted the progress made in reconciliation, citing statistics indicating 72 percent of Rwandans trust one another; 90 percent of Rwandans trust the country's leaders to do what is in the citizens' best interest; 98 percent of Rwandans aspire to "Rwandanness," and 90 percent see national unity as the key strategic policy shaping Rwanda's destiny. He also touted Rwanda's control of corruption, which reaches levels comparable to that in South Korea and Taiwan, and the steady reduction of poverty and tripling of per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in the past 10 years. The "I Am Rwandan" campaign is making Rwanda more predictable; predictability is the mother of security; and with security comes development, he concluded, appealing for international solidarity.[18]

The IRDP is housed in a pleasant complex near the Kigali Genocide Memorial. It was founded to study what happened to cause the genocide and how people could kill members of their own families, to engage people in dialogue, and to identify the challenges and solutions for peace. When I visited the IRDP, the director at the time was Pierre Rwanyindo Ruzirabwoba, an authority on genocide ideology. He said Rwanda's hierarchical society and blind obedience to authority are contributing factors to the genocide, and the churches and elders did not function as they should have.

He said the institute is trying to rebuild critical thinking so that people think critically instead of simply reacting to rumors and manipulation. The institute conducts a governance barometer, serves as a bridge between government and citizens, and has a steering committee that implements advocacy efforts. It has been able to hold student debates, provide space for women's dialogue, and has held a forum on sensitive topics such as "relations between Tutsi and Hutu after 17 years." The institute is combating the genocide ideology promoted by the previous regime. Rwanyindo said the current government is trying to be different by putting in place institutions for good governance such as the constitution, which gives power to the people, but not representation. He said that there is separation of powers in the constitution between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, and that multipartism, civil society, and decentralization are also provided for. The question, he said, is whether these mechanisms function. His answer: a bit, but not a lot. He placed much of the blame on the weakness of civil society and the parties. The RPF imposed its power and ideology on the government, and the opposition parties found it comfortable to remain in the government of national unity. They have no ideology, no policies, and lack vision, he said. They are parties in name only. Even within the RPF, there is less space for debate. In his view, Rwanda has strong people, but not strong institutions. The society is still fragile, and parties need to focus on programs rather than ethnicity. Rwanda's emerging middle class could be more demanding of political space and participation, he said.[19]

The Rwandan Kool-Aid goes down easy. Rwanda deserves credit for the dramatic social and economic progress the country has made since the genocide, and it gets a lot. Unsurprisingly and with some skill, the government has learned to speak the international jargon, but on its own terms. As Shyaka, Rwanyindo, and Kagame's remarks demonstrate, the government is adept at attractively packaging itself for international approval. Public relations, as well as propaganda and indoctrination, have been highly effective in legitimating the regime. Reyntjens observes, regarding Rwanda, that "the use of the instruments of knowledge construction has an extraordinary impact on the relations of those in power with both their own citizens and the outside world." He suggests this may be due to Kagame's experience as head of military intelligence in Museveni's National Resistance Army. This has been successful with the international community, but also "domestically, the RPF has decreed one single truth and devised instruments (legislation, intimidation, 're-education,' silencing alternative voices) to avoid its being challenged, at least publicly."[20]

Unlike Nazi or communist ideology, the RPF does not spout racism, class warfare, or world domination. It offers redemption from genocide and a comprehensive program for nationbuilding, but it can hardly be described as promoting a chiliastic ideology. Although similar, its program sounds

less radical than the revolutionary developmental state conjured by Meles. But as one rather cynical observer explained to me, the evidence to suspect that Rwanda is a totalitarian state is plentiful, even if it comes wrapped up in a pretty package. According to this assessment, the Rwandan regime shows a strong commitment to an overarching ideology espoused by Kagame, which has its roots in the Dar es Salaam University Marxist theory espoused by many of the region's other "new generation leaders," such as Meles, Isaias Afwerki, John Garang of South Sudan, and Museveni. The party and Rwandan state are one, despite the window dressing of some of RPF's sister parties in the coalition government and the one member of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), who always gets included in photo opportunities. Mass mobilization occurs at every level, from the villagization to the monthly work brigades to the education system. The government has made no progress in opening political space, thus forgoing Millennium Challenge Corporation compliance, although it is still being monitored for possible future accession. Rwanda's new CSO law that was promulgated with the assistance of some international consulting looks fine on paper, but the test will be in its implementation. Institutions close to the government, such as the IRDP, have the potential to provide space to speak more openly. But in a student debate at the IRDP, the competition was over who agreed more with the government. The government sets the measure of what is right and wrong. There is no popular participation. All decisions are top-down. Some of Kagame's inner circle, such as the minister of local government at the time, James Musoni, may wield great power, but they serve at the mercy of Kagame and can be removed at his whim.[21]

Repression of Political Opposition

As in Ethiopia, political opposition in Rwanda has been steadily emasculated over the years that the RPF has been in power. Following the genocide, the RPF took control of Kigali, the capital, and established a government of national unity in July 1994. Pasteur Bizimungu, a moderate Hutu installed by the RPF, served as president of Rwanda until he resigned in 2000, and Paul Kagame, who had been vice president, replaced him. A new constitution was promulgated in 2003, and national elections consolidated the dominance of the RPF, while the largest opposition party, the Democratic Republican Movement, was declared illegal for allegedly promoting ethnic hatred. Four parliamentary commissions between 2003 and 2008 leveled accusations of genocide ideology and divisionism against many individuals and organizations without due process, driving them into exile, and forcing some NGOs and parties to limit their activities. The RPF won 42 of 53 seats in the 2008 parliamentary elections, a result that may

have been undercounted to make it seem more democratic. Kagame won the 2010 elections with 93 percent of the vote, while the most credible opposition candidate, Victoire Ingabire, leader of the United Democratic Forces-Inkingi (FDU-Inkingi), was arrested on charges of genocide denial and collaborating with a terrorist group, then released and re-arrested in October 2010 for engaging in terrorist activities. In February 2011, Bernard Ntaganda of the Social Party-Imberakuri was sentenced to four years in prison for divisionism and threatening state security.[22] In 2012, Charles Ntakirutinka was released after 10 years in prison, a sentence he was given for trying to organize an opposition political party, the Democratic Party for Renewal, with former president Bizimungu before the 2003 elections. Ntakirutinka had been former minister of transportation in the government as a member of the SDP and, after his arrest, was considered by both AI and the US Embassy to be a political prisoner. There may be many political prisoners in Rwanda's jails, but it is difficult to know the number since many were convicted of genocide ideology crimes and divisionism, or just misdemeanors. The US Embassy does not consider imprisoned politicians such as Victoire Ingabire to be political prisoners; in Ingabire's case, the embassy points to the fact that in her trial the government was able to demonstrate that she had published books that espoused racial hatred.[23]

Rwanda's 2013 legislative elections, held September 16–18, provide some additional perspective on the political climate in the country. In the 2013 elections, bureaucratic issues had prevented the opposition Democratic Green Party from being able to register until just 10 days before the election, so that the party did not campaign. The FDU-Inkingi, Ingabire's party, could not participate with its leader in prison, and the Democratic Union of the Rwandan People and the Prosperity and Progress parties were also unable to participate. The ruling RPF and four allied parties, as well as the Liberal Party, the SDP, and the PS-Imberakuri, were the main parties that contested. According to an election monitoring report by the Ligue des Droits de la Personne dans la Région des Grands Lacs (LDGL), turnout for the elections was "relatively significant" and took place with calm and order. However, it also noted an absence of political debate, a reduced political space, and some irregularities in the counting, as well as problems with the registration of independent candidates. The electoral commission is dominated by the ruling party, and the display and counting of the results lacked transparency. None of this called the credibility of the elections into question, the report stated. The elections were peaceful, professionally conducted by the National Electoral Commission, and covered fairly by the media, it observed.[24]

The Rwandan electoral system is complex. In the case of the legislative elections, 53 out of 80 seats are elected on the basis of universal suffrage,

while 24 seats are reserved for women elected by district councils, two for youth elected by the National Youth Council, and one seat elected by the federation of persons living with a handicap. The commission declared that the ruling party coalition won 76.22 percent of the votes, or 41 of the 53 seats up for grabs. The SDP won 13.03 percent, and Liberal Party won 9.29 percent. Both usually support the ruling party. No other parties passed the 5 percent threshold. Women gained an impressive 64 percent of the seats. LDGL's recommendation to the government: "Favour and guarantee the diversity of political parties and opinions in the country that will be conducive of a more open political space."[25]

The Justice System and Human Rights

Regarding Rwanda's justice system, the 2013 US State Department's Human Rights Report on Rwanda identified some progress in criminalizing torture, improving prison conditions, loosening up media laws, and clarifying the anti-genocide laws. Both the police and military got good grades for discipline and professionalism. Abuses by the Local Defense Forces, a 20,000-member informal volunteer police auxiliary, reportedly declined. The *gacaca* courts closed down in 2012 after trying an official total of 1,958,634 cases with a conviction rate of 86 percent. Although the judiciary usually operated without government interference, there were "constraints," and government officials tried to influence some cases. An uncertain number of individuals who had been internationally identified as political prisoners continued to be held. A couple of journalists had been released from prison—Stanley Gatera, editor of *Umusingi*, and Saiditi Mukakibbi, working for *Umurabyo* newspaper—but the editor of the *Umurabyo*, Agnes Uwimana, remained in prison. At least 54 publications were registered with the government, although fewer than 10 published regularly. Some 26 radio stations, including 20 independent ones, were broadcasting, as well as one government and one independent television station. Citizen call-in shows were popular forums for local dissent, and some radio stations were so bold as to report irregularities during the elections. Although media sometimes criticized the government and the new media laws had granted greater press freedoms, the State Department still noted that "self-censorship occurred due to harassment and threats from official and unofficial sources."[26]

Nirere Madeleine of the Rwanda National Commission for Human Rights is another example of Rwanda's benevolent public face, and the government's skill in responding to international concerns about human rights and democracy in the country. Established in 1999 to promote and protect human rights, the Rwanda National Commission for Human Rights had 55 staff and a robust mandate at the time I met with her. It provides

human rights education in the secondary schools and monitors the police and prisons with subpoena power. When violations are committed by local leaders and the police, the commission sometimes intervenes. Madeleine relayed that in one case, some policemen had severely beaten a petty thief, and the commission took the matter to court, which sentenced one of the policemen to eight years in prison. The commission conducts surprise visits to the prisons to assess conditions, and it provides legal aid to children, such as when relatives seize the property of orphans. The commission produced a report in 2006 on the right to housing and found that the government's villagization policy has improved services. It has made an inventory of human rights conventions for the government to ratify, starting with the convention against torture, and has joined the Universal Periodic Review mechanism of the UN Human Rights Council. The commission provides an annual report to Parliament and comments on human rights legislation. Madeleine said Rwanda has seen an improvement in human rights and that people are more conscious of their rights. She noted that the commission monitored the *gacaca* courts and played a big role in mobilizing leaders and judges to respect human rights and report violations. The commission also is working with the women's NGO umbrella to strengthen women's rights with training and advocacy.[27]

Similarly, Rwanda's Ministry of Justice commissioned a study on the human rights situation in Rwanda, which was submitted by Restrad Consultancy Ltd., in April 2015. The report is an expansive document outlining the country's accomplishments and challenges in a wide range of human rights concerns, including the government's failings as well as its initiatives. For example, the report acknowledged, "There is a dire shortage of lawyers in Rwanda, access to legal aid is limited and the majority of defendants do not have legal representation." Although it noted that the number of prisoners had dropped from 145,021 in 1998 to 54,279 in 2014, it still observed that "conditions within many places of detention are a serious concern and efforts should be strengthened to tackle overcrowding." The report provided support for Rwanda's *imidugudu* villagization policy, which gathers citizens in more efficient settlements accessible to schools, health clinics, electricity, and water. The policy was complemented by the government's efforts to move families out of grass thatched houses and into homes with access to water and sanitation. Unlike in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and many other countries in the region, the Rwandan constitution guarantees the right to private ownership of land, and a land tenure reform adopted in 2008 has contributed to the high rate of home ownership and improved social infrastructure. The report admonished Rwanda's burdensome registration process for NGOs and encouraged the government's commitment to relieve this. It also encouraged the government to abolish the annual registration requirement (380 registered in 2014) and to not hinder human rights organizations.[28]

From a rule-of-law perspective, there is a compelling counter-narrative to that promoted by the Rwandan government. According to one confidante, an authoritative estimate puts the number of political prisoners in Rwanda's prisons at approximately 8,000, although the government has claimed there to be fewer than 1,000. One can be imprisoned for anything, including suspicion of espousing genocide ideology or, more recently, supporting terrorism by, for example, having contact with certain outside groups. The recent arrests of some journalists and a famous musician on this charge demonstrate the extent to which the government can monitor every email that is sent or received in the country. These individuals were almost certainly tortured to extract their confessions. Any communication must be done in cryptic, neutral language so it does not get caught in the government's filters. Rwandan law requires that every defendant get a lawyer, and prosecutors will often recruit lawyers to defend their cases just so they can check off that box. For every client that is defended, the government will refer 10 more. The need is overwhelming, and the prisons are bursting. Yet, most prisoners that get a defense lawyer are usually released, because there is typically little evidence against them and the judges have no interest in keeping people locked up. In politically sensitive cases, the decision to convict is made in advance, and no matter what the evidence is, the person will be convicted. It is better to recuse oneself from such cases on the constitutional grounds of conscientious objection, since one would only get in trouble trying to do one's job. Although legal defense is required, the authorities consider it unnecessary, since they are never wrong. Rwanda's law schools provide only limited training. Whatever is done in terms of legal aid, all NGO activities must support the government.[29]

According to a legal practitioner I spoke with, lawyers are afraid to take cases, knowing they cannot be won. The same person said that, unlike in neighboring Burundi, there is no overt police brutality in Rwanda, but the government cannot be persuaded to change its mind under pressure, as sometimes happens in Burundi. It will not let itself appear weak. The security forces act professional and disciplined, and keep the torture hidden. One way the government removes its perceived enemies is by fabricating cases of defilement, which, along with murder, is non-bailable. Defendants can spend years in prison without trial, even when there is clearly exonerating evidence. There are now more than 1,000 lawyers in Rwanda, twice the number a few years ago. But only 10 lawyers take on most of the high-profile cases, which are often assigned to them by the government. Lawyers cannot confront the government head-on, and they cannot challenge the judges. Defendants must present their cases themselves, and the judges will tell the lawyers to keep quiet. Lawyers need to become more confident, I was told. Rwanda is a small country, and everyone in the elite knows one another; some are good, and some are not. People are arrested

for no apparent reason, and they are harassed in other ways as well, such as being given difficulty in accessing loans. People are scared, repression is worse than ever, and information is controlled. The government invests a lot in its intelligence apparatus. Outsiders look at Rwanda and cannot see what people are complaining about; the opposition runs away and accuses the government of crimes from the comfort of exile. In Burundi, the repression is stupid and cruel, but at least it can be seen. In Rwanda, everyone is afraid to talk, and people are always looking over their shoulder. Any registered NGO cannot escape monitoring. The government will follow your movements, and if they want you, they will get you. Lawyers can do much in the name of legal duty; the laws are good, and procedures are there, but the outcomes are predetermined. No one knows how many prisoners are in Rwanda, even lawyers can enter only the prison compound, not the prison itself, and knowledge about conditions is secondhand, not coming from the prisoners themselves.[30]

The Charismatic Leader

In the absence of Meles, Kagame must now rank among Africa's most charismatic leaders: "The Darling Tyrant," as Anjan Sundaram billed him in *Politico* magazine, or "the Global Elite's Favorite Strongman," as Jeffrey Gettleman profiled him in the *New York Times Magazine*. "Spartan, stoic, analytical and austere, he routinely stays up to 2 or 3 a.m. to thumb through back issues of the Economist or study progress reports from red dirt villages across his country," Gettleman reported. He is friends with Bill Gates, Bono, and Bill Clinton, among many other admirers. He also has a reputation for being merciless and brutal and is said to personally beat associates who anger him. As is common in most African dictatorships, portraits of Kagame are everywhere, and some Rwandans even kneel before them and pray. Yet in Gettleman's interview, he described Kagame as shy, nervous, 6 foot 2, and very thin, conservatively dressed and wearing owlish glasses.

Kagame grew up in a Ugandan refugee camp, where he became politically conscious. He joined Museveni's rebel army, and after an abbreviated training at Fort Leavenworth in the United States, he returned to Rwanda in 1990 to lead the Tutsi rebel Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA). After the RPA defeated the Hutu extremists who had committed the Rwandan genocide in April 1994, Kagame became defense minister, vice president, and then president. According to one critic and former adviser to Kagame, David Himbara, Kagame barely finished high school and is insecure. When Himbara worked for Kagame, he said it was necessary to flatter him and give him credit for the work of others. When Gettleman questioned Kagame about an extravagant hotel room he stayed in in New York,

in contrast to his modest home in Kigali, Kagame became testy and "flipped from friendly to imperious," but then regained his professorial composure. At the end of the interview, Kagame confessed, "God created me in a very strange way."[31]

Patricia Crisafulli and Andrea Redmond compare Kagame to a CEO and describe Rwanda as his successful company. He "stays focused on the vision, pushes for results, and demonstrates decisiveness. Just as strong CEOs understand the levers of their businesses that will improve growth and profitability, Kagame knows what is most important to facilitate the growth and development of Rwanda." Based on interviews they conducted, they concluded that "Kagame is a highly skilled motivator of people, leading the turnaround plan for Rwanda."[32] They cited as some of his attributes typical of a successful CEO his intolerance for corruption, steely toughness, and extraordinary courage, his serving as "a role model who has given people a reason to be proud of themselves and their country," his championing of national reconciliation, consistent focus on the future, openness to innovation, and his reliance on his Presidential Advisory Council to encourage investment and development. They noted that Kagame looks for staff with both character and ability, moves them around so they do not come to equate themselves with their institution, and is a good reader of people. They found "no evidence of the president as an iron-fisted dictator," but rather found him to be someone who shies away from the limelight and gives credit to others. "Strong, yes; strongman, no," they contended. Gourevitch is similarly admiring. In the course of his interviews with Kagame, he "always sounded so soothingly sane." Relishing the challenge of reconstructing his country, Kagame "was a man of rare scope—a man of action with an acute human and political intelligence." Not an ideologue, but more than an unprincipled pragmatist, "he sought to make a principle of being rational." He was "convinced that with reason he could bend all that was twisted in Rwanda straighter, that the country and its people truly could be changed—made saner, and so better—and he meant to prove it."[33]

The Rwandan constitution, unlike the constitutions of some other African countries, was explicit on the question of term limits, which would have required President Kagame to step down after his two seven-year terms expired in 2017. Crisafulli and Redmond lavished praise on Kagame for his commitment to respect term limits in 2012, predicting the steady progress of democracy in the country. Yet the RPF pressed for a constitutional amendment, successfully campaigning for four million signatures. Kagame had been coy about whether he would run but finally succumbed to the expressed will of the people. All of Rwanda's registered political parties, except the Greens, endorsed this third-term bid, which he won handily in 2017.

Mass Mobilization

Mass mobilization is another characteristic of totalitarian systems found in Rwanda. As Kagame asserted, mass mobilization was essential to the RPF's transformation of Rwanda. Yet this has not been voluntary. The *gacaca* courts failed to achieve significant popular participation until attendance was made mandatory. The famous *Umuganda* brigades, inherited from the previous regime, require every Rwandan citizen to devote the last Saturday morning of each month to public service, such as cleaning the roads, but shirkers can be punished with a fine by local authorities, who thereby have a material interest in catching them. In addition, the *ingando* reeducation centers for former *génocidaires* have attained some notoriety. They are also mandatory for youth after graduation from secondary school. One researcher, Susan Thomson, was required to go through the class for a week. In an interview, she described it as "alienating, oppressive, and a sometimes humiliating experience that worked hard to silence all forms of dissent."[34] The government's attempts at social engineering also include rural transformation through villagization, crop regionalization, and the forced elimination of thatched huts, or *nyakatsi*.[35] Although all these efforts have socially beneficial justifications, in practice they are often coercive and assert the control of the state over the individual.

As has been noted in the cases of Eritrea and Ethiopia, this kind of mass mobilization has achieved a grudging acquiescence on the part of much of the population. In October 2010, I met with a group of about 300 local residents of a district some 100 kilometers outside of Kigali who were holding a workshop on reconciliation sponsored by an international donor. The group was almost evenly divided between survivors of the genocide and ex-prisoners or family of prisoners. In the course of the workshop, some participants seemed to express a willingness to make efforts to reconcile. Typical of other ex-prisoners, one participant emphasized that, after being released from 15 years in prison, he was struggling to survive and support his family. But as far as his neighbors were concerned, they forgave him for what he had done, and there was no longer a problem between them. It was apparent that one of the incentives for participants to attend the workshop was the 1,500 RWF ($3) "transportation allowance" each of them collected at the end of the program. Yet at the conclusion of the workshop, several relatively well-dressed police and local government officials intervened to make it clear that all participants were expected to donate $1 of their allowance to help build a new classroom for the local school. Virtually every participant dutifully did so, and they were each given proper receipts, but it was poignantly clear that most did so with some regret, even if uncomplaining, since even $1 is a lot of money in such a poor community. What was not clear, watching the

officials handling the money after collecting it, was how much would actually go to build the classroom.

More recently, a *New York Times* report of a reconciliation project by Prison Fellowship in the village of Mbyo described a similarly ambiguous process. According to the report, upon observing an *Umuganda* work brigade in which Kagame participated, "none of the villagers openly questioned *umuganda* or the wider reconciliation process." Instead, they praised the government: "It's painful, but it's a journey of healing," one villager is quoted to have said. Individuals whose families were murdered are now able to sit down with their murderers, who have asked for forgiveness.[36] A more scientific study by Bert Ingelaere, based on an analysis using a word count of the life history narratives of 377 Rwandese peasants, found that "RPF authority" pervaded peasant life, including education of children, cattle breeding, farming, inheritance, and business. Referencing Goren Hyden, Ingalaere suggested that where Julius Nyerere had failed in Tanzania, Kagame had succeeded in Rwanda, and the peasantry had been "captured." The interviewees appreciated some aspects of this "state reach," such as the *girinka* (everyone a cow) system, the free education, and the agricultural advice, but they were less enthusiastic about the land consolidation policy, taxes, and regulations, including coercion to support community projects such as I had witnessed. This ambivalence emerged especially regarding the government's unity and reconciliation efforts. Initiatives such as the destruction of thatched huts, *nyakatsi*, were also unpopular. But criticism of the government was dangerous and rarely expressed publicly. At the local *umudugudu* level, salaried authorities are appointed and held accountable at a higher level through the *imihigo* process, a kind of official performance scorecard. Local elected authorities are unpaid and usually defer to the appointees but nevertheless express a feeling of inclusion in the system, which is especially significant for those implicated in the genocide. Thus, Ingelaere concluded that the Rwandan state has successfully reached society with positive programs but has also overreached in terms of the pervasive but repressed fear of authority.

Such passive objections to the regime have been documented by Susan Thomson as well in her study, "Whispering Truth to Power: The Everyday Resistance of Rwandan Peasants to Post-genocide Reconciliation." As Thomson observed, the Rwandan government's policy of national unity and reconciliation "structures the interaction of individual Rwandans with the state and with each other. On paper, it is a set of mechanisms that 'aim to promote unity between Tutsi and Hutu in creating one Rwanda for all Rwandans'; in practice, it disguises the government's efforts to control its population while working to consolidate the political power of the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)."[37] In his memoir of Rwanda, *Bad News*, Anjan Sundaram cites the genocide commemorations as a means not of

reconciliation and restoration but of creating distress. "The president each year held an event, at which he brought thousands together in the national stadium: films of the killings were played, the crowd was driven into a traumatized frenzy. And the president reminded everyone that he is their savior."[38] Gourevitch describes one of these assemblies with more sympathy, but still some ambivalence. He describes how, during a performance at the assembly, as one genocide survivor recounts his story, "the screaming began. The first voice was like a gull's, a series of wild, high keening cries; the next was lower and slower, strangled with ache, but growing steadily louder in a drawn-out crescendo; after that came a frantic, full-throated babbling—a cascade of terrible, terrified pleading wails." The 260 performers reenacted the genocide in a "song-and-dance spectacle" collapsing "in an appallingly realistic spasm of mass death," and reaching a crescendo of "berserk emotion," both excessive and inadequate. The ceremony ended with dozens of RPF soldiers jogging onto the field to resurrect the bodies as the music soared and the screams continued. "So there is memory that we manage," Gourevitch concluded, "and there is memory that manages us."[39]

Civil Society

Critical to the assessment of whether Rwanda may represent a totalitarian system of government is the state of civil society. This becomes especially salient when Rwandan civil society is contrasted with civil society in most other African countries, including neighboring DRC, Kenya, and Uganda. Independent human rights organizations, trade unions, and advocacy groups are rare in Rwanda, and to the extent that they do exist, they are exceedingly circumspect in their engagement with the government. As was the case in Ethiopia, many NGOs exist, but they focus primarily on service delivery, health, and economic development. Many human rights groups, youth organizations, and women's organizations, upon closer inspection, often turn out to be government-controlled entities that rarely criticize but have in fact been created to reinforce support for government policies. Nevertheless, some courageous and innovative groups are delicately carving out space in Rwanda. Several examples will serve to illustrate this situation.

The Conseil National des Organisations Syndicales Libres au Rwanda (COSYLI) is an independent federation of trade unions and associations that organizes domestic workers, teachers, and informal sector workers. It seeks to protect and educate them on their rights. COSYLI is one of the few autonomous organizations evident in Rwanda and is one of a relatively small group of organizations constituting Rwanda's human rights movement. The former president of COSYLI, the late Florida Mukarugambwa, was the only female trade union leader in Rwanda. Organizing domestic

workers has not been easy, she told me. Employers do not respect such workers and treat them like slaves; they get no contract, little rest, and are considered informal, so with no legal rights as workers. They need to understand how to approach the police and get resolution. Plantation workers are also poorly paid and overworked. Local authorities are frequently illiterate and need training. But most Rwandan trade unions, she noted, are not very democratic and are reluctant to stand up against the authorities. Contrary to what is stated in the constitution, there is no right to strike and, unlike in neighboring Burundi, there has never been a strike in Rwanda. The authorities demand requests for permission to hold any meetings, and they monitor them to make sure there is no discussion of politics. But workers desperately need representation. There is no minimum wage, although this is under discussion. Soldiers are poorly paid, and they do not get to keep most of their international peacekeeping pay. Police are also poorly paid. Public sector unions are not allowed. Yet despite some constraints, the government still allows COSYLI to operate.[40]

The travails of Rwanda's longtime premier human rights organization, the Rwandan League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LIPRODHOR), exemplify the kinds of struggles that civil society groups must sometimes endure in relations with the government. The group has existed since before the genocide, during which half its membership was killed, but recurring bouts of harassment have sent one set of its leadership after another into prison or exile, and LIPRODHOR's credibility and level of activity have ebbed and flowed in tandem. Monique Mujawamariya, a courageous human rights activist who was almost killed during the genocide, was forced to flee the country and was recently denounced as a terrorist for meeting with political opposition outside the country. The online account of this was outrageous, not so much for the accusations, but for the level of surveillance that was implied by the amount of detail provided. In 2004, I met with the LIPRODHOR vice president, Francois-Xavier Byuma, an author and executive secretary of Ibwara, the Rwandan Association of Writers, another pursuit about which he was passionate. Byuma was a founding member of LIPRODHOR, and had been a human rights activist for ten years, defending the rights of Tutsis before the genocide. He said the recent elections had been fraudulent, and that LIPRODHOR continues to denounce human rights violations. The organization was then under great pressure from the government, forcing the president and eight other leaders of LIPRODHOR to flee the country, but it had overcome efforts by the parliament to close it down.[41] On September 10, 2007, Byuma was imprisoned, convicted of trumped up genocide-related charges by a gacaca court, and the organization became dormant.[42]

Despite considerable intimidation, the group revived, but when I met the leadership in 2012, LIPRODHOR was still having a difficult time,

recently being forced from its long-standing offices for bureaucratic city zoning reasons. It was renting a space provided by the Catholic Church, although much of its office furniture was in a shipping container or on the porch outside. Both LIPRODHOR and LDGL are members of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network, which was holding a workshop while I was in Kigali on that occasion. Such regional solidarity provides some protection to human rights groups. LIPRODHOR was still doing its human rights monitoring and reporting, and worked closely with the United States and other embassies in Rwanda, but was regarded with some hostility by the Rwandan government. LIPRODHOR was working on a modest project to promote women's political participation in two sectors of the Kitale district of Rwanda. Most local authorities in Rwanda are essentially appointed by the RPF in a complicated process of council elections, and the parliamentary deputies are elected from a list that also favors RPF choices. Thus there has not been much accountability between the authorities, elected or not, and the population. LIPRODHOR had brought women leaders from the communities and the elected deputies together to discuss their rights and how to increase participation. At one of the meetings, a participant challenged the authorities on how democratic Rwanda's political system is, a rather unprecedented act, I was told, and a sign that people might be losing their fear of speaking out.

A year later, however, the RGB arbitrarily transferred the leadership of LIPRODHOR to a new, unlawfully elected executive committee, effectively ending its existence as an independent organization. A group of LIPRODHOR members had convened on July 21, 2013, to hold an unauthorized general meeting without informing the executive committee, including the president and vice president of the organization, and without a quorum of active members. This was precipitated by an action on July 3, when LIPRODHOR and two other organizations had withdrawn from the national collective of human rights organizations, CLADHO, concerned that the government was interfering too much in its internal affairs. A similar change in CLADHO's leadership had been engineered by the RGB. The new LIPRODHOR group canceled the withdrawal from CLADHO and was recognized by the RGB despite the protests of the former leadership, who took the case to court.[43] LIPRODHOR's former leadership has attempted to reconstitute the group, or move to other human rights organizations doing similar work, but the ongoing struggles of the group signal the challenges and possible consequences of any similar effort by Rwandan civil society.

Following this pattern of reconstituting or moving into new groups, one group, Maison de Droit, which included former members of LIPRODHOR, sought to provide citizens with a platform for advocacy, making use of community radio to discuss citizens' fundamental rights and to share experiences, including government mismanagement. They planned to have

workshops that would also raise citizen awareness, and authorities would be involved using a rights-based approach. Because the authorities mistrust NGOs, the group would explain that it has the same objectives as the government and was trying to be helpful. Barazas, or town hall meetings, were to generate recommendations to be given to authorities. Maison de Droit was founded in 2006 by mostly law students who were giving legal advice in the house they lived in, hence the name of the group. They later went beyond legal advice to promoting citizen participation in 2012. They told me the receptivity of the authorities varies from district to district; in some districts, participants have been held incommunicado for a week or so.[44] Some months after my visit, the executive secretary of the group was dismissed and prevented from returning to the office. Although he had never received an official notice or explanation, he had disagreed with the board about the program, which he said the board wanted to be more closely aligned with the government. His earlier optimism about Rwanda moving in the right direction had been proved wrong. He was traumatized and under threat and soon fled the country.[45] Thus, this was yet another NGO compromised by the government.

Rwanda's politics are filled with such contradictions and uncertainties. Despite the repression of opposition political parties, the media, and civil society, the country has adopted ostensibly progressive policies on issues such as women's representation and zero tolerance for corruption. While countries such as Uganda and Nigeria have been adopting laws meant to isolate and criminalize LGBTI persons, Rwanda has resisted this trend, partly as the result of a civil society campaign. An example of a group that has so far skillfully navigated this space is the Human Rights First Rwanda Association, launched in 2005 by a group of human rights lawyers and university professors who wanted to teach students law in rural areas and came up with the idea of legal aid clinics to empower citizens to know their legal rights. The students proved to be an enthusiastic workforce. A clinic was set up in Kanoni district, to which the students go on a weekly basis and write up legal briefs on the human rights situation. Some 800 women have been trained as paralegals, focusing on land rights and vulnerable groups. Human Rights First has also produced a manual on land law that promotes literacy, and one of its beneficiaries was a poor woman who had recently been empowered enough by the training to stand up in court to defend her land from being expropriated—and she won. A legal aid forum was set up in 2007 to coordinate the activities of 38 organizations working on access to justice. The group successfully lobbied the government to permit NGO lawyers, not just members of the Bar Association, to legally represent community members in court.[46]

Human Rights First also contributed to a successful united action by CSOs to defend LGBT rights. A bill was proposed to criminalize LGBTs

and those who defend them, including lawyers. But CSOs worked as a coalition, conducted research, put together a report that supported LGBT rights, and held a series of workshops. Although they met a lot of resistance, they persuaded the government that the bill was a bad idea, including the idea that it singled out a minority group for repression (as the Tutsis had been). The campaign showed the potential of a united civil society, but pressure has to be maintained, since anti-LGBT legislation has been gaining popularity elsewhere in the East Africa region, and leaders talk to and imitate each other. Despite an otherwise closed political environment, Rwanda has been unusually progressive on the LGBT issue, has abolished polygamy, and has promoted women's participation. Rwanda has not ratified the Rome Statute of the ICC, however. Rwanda has adopted a new law on freedom of information, which says citizens and journalists have access to information, but due to self-censorship, no one has tested it yet. In addition, groups and individuals can now report government abuses to the Office of the Ombudsman. Likewise, the Rwanda Media Self-Regulatory Body was established to protect journalists' rights, but has seldom been used. Criminal defamation is still on the law books. Community radio has blossomed, and call-in programs are sometimes critical of local officials. The strategy of civil society is to engage the government, not hide from it; to do the research and present the facts. It is not easy; it is not confronting the government but working within the framework that has been established. Gains will come slowly, but one cannot just complain, I was told.[47] Human Rights First is a member of the East Africa Civil Society Organizations Forum and the East Africa and the Horn Human Rights Defenders Network. As was seen in the case of LIPRODHOR, such regional cooperation and solidarity can be important.

Human Rights First Rwanda has produced a manual in English and Kinyarwanda on freedom of information and has held stakeholders' consultations. The manual is intended to be a valuable tool for promoting press freedom. The group conducted a training on human rights and the media and is forging a civil society network for freedom of association and expression, so that media and human rights groups can support one another. It has also conducted training on freedom of information and investigative journalism. Human Rights First produced a YouTube video of a workshop on this matter in 2017 that portrays a sincere engagement with the authorities and journalists. The group is trying to address the concern that many Rwandan journalists make the mistake of not grounding their stories on the facts. Social media allows considerable freedom of expression in Rwanda, but there is a lack of awareness of what is possible. Most reporting is done by international media. The Media High Council regulates and monitors the press, but it can assist as well. All groups have to register with the RGB, which requires quarterly reporting, and Human

Rights First dutifully complies. Human Rights First is continuing its LGBTI work and assisting LGBTI groups in Rwanda. Although it is legal to be gay in Rwanda, there is still a stigma. It is also continuing its land rights program with a manual and paralegal assistance. The Ministry of Justice has participated in Human Rights First activities.[48]

Another prominent human rights NGO in Rwanda, the LDGL, has used its status as a subregional institution to provide itself some protection, but it still has had to tread carefully and has had its share of confrontations with the government. LDGL had been very circumspect in its report on the Rwandan elections, for which it was the only independent domestic civil society election observer. After observing the DRC elections and the Rwandan presidential elections, LDGL compiled the reports into a book that provides a comparative perspective and lessons learned. Such debate is still limited in Rwanda. Community radio has grown and is allowing the opportunity for some discussion at the local level but never criticism of the national leadership. LDGL's lessons are the same as those for national NGOs. As an LDGL leader told me, Rwanda's laws are not bad, but no one will go beyond the understood bounds. If groups conduct careful documentation, the government will listen to human rights concerns. It is important to have contact within the government. The main problem stems from mistrust. LDGL's report to the UN Universal Period Review report had gotten the group into trouble with the government, but more for not reviewing it with the government first, rather than for anything in the report itself. The former executive secretary of LDGL, Epimack Kwokwo, had to flee Rwanda due to threats linked to his work on the report. The government has since accepted most of the recommendations in the report, and the National Commission for Human Rights is taking the Universal Periodic Review report seriously. LDGL has also provided training to the government's Human Rights Commission and the deputy attorney general. The government now has greater respect for LDGL, the group claimed.[49]

Groups are thus learning how to navigate Rwanda's sensitive politics while still pushing the envelope of what is possible. Groups can work on issues such as land rights, a problem exacerbated by the large number of returning refugees and properties abandoned due to the genocide. More space is available to criticize local authorities, and such criticism provides useful feedback to the central government. Some groups have developed a scorecard to assess the performance of local government. This provides a means by which communities can anonymously hold their unelected authorities accountable and has had some success in parts of Rwanda. The radio call-in programs also focus on local issues.

Some activists place a lot of hope in Rwanda's youth, who they say are less passive than their elders. Youth groups are just as constrained as their elders, but they carry less baggage. A youth discussion forum on

governance and rights organized by Never Again Rwanda (NAR) provided yet another grassroots example of Rwanda's paradoxical discourse. The guest speaker was Mporanyi Theobald, an RPF member of parliament (MP) and member of the Parliamentary Budget Committee. About 80 young people participated in an animated discussion in Kinyarwanda. The MP described the legislative process, how bills originate and are approved, and the mechanisms by which the public and youth can provide input. The Parliament has a website, and it has become more open to providing information and engaging citizens. An NAR staff person spoke about the role of youth in influencing policy on issues such as unemployment and education and encouraged youth participation and leadership. When the discussion was opened up for questions from the youth, there were a lot of good questions about various issues such as maternity leave, the need for greater communication, and inheritance rights. This was the first such event in which the group had engaged an MP, and the response was very enthusiastic. Everyone appealed for more such events and that more time be given for each one. The MP also expressed his enthusiasm and seemed to appreciate the usefulness of such programs. NAR's approach to the government is to stick to the facts and avoid confrontation. Genocide denial is the red line that no one can cross. Youth involved in NAR are sometimes children of government officials. The Rwandan elite may grumble about a lack of freedom, but the great majority of the population have benefited from Kagame's rule, such as with the free cattle. According to this perspective, exiles who criticize the government are often hypocrites who had committed crimes when they held powerful positions in government. The RGB supports NAR's work. NAR can do a lot for the government that the government cannot do for itself.

Another youth group, the Rwanda Good Governance Promotion and Youth Development Organization (RGPYD), was conducting an ambitious program of workshops and civic education activities, focused on helping youth understand democracy and governance, making them aware of their responsibilities, including leadership, and fostering a culture of debate. The nascent group adopted an approach of engagement and cooperation with the government. They contended that youth do not realize they have freedom of expression, and no one in the government is stopping it, so youth should start exercising their right. RGYPD also wanted to build the capacity of local communities for effective advocacy and service delivery, giving them ownership of decisionmaking for sustainable impact. The group was working in all four provinces of Rwanda and Kigali. Freedom of expression is essential for reconciliation and good governance, they asserted. Older youth need to encourage younger youth to take the lead in building the nation. All youth want a better future, a healthy life, a job, and education. They are tuned in to social media, and they are going to school. Like women, youth

are becoming more active in government and business; they need to know more about the opportunities. RGYPD's good governance clubs help youth become more confident and participate and are present in most universities and many high schools, they claimed. RGPYD has participated in both European and East African youth leadership forums. The clubs average 100 members each and provide debating forums, community engagement, and an interface with local authorities in *imihigo*. RGYPD coordinates its activities with the RGB and serves as a channel for implementation of activities and debates at a national level, visits to Parliament, and workshops on political history. When the leader of the group was convicted of forging a check and sentenced to a year in prison, however, its activities stalled. Although he contested the charges and was later vindicated, the damage was done, and RGYPD is effectively no more.[50]

A coalition of independent human rights organizations, the Syndicat des Travailleurs aux Services des Droits Humains, produced a report in 2015 that found that "NGOs face registration restrictions, and the provisions of laws are often misinterpreted to restrict the activities of NGOs. It was even found out that the Government maneuvered to interfere in the business of NGOs." The report identified "dissolution threats and genocide ideology accusations against human rights defenders, cases of impediment to freedom of association, cases of harassment, arrest, detention and exile of defenders, cases of murder and legal proceedings linked to their profession" and "similar cases of violation against independent lawyers and journalists, who were victims of their opinions or published articles." The report also criticized human rights defenders for their lack of professionalism, unethical conduct, conflict among groups, and lack of networking.[51]

Control over the Economy

Like the economy of Ethiopia, the Rwandan economy has performed well over the past 20 years. David Booth and Frederick Golooba-Mutebi have ascribed a "developmental patrimonialism" model to Rwanda based on their study of the RPF's ownership of two private business operations, Tri-Star Investments and Crystal Ventures Ltd. (CVL). In contrast to the usual "African modal pattern" of rent extraction for personal enrichment, the profits of these two holding companies—which have supported ventures such as housing, bottled water, dairies, furniture, mobile phones, road construction, and mining—have been taxed and reinvested in the party, centralizing economic rents rather than dispersing them to corrupt officials. According to Booth and Golooba-Mutebi, Rwandan government policy is attempting to build a broad base of support by delivering more and better public goods, adhering to the "Rwanda Vision 2020," which

asserts that economic and social development is the only feasible way to overcome ethnic division and violent conflict. They determined that the RPF can rely on income from the private investments rather than resorting to corruption to maintain support.

This resistance to corruption is reinforced by a new and youthful civil service installed after the genocide that has inculcated performance-based contracting practices through the *imihigo*. Impunity for corruption does not exist in Rwanda, they contended, despite assertions otherwise by government opponents. Their ownership by the party does not seem to have given Tri-Star/CVL an unfair competitive advantage, especially versus foreign firms, but has provided a boost to local enterprises in an underdeveloped economic environment, "playing a critical role in getting capitalism started."[52] Booth and Golooba-Mutebi also noted that management of the holding companies has improved over time from a parastatal style to a venture capital approach with increasing financial professionalism. More broadly, the Rwandan government has encouraged privatization, but with caution. Another holding company, Horizon Group, was created by the army and has supported projects such as irrigation systems, coffee-washing stations, and urban development projects. Horizon is run as a private firm and has no serving military officers on its board, but maintains its social and political purposes. The government also established a consortium, the Rwanda Investment Group, in 2006, which includes some of the country's biggest local and diaspora investors. Such politically inspired economic activism has strengthened Rwanda's business climate and should serve as an example for other poor African countries, Booth and Mutebi concluded.[53]

Kagame expresses great enthusiasm for state-promoted private enterprise. He declared that Rwanda was shifting from an economy dependent on coffee, tea, and tourism to become a leader in ICT, logistics, financial services, and education. "It is increasingly clear to us that entrepreneurship is the surest way for a nation to meet those goals and to develop prosperity for the greatest number of people. In fact, government activities should focus on supporting entrepreneurship not just to meet these measurable targets, but to unlock people's minds, to allow innovation to take place, and to enable people to exercise their talents."[54] Crisafulli and Redmond elaborate on the success of this economic model in *Rwanda, Inc*. As they describe it, "Through strong leadership, decentralization to empower the grassroots, free markets, private sector development, managing and aligning the activities of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with the Rwandan government's priorities, and active courting of foreign direct investment— all enhanced by cultural values and traditions—Rwanda has become a model for the developing world."[55] Again, the Rwandan paradox is apparent. Although the economy is guided by the state, as in Singapore or modern China, it invokes liberal free-market ideals.

Media

The Ministry of Justice's 2015 human rights study details the government's position regarding freedom of the press and expression, which is guaranteed, as long as it does not advocate genocide. The government has provided newspapers with a printing press and journalist training and has set up a school of journalism. The public is encouraged to use information and communications technology (ICT). A clear policy for the registration of press or broadcasting media exists, and the president holds regular press conferences. Several media reforms promulgated in 2013 established a media self-regulatory body "with the mandate to promote media self-regulation, freedom, responsibility and professionalism" and the Media High Council, which is in charge of capacity-building. Reforms also included an access to information law, a progressive form of legislation found in only a few other African countries. According to the report, in 2015 Rwanda had more than 100 online media sites, 30 print media, 6 privately owned television stations, and 35 radio stations. Half the Rwandan population own and use mobile phones. There are also major international broadcasters and newspapers circulating in the country.[56]

In its 2017 report on press freedom, Reporters Without Borders ranked Rwanda 159 out of 180 countries surveyed, citing "ubiquitous censorship and self-censorship," but this was two spots higher than in 2016, and the report mentioned no specific incidents. Freedom House's 2016 Freedom of the Press report ranked Rwanda as "not free," concurring with Reporters Without Borders that a "culture of fear among journalists drives widespread self-censorship." Freedom House also noted that, after making "modest progress in advancing media independence," the Rwanda Media Commission chairman, Fred Muvunyi, had resigned and fled the country following a dispute with the government over suspension of the British Broadcasting Company's Kinyarwanda service due to its airing of a film that had questioned aspects of the genocide. Other journalists who have fled recently include Stanley Gatera, editor of *Umusingi*, who left after his arrest in April 2014; Eric Udahemuka of *Isimbi* newspaper, who also fled in 2014 due to threats; and Charles Ingabire, editor of the online *Inyenyeri News*, who fled to Uganda in 2007 and was murdered there in November 2011.

Sundaram's account of his experiences with a journalism training program that he began in Rwanda conjures up a relentlessly repressive environment that is unmistakably totalitarian. "The president became even more pervasive. His image was on key chains, rearview mirrors and hats. Wartime mottos from his rebellion days were broadcast on the radio, eliciting familiar emotions. School-age children ran down streets and sang traditional songs that replace 'Jesus' with 'Kagame.' Everywhere one felt watched by these devoted, and that one's entire being—actions, thoughts,

and soul—were scrutinized. I felt profoundly unsafe for not being among the believers."[57] One by one, his journalism trainees disappeared, fleeing into exile, terrorized into silence by death threats, or reduced to obsequious praise of the regime. The Orwellian contradictions abound. "The President announced that there was a vibrant and free press in Rwanda, and the population, if asked, would repeat this." But, in fact, "the government had won. There was silence in the country."[58]

According to a diplomatic observer, Rwanda's recent media reform is toothless when there is no independent media left and may in fact provide greater legal basis for tightening control over the internet. Newspapers such as *Umuseso* may have lacked professionalism, going for the splashy headlines and scandals, he said, but that is what people wanted to buy, and it occupied ground that no other media did. The government is all in favor of freedom of speech, at least for people who think like they do, he said. Despite the cynicism, he still found some hope. Radio is mostly music and religious programs, but there is a new two-hour live program allowing people to call in and express grievances with local leaders. A one-page online newspaper, *Chronicles*, can be widely accessed. He noted hopefully that Rwandans are becoming less afraid. They are not criticizing the top, but it is okay to complain about local leaders and the security forces.[59]

In stark contrast to Ethiopia, Rwanda has aggressively pursued the development of its ICT sector, launching a national ICT literacy and awareness campaign and expanding fiber-optic cable, among other initiatives. At a World Bank conference, Rwanda's Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Claver Gatete, declared, "In governance, in elections, we are using IT [information technology]. In interacting with ordinary people, we are using IT. In the way the central government works with the local government, we are using IT. In the whole economic sector, we are using IT."[60] Freedom House rated Rwanda as "partly free" in its 2016 Freedom on the Net report. According to Freedom House, Rwanda was building on progress from previous years. As ICT development spread and access expanded, Rwandan internet users became more active on the net and sometimes openly critical of the government. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) ranked Rwanda as the most dynamic country in Africa in its use of ICT, and the Net Index placed its download speeds at first place in Africa and 62nd globally. With competition among three providers, internet prices are decreasing, and mobile phone penetration reached 70 percent in 2013, according to the ITU. Rwanda's telecommunications regulatory bodies apparently work freely. Some online news outlets and opposition blogs have experienced disruptions, but the disruptions may have been due to technological issues rather than government interference. The online version of the independent newspaper *Umuvugizi* was blocked after the print version was suspended in 2010, but it was later unblocked, and for the most part,

independent online publications, radio stations and international news sources are accessible. Some self-censorship occurs; issues such as modifying the constitution to allow Kagame to run for a third term may be debated, but the *Ireme* website was blocked for its critical reporting on the issue. In 2012, Kagame was one of Africa's most popular presidents on Twitter with some 95,000 followers. Twitter and SMS (short message service) messages have also become a popular means to criticize some government policies. No one has been imprisoned for online activity since 2007, but the government does have the power to intercept and monitor communications.[61]

Conclusion

The case of Rwanda epitomizes the totalitarian dilemma. It meets all of the criteria for a totalitarian system: a powerful and comprehensive ideology; a variety of efforts at mass mobilization; and a conflation of the state, party, economy, military, and civil society. The ideology does not conform to common notions of chiliastic salvation, but it still holds power to legitimize the government, the leader, and his program. Mass mobilization sometimes lacks popular enthusiasm, but it has nevertheless effectively "captured the peasantry" and ordered the rest of society. Vestiges of political opposition, independent media, and civil society exist, though they are weak. They serve to legitimate the regime, to provide the photo op or talking point, or to support the government's development policies, rather than to challenge it in any serious way. To reinforce the totalitarian diagnosis, Rwanda is sufficiently repressive, sometimes resorts to terroristic tactics such as death squads, and both endured a genocide and perpetrated one in the DRC, where Congolese frequently accuse it of imperial ambitions. It boasts one of Africa's most charismatic, if autocratic, leaders. Governance is strong, corruption is low, and security and stability relatively assured. The economy is growing, if vulnerable, and the government engages the international community positively, whether through encouraging investment, building ICT infrastructure, maintaining a lax visa system, or promoting tourism. The official discourse, like that of Ethiopia, favors a gradual democratic evolution along a unique path. But the political reality proclaims one-man rule for many years to come. If postmodern totalitarianism seeks a poster child, it need look no further.

Notes

1. Paul Kagame, "Rwanda's Democracy Is Still the Model for Africa," *Financial Times*, August 19, 2010.

2. "Paul Kagame Speaks at Chatham House," October 21, 2014, http://paulkagame .com/?p=3730.

3. Larry Diamond, "The Road to Digital Unfreedom: The Threat of Postmodern Totalitarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 30, no. 1 (January 2019): 20.

4. Karl Graf Ballestrem, "Totalitarianism in Eastern Europe and Its Consequences," in *Totalitarianism and Political Religions,* ed. Hans Maier (London: Routledge, 2004), 219.

5. Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2011: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties* (Washington, DC: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2011).

6. Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2012-Rwanda, US Department of State, http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm.

7. Filip Reyntjens, *Political Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

8. Hannah Arendt, *Eichman in Jerusalem* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006) 288.

9. Juan J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 104.

10. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1958), 464.

11. Timothy Longman, "State, Civil Society, and Genocide in Rwanda," in *State, Conflict, and Democracy in Africa*, ed. Richard Joseph (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999), 343.

12. Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999).

13. Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1998), 95.

14. Gerard Prunier, *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

15. International Rescue Committee, "Mortality in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: An Ongoing Crisis," May 1, 2007, https://www.rescue.org/report/mortality -democratic-republic-congo-ongoing-crisis.

16. Innocent Gahiji, "Kagame says Ethiopia is Africa's beacon for self-reliance," News of Rwanda, http://www.newsofrwanda.com/featured1/26434/kagame-says -ethiopia-is-africas-beacon-f... 2/19/2015.

17. Anastase Shyaka, in discussion with the author, Kigali, 2012.

18. Notes from public meeting at the Atlantic Council, Washington, DC, April 14, 2014.

19. Pierre Rwanyindo Ruzirabwoba, in discussion with the author, Kigali, 2012.

20. Filip Reyntjens, "Constructing the Truth, Dealing with Dissent, Domesticating the World: Governance in Post-genocide Rwanda," *African Affairs* 110, no. 438 (January 2011), 33, 35.

21. Discussion with the author, Kigali, July 2012.

22. Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2013: Rwanda." https://freedomhouse .org/report/freedom-world/2013/rwanda.

23. Discussion with the author, American diplomat, Kigali, July 1012.

24. Ligue des Droits de la personne dans la Région des Grands Lacs, "Rapport Final de la LDGL sur l'Observation des Elections Legislatives 2013 au Rwanda," September 2013, www.ldgl.org.

25. Ibid, 40.

26. US Department of State, "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013, Rwanda," https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2013humanrightsreport /index.htm.

27. Nirere Madeleine, in discussion with the author, Kigali, July 2012.

28. Restrad Consultancy Ltd., *Baseline Study on the Human Rights Situation in Rwanda* (Kigali: Ministry of Justice, Republic of Rwanda), April 2015.

29. Discussion with the author, Kigali, May 2014.

30. Lawyer, in discussion with the author, Kigali, September 26, 2014.

31. Jeffrey Gettleman, "The Global Elite's Favorite Strongman," *New York Times Magazine,* September 4, 2013.

32. Patricia Crisafulli and Andrea Redmond, *Rwanda, Inc.: How a Devastated Nation Became an Economic Model for the Developing World* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 92.

33. Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families*, 224–225.

34. Jennifer Fierberg, "It Is Not Safe in the New Rwanda to Share What You Really Think," *The Rwandan,* June 25, 2014, http://www.therwandan.com/blog/it-is-not-safe.

35. Jennifer G. Cooke, *Rwanda: Assessing Risks to Stability* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies Africa Program, 2011), 16.

36. Megan Specia, "How a Nation Reconciles After Genocide Killed Nearly a Million People," *New York Times*, April 25, 2017, https://nyti.ms/2pZCupf.

37. Susan Thomson, "Whispering Truth to Power: The Everyday Resistance of Rwandan Peasants to Post-genocide Reconciliation," *African Affairs* 110, no. 440 (July 2011), 439–456.

38. Anjan Sudaram, *Bad News: Last Journalists in a Dictatorship* (New York: Doubleday, 2016), 23.

39. Philip Gourevitch, "Remembering in Rwanda," *The New Yorker*, April 21, 2014.

40. Florida Mukarugambwa, in discussion with the author, Kigali, May 2014.

41. Francois-Xavier Byuma, in discussion with the author, Kigali, November 2004.

42. Human Rights Watch, "Justice Compromised: the Legacy of Rwanda's Community-Based Gacaca Courts, 'The Story of Francois-Xavier Byuma'" June 2011, (http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2011/05/31/justice-compromised-o).

43. East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, "Rwanda: Independence of Civil Society Undermined," *Press Release* (Kampala: East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, August 19, 2013).

44. Discussion with the author, Kigali, May 2014.

45. Discussion with the author, Kigali, September 2014.

46. Discussion with the author, Human Rights First Rwanda staff, Kigali, September 2014.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Discussion with the author, Kigali, May 2014.

50. Discussions with the author, Kigali, May 2014 and June 2019.

51. Syndicat des Travailleurs aux Services des Droits Humains, *The Work of a Human Rights Defender in Rwanda: A Thorny Exercise* (Kigali: STRADH, July 2015).

52. David Booth and Frederick Golooba-Mutebi, "Developmental Patrimonialism? The Case of Rwanda," *African Affairs,* 111/444 (May 2012), 396.

53. Ibid., 403.

54. Paul Kagame, "The Backbone of a New Rwanda: Entrepreneurship Is the Surest Way," in *In the River They Swim: Essays from Around the World on Enterprise Solutions to Poverty*, ed. Michael Fairbanks, et al. (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2009).

55. Crisafulli and Redmond, *Rwanda, Inc.,* 110.

56. Restrad Consultancy Ltd., *Baseline Study on the Human Rights Situation in Rwanda,* 33–36.

57. Sudaram, *Bad News,* 111.

58. Ibid., 175–176.

59. Discussion with the author, Kigali, July 2012.

60. World Bank, "Imagining a 'Smart Country'—Such as Rwanda," July 18, 2013, www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/07/17/imagining-a-smart-country-Rwanda.print.

61. Freedom House, "Freedom on the Net 2013 and 2016: Rwanda." http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2013/rwanda., http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2016/rwanda.

6

Totalitarianism and Islamism: Sudan

At first glance, Sudan looks totalitarian. Freedom House has ranked Sudan a 7-7, its lowest possible rating, also accorded to Eritrea and Equatorial Guinea, and worse than that of Ethiopia and Rwanda. Regarding political rights, Freedom House cited irregularities with the 2010 elections, such as inaccurate voter rolls, ballot stuffing, and vote buying; harassment of opposition political parties, including the detention of Sadiq al-Mahdi, the head of the Umma Party, and others, as well as restrictions on public meetings; high levels of corruption and control of the economy by the ruling National Congress Party (NCP); and, most egregiously, the military campaigns in Darfur, Blue Nile, and South Kordofan states that have led to the deaths of thousands of civilians and the displacement and impoverishment of hundreds of thousands. Regarding civil liberties, Freedom House noted the powers of the National Press Council to censor and close newspapers and the practice of the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) to seize newspapers after their publication and arrest journalists; the restrictions on internet access; intolerance of Christians; and limited academic freedom. The violent suppression of student protests in September 2013 and restrictions on NGO operations are examples of the lack of freedom of assembly and association. Freedom House considered Sudan's higher courts to be politicized and lacking independence and cited the application of sharia law as an additional detriment to the rule of law. The NISS has also arbitrarily detained and tortured government opponents.[1]

The 2014 US State Department Human Rights Report made many of the same findings, adding abuses such as obstruction of humanitarian aid and poor prison conditions. It also criticized abuses committed by opposition militia fighting the government. It implicated the Rapid Support Forces

(RSF), created out of elements of the former Janjaweed militia in 2013 and controlled by NISS, in serious abuses in the conflict areas, including the killing of civilians, rape, looting, and destruction of property leading to the displacement of 400,000 persons in 2014. As for independence of the courts, it depends. In one case cited in the report, a judge acquitted defendants who had participated in the September 2013 protests, but they were re-arrested the same day and then freed again the following day. The report found that "courts were largely subordinate to government officials and the security forces, particularly in cases of alleged crimes against the state." But it also found that "on occasion courts displayed a degree of independence." In Darfur, Blue Nile, and South Kordofan, a state of emergency allows for arrest and detention without trial, and Sudan may hold hundreds of political prisoners. The government claims there are none, but many cases of activists and party leaders being detained have been documented. On December 6, 2014, for example, senior political leaders Farouq Abu Eissa, head of the National Consensus Forces; Amin Mekki Medani, president of the Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organizations and former head of the Sudan Human Rights Organization; and Farah Ibrahim Mohamad Alagar, Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) adviser, were arrested after they signed the Sudan Call, a document demanding political reforms and a transitional government. They remain in prison. Government surveillance and a wide network of informants are in place.[2]

In addition to the repression, ideology has figured prominently in Sudanese politics. Likewise, political Islam and war have mobilized at least a segment of the population. These efforts to impose the official Islamic ideology, and conflict in Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile, have generated major human rights violations, required ubiquitous police repression, and resulted in massive loss of life. In furtherance of a monistic agenda, the government has attempted to suppress the political opposition, media, and civil society. The military plays a dominant role in politics, and loyalists of the ruling NCP largely control the economy. These are all typical indicators of a totalitarian regime, but they have not been sufficient in the case of Sudan. In fact, although the government once aspired to what is essentially a totalitarian system, it failed. Instead, Sudan retains a vibrant, if sometimes weak and fractured, political opposition, independent media, and civil society. They are outspoken and critical of the government, and they are prone to organize and demonstrate. Sudan's 2010 elections may have been flawed and rigged, but the relative freedom of the Sudanese opposition to denounce the government and campaign openly contrasts starkly with the political playing field in the three countries previously discussed, none of which has been as competitive. The success of the South Sudan independence referendum demonstrated a pragmatic, if reluctant, willingness by the government to reform, at least under concerted international pressure. Thus, despite the

"monistic" impulse, there is sufficient countervailing social autonomy in Sudan to disqualify it as a totalitarian system.

In some respects, therefore, even before the secession of South Sudan in 2011, and still today, Sudan arguably has significantly greater political freedom than any of the three countries this study has examined thus far. Such a contention contradicts Sudan's international pariah status. This analysis does not seek to diminish the grave human rights abuses and undemocratic practices that have long characterized the Sudanese regime and have not abated since the secession of the South. It gives little credit to the government for bestowing upon the population any measure of relative freedom. Nevertheless, Sudan's unique historical, social, and political complexity provides the basis for hope that it will become more open and democratic.

Some Historical Context

Formally split into two countries on July 9, 2011, Sudan has been in conflict with itself during nearly its entire existence as an independent country. That conflict continues in both Sudan and the newly created South Sudan, but no longer so much between the two, at least. Once united by the British in a landmass half the size of the continental United States with a population of barely 10 million at independence in 1956 (growing to more than 30 million at the time of separation, despite war and famine), Sudan once contained 19 major ethnic groups, including 597 subgroups, and more than 100 languages. According to the 1956 census, the only one to examine ethnicity, 39 percent of Sudanese considered themselves Arab, 12 percent Dinka, and 7 percent Beja. The Arabs may be divided between the sedentary Jalayin and the nomadic Juhaynah, which are in turn divided among several subtribes. In addition, there are the Muslim, but non-Arab, Nubians, Beja, Fur, and Zaghawa. Before separation, more than half the population was Sunni Muslim, belonging to various brotherhoods, including the Qadiriyya, Khatmiyyah, and Mahdiyyah. The largely non-Muslim Dinka, Nuer, and Shilluk constituted perhaps another 20 percent of the total population and lived mostly in the South; and to these could be added the non-Muslim Bari, Azande, and Nuba. More than 30 percent of Sudanese were estimated to follow traditional religions, and 5 to 10 percent were Christian. Added to this mélange was a growing population of Muslims of Nigerian origin, the Fellata, who made up as much as 10 percent of the population.[3]

In addition to the complex demographics, there is the challenging physical environment. With the exception of the lands fertilized and watered along the Nile, Sudan today is mostly uninhabited desert. South Sudan is greener, including swamps, savannah, and forests, but it is almost completely undeveloped. This hostile environment has exacerbated conflict, as

nomadic peoples have moved south for grazing areas, competing with farmers for land, and sometimes raiding for cattle and slaves. But this traditional dynamic has been turned upside down as war and hunger have displaced millions. Famine, exacerbated by the war, and sometimes even manipulated as a weapon of war, has been the main killer in Sudan. Sudan used to be described as a bridge between the Arab world and sub-Saharan Africa, suggesting peaceful trade and cultural melding. It has also been described as the advance guard for the Islamic conquest of Africa. Sudan's geographic context has made it critical to its neighbors. Egypt is obsessed with control over the Nile, among other concerns. Proxy wars have been fought by rebel groups along the borders of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Libya, Chad, Congo, and Uganda, and refugees from each country flow back and forth across the borders.

Sudan is the political expression of one of the most ancient cultures in Africa, whose rulers conquered Egypt in the ninth century BC. The Sudanese kingdom of Merowe left traces as far as Mali and Zimbabwe before its conquest by Christians in the fourth century AD. The successor state of Nubia lasted until the Mamluk conquest in 1250, and Sudan was reconquered by Muhammad Ali, the Ottoman ruler of Egypt, in 1821. Penetration of the South, including the slave trade, intensified at this time. British control over Egypt and Sudan ended with the defeat of the British General "Chinese" Gordon at Khartoum in 1886 by Muhammed Ahmed, the Mahdi, whose great-grandson is today the leader of the Umma Party, Sadiq al-Mahdi. The Khatmiyyah were opposed to the Mahdists, remaining aligned with the Egyptians, and their descendants today largely constitute the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), led by Mohammed Osman al-Mirghani. Although the British at first favored the Khatmiyyah, they switched favor to the Mahdists when the Khatmiyyah began supporting Egyptian nationalism.

After World War II, the Sudanese Communist Party, one of the strongest parties in Africa and the Middle East at the time, became an important political force with its core of support among the railroad workers, and was nearly half a million members at its height. As Sudan neared independence, however, southern concerns were ignored, and as a result, the Anya-Nya rebellion began in 1955. Shortly after independence on January 1, 1956, General Ibrahim Abboud took power in a coup, espousing Islamization for the entire nation, but his regime collapsed in 1964 following a general strike led by the Communists. Al-Mahdi then led a coalition government with the Umma Party and the National Unionist Party (NUP, later DUP) but failed to end the war and lost his majority in Parliament. The government of Mohamed Ahmed Mahjoub was subsequently overthrown in May 1969 by Colonel Jaafer el-Numeiri with the support of the Communists. A year later, 11,000 armed supporters of al-Mahdi were killed by the military, and al-Mahdi was exiled. In 1971, el-Numeiri crushed a coup led by Communist army officers. Although

it was abolished by el-Numeiri, the Communist Party remains an important secular influence even today, analogous perhaps to the role played by the SACP. The irony that a party adhering to a totalitarian ideology in the cases of both Sudan and South Africa would play, essentially, a powerful democratizing force, deserves consideration.

El-Numeiri ended the civil war in 1972, however, granting the South autonomy in the Addis Ababa Agreement. The following 11 years would be the only time of peace modern Sudan has known. In 1975 and 1976, with Egyptian help, el-Numeiri crushed another uprising by the National Front, which consisted of the Umma Party, NUP, and Muslim Brotherhood. But he soon allowed al-Mahdi to return and released the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Turabi, from prison, making him attorney general in 1979. On September 8, 1983, el-Numeiri redivided the South, reducing its independence. El-Numeiri's abandonment of the Addis Ababa Agreement and other policies triggered the outbreak of war in the South led by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). He also promulgated the so-called September Laws, which imposed Islamic punishments (*hudud*), including amputations for theft, floggings for drinking alcohol, stoning for adultery, and execution for apostasy, the fate of the great reformist Muslim theologian Mohamed Taha in 1985. That same year, revulsion against these policies led to a popular uprising in Khartoum that overthrew el-Numeiri and installed an interim government, which nevertheless failed to abrogate the September Laws. The war continued.

In April 1986, al-Mahdi was elected prime minister of a coalition government. The Koka Dam Declaration of 1986, which was signed by the Umma Party and the SPLA, was unfortunately ignored by al-Mahdi after he came to power, and instead al-Turabi's NIF joined the government in May 1988. Ironically, the DUP, which had rejected the Koka Dam Declaration, then reached an agreement with the SPLM on November 16, 1988. Although al-Mahdi forced the DUP to resign from the government on December 27, 1988, considerable military and popular pressure compelled al-Mahdi to initial a draft bill suspending Islamic law on June 29, 1989. The next day the military, led by General Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, seized power in a coup backed by the NIF.[4]

The new government banned political parties, trade unions, various student and professional associations, and the independent press. It purged the army and established a parallel militia, the Popular Defense Forces (PDF). Although initially imprisoned in the first days after the coup, al-Turabi was soon released and became the acknowledged power behind the throne. The Islamist agenda was pursued with greater fervor than ever, severe restrictions on clothing and behavior were enforced, and the war with the South was declared to be a jihad against infidels. Human rights abuses escalated as political prisoners filled the jails and "ghost houses"

(clandestine prisons), dissent was repressed, torture became routine, and the independence of the courts disappeared.

But what was happening in the South made the North seem tame by comparison. As the war continued and various peace initiatives failed, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) became increasingly brutal in its own tactics, and ethnic rivalries became apparent. In 1991, a split occurred between the SPLA-Torit, led by John Garang and composed mainly of Dinka, and the SPLA-Nasir, led by Riek Machar and composed mainly of Nuer. The splintering of South Sudan's rebel movements was brought about by the Khartoum government's divide-and-rule policies as well as by traditional rivalries between the Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups. Fighting between such factions as the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), South Sudan Independence Movement/Army, South Sudan United Movement, United Democratic Salvation Front, South Sudan Defence Force, and Sudanese Armed Forces caused hundreds of thousands of deaths, created humanitarian emergencies, led to severe human rights abuses, destroyed vital institutions such as schools and courts, and forced civilians into a state of constant insecurity. The destruction and loss of life resulting from these factional disputes was ultimately greater than that directly perpetrated by the government. Although the main Nuer leader, Machar, had signed a peace agreement with the government in 1997, the agreement lacked credibility, and he eventually resumed his armed opposition to the government, rejoining his former archrivals in the SPLA. The reunification of the forces of Garang and Machar on February 12, 2002, eliminated the most egregious source of conflict.[5]

Meanwhile a series of peace negotiations, most prominently the process led by IGAD, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, which brings together all of the countries of the Horn of Africa, finally culminated in the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement (CPA) on January 9, 2005. After the World Trade Center attacks on September 11, 2001, the Bush administration had shifted US policy on Sudan, which under the Clinton administration had focused on confrontation, to one of engagement, thus lending much greater support to IGAD, including the appointment of a special envoy, the former senator John Danforth. By 2002, the intensified diplomacy brought a ceasefire to the beleaguered Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan, and the Machakos Protocol was signed, in which the SPLM/A conceded to sharia law in the North, and the NCP accepted a secular administration in the South as well as an internationally monitored referendum on the secession of the South. Within a year, however, the long-simmering conflict in Darfur exploded with great violence, gravely complicating the peace process. Aggravated by al-Turabi's Islamist ideology, the conflict would claim some 300,000 lives and displace millions more, continuing to flare up sporadically more than 10 years later.[6] To com-

plicate matters, John Garang, who had long advocated a united New Sudan, died tragically in a helicopter accident shortly after signing the CPA, thus precipitating the inevitable vote for secession and a divided nation.

Islamist Ideology and the Mass Movement

To gain some understanding of Islamist ideology, how it was originally intended to be applied in the case of Sudan, and its totalitarian potential, one can begin by examining the NIF's Sudan Charter (circa 1987). "The Sudanese are one nation," it begins, "united by common religious and human values, and by the bonds of coexistence, solidarity and patriotism, and diversified by the multiplicity of their religious and cultural affiliations"—so far, a tolerant statement. It continued, "The bulk of Sudanese are religious: The following principles shall therefore be observed in consideration for their dignity and unity: 1) Respect for religious belief, and for the right to express one's religiousness in all aspects of life. There shall be no suppression of religion as such, and no exclusion thereof from any dimension of life." The charter called for freedom of choice of religious creed and practice, no coercion in religious affiliation, and no prohibition of religious practice. Moreover, it declared "benevolence, justice, equality and peace among different religious affiliates. They shall not prejudice or hurt one another by word or deed." After this generous start, however, the charter stated that Muslims are the majority in Sudan and that secularism is "a doctrine that is neither neutral nor fair, being prejudicial to them in particular: it deprives them of the full expression of their legal and other values in the area of public life" and is "therefore of little relevance to the historical development of the legacy of the Islamic civilization." Although it accorded freedom of religion to non-Muslims "in private, family or social matters," it also asserted that "Islamic jurisprudence [ie, sharia] shall be the general source of law," since "it is the expression of the will of the democratic majority." The charter called for no discrimination on the basis of ethnicity or language and for a centralized system of government with significant power devolved to the regions, eventually leading to a federal system. Development, according to the charter, should be distributed evenly throughout the country. It concluded with the proposal for a general constitutional conference that would bring together all of the parties, as well as the SPLM, on condition of a ceasefire, to address the issues that divided the country.[7]

At this time, during the democratic interregnum, the NIF's Sudan Charter document would not appear unreasonable. Notably, it was not a religious statement, but a political document. There was no hint of jihad or *hudud* punishments. It espoused democracy rather than military dictatorship and focused much attention on practical issues rather than ideological doctrine.

In this regard, it resembled a political platform version of Meles's dissertation, providing the logical basis for an ideological program. But it is therefore ideology, not religion, that is at the heart of the contradiction between the government's agenda in Sudan and the social and political reality that has constrained it. As has been shown in the preceding historical review, the ideology of political Islam, or Islamism, has transcended regimes and regime types. Just as Marxism transcended both the Derg and the EPRDF, throughout Sudan's history since independence, governments have sought to impose sharia law and both Islamize and Arabize the entire nation. All of Sudan's traditional parties have advocated sharia, despite the country's heterogeneity, fueling much of the conflict that has plagued the nation, especially when the southern third of the country was predominantly non-Muslim and even though Christians and nonfundamentalist Muslims constituted a large percentage of the population in the North.

When el-Numeiri promulgated the September Laws in 1983, whether to reassert his religious convictions or to shore up his political support, he abandoned his erstwhile Communist allies and more than a decade of peace to reignite the civil war with the South. Likewise, despite initial promises to abrogate the September Laws, the brief democratic government led by al-Mahdi struggled to come to terms with the issue, finally allying with the NIF against the rival DUP, perpetuating the war. The unpopular *hudud* punishments were largely suspended at this time, however. When it seemed a peace agreement was imminent and sharia might be compromised, General Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir seized power in a coup and quickly aligned with the NIF. The new government soon moved to codify sharia, basing it on the Maliki school of Islamic law. This move was joined to the ambitious Islamic Civilization project of the Muslim Brotherhood, politically embodied by the NIF and led by al-Turabi, who happened to be al-Mahdi's brother-in-law.[8] The new regime "set up an apparatus of state repression evoking communist totalitarian regimes."[9]

Al-Turabi is the widely acknowledged architect of Islamism in Sudan and sought to spread Islamism throughout the Muslim world. His cosmopolitan erudition made him a charismatic exponent of Islamism and the Islamic State, a cause he championed for more than 60 years. He joined the Muslim Brotherhood in 1954, became its leader in 1964, attorney general under el-Numeiri in 1979, and speaker of Sudan's National Assembly in 1996. He was the ideological and intellectual power behind the throne until he was outflanked and dismissed by al-Bashir in 1999, never fully regaining his former status, sometimes under house arrest, but still a formidable presence in Sudanese politics as the leader of the splinter Popular Congress Party (PCP) and with close links to one of the Darfur rebel factions, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). Al-Turabi argued for a modernist Islamism, ruled by a democratic *shura*, or scholarly council, that would build a new civilization,

along the lines of the Pakistani al-Jama' al-Islamiyya movement. Some of his ideas were progressive, such as his declaration of women's equality, including equality on issues such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance; others were simply opportunistic, such as his support for negotiations with the SPLM when he was out of power. Implementation of the *hudud* punishments reached its zenith in the few years after the promulgation of the September Laws when al-Turabi was attorney general, and he is alleged to have fainted when he saw the blood spurting from the first victims to be punished. But by the time al-Turabi died in March 2016, the Islamist project in Sudan had all but died with him.

Just as was the case for el-Numeiri, sharia and Islamization proved to be not so much a matter of religious conviction for al-Bashir and al-Turabi as they were political instruments. The *hudud* punishments were meant to intimidate the population rather than enforce religious adherence. In other words, true to totalitarian form, the ideology was more important for opportunistic reasons, for its usefulness in justifying the seizure and maintenance of power, than for any underlying religious purpose. The chiliastic, all-encompassing claims of the Islamist ideology make it well suited to totalitarian purposes. Sharia claims divine provenance and asserts jurisdiction over an individual's personal life, not just over civil and criminal matters. In the early years of the NIF's "*Ingaz*" (salvation) government, its ruthless suppression of the political opposition and civil society and its extensive use of terror, combined with the promotion of the Islamist ideology and efforts at popular mobilization, bore all the hallmarks of a nascent totalitarian system. Sudan's sheltering of Osama bin Laden from 1990 to 1996 and its declaration of jihad against the South reinforce the perception of a radical, expansionist, and violent regime. Al-Turabi's vision of the Islamist State evolved over time, but its current embodiment in the form of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Boko Haram in Nigeria finds some ancestry in the Sudanese experiment.

It was not to be, however. Sudan's multiethnic, religiously heterogeneous society proved to be an insurmountable obstacle to the utopian project. United in their opposition to the al-Bashir government soon after it came to power, all of the opposition parties as well as the SPLM in March 1990 signed the National Democratic Charter, which called for the removal of sharia as state law. The civil war and constant international pressure kept the government on the defensive, and the rapid growth of the oil economy introduced material incentives and corruption that further undermined the Islamist project. Al-Turabi's Islamic Civilization included bans on women appearing in public, western music and dancing, gambling, and other social affairs, as well as a ban on offensive publications. It also attempted to Islamize all government institutions, banks, and many businesses. But these measures steadily became unpopular and were decreasingly observed. The real impact of sharia was its utility for mobilization and the repression of

political dissent. The government was able to assert control and crush threats to its security through what amounted to a parallel justice system.

Sudanese and international human rights advocates pressured the government with sustained criticism of this misapplication of sharia and other human rights abuses. When it was officially abandoned as a national imperative by the CPA in 2005, sharia still had its adherents, but its political utility had largely been spent. In its determined efforts to restore relations with the West, the government cooperated with the United States in providing intelligence regarding terrorist networks. The heavy Chinese investment in Sudan's oil production has also encouraged the government's pragmatism, despite China's avowed agnosticism regarding Sudanese politics.[10] More recently, the Sudanese government has shifted its international alliances from the revolutionary Iranian regime to the more status quo, albeit conservative Wahhabist, Sunni powers of the Gulf states. By the end of the Obama administration in early 2017, the United States had provisionally lifted some sanctions, Sudan's relations with the EU had improved in an effort once again to stem emigration from other parts of Africa, and the Sudanese had become cautiously optimistic about the normalization of their relations with the West.

Attempts at popular mobilization, such as the PDF and the mujahidin, the Islamic militia recruited to fight in the civil war, ultimately fizzled out. The government declared jihad against the South and established numerous voluntary jihadist organizations to support the war effort, but the recruits sent to fight in the South proved no match for the SPLA. Years later, to fight its opponents in Darfur, the government resorted to the notorious Janjaweed militia, but these fighters were motivated more by the lust for land and by ethnic rivalries than by patriotism or religious ideology. The Janjaweed have since morphed into the RSF, which bear even less resemblance to a mass movement. Sudan's various religious sects could be manipulated but were never fully converted to al-Turabi's Islamic Civilization project. The NIF exerted great influence, and amassed considerable power, but it never consolidated this and always remained in competition with the other parties. Thus, whatever the government's aspirations may have been, Sudan lacks the three criteria for totalitarianism. The regime is not monistic, the ideology has faded, and no mass movement has materialized.

In a conversation I had with Atta el-Battahani, a political science professor at the University of Khartoum, he proposed that, rather than a totalitarian system, Sudan is a "recombinant authoritarian" regime—one that is able to survive recurring crises with the core intact—a theory posed by Steven Heydemann. Al-Bashir set the terms of reference for the regime through the al-Turabi period, the CPA, and now the National Dialogue, the government's gesture toward reform, el-Battahani said. It is all elite politics; no one cares about the masses. The Arab Spring was a grassroots

social movement, the opposite of Sudan's experience. Al-Turabi was modeling Sudan after Iran; he had an expansionist vision of the Islamist movement. The military used to have a slogan, "From Asmara to N'djamena." But by 1999, pragmatists within the government decided the ideology was too costly and that al-Turabi had to be removed. Yet the legitimacy of the regime is still based on Islamism, the idea that all aspects of life are covered by religion. Al-Mahdi also wants to be seen as an Islamist. A secular state cannot be stomached; it is a "civil state" that is sought instead. (This aversion to secularism may be due to the interpretation of secularism [such as what al-Turabi's experience in France would have provided] as traditionally associated with anticlericalism rather than simply a separation of church and state, as it is understood in the United States.)

Al-Bashir used the RSF (Janjaweed) to crush the September 13 uprising, and the army was not happy about it. According to el-Battahani, NISS and the RSF are getting all the resources to coup-proof the government from an emasculated army. Al-Bashir used the army to gain power, but he has since abandoned it, and the army is no longer professional. Al-Turabi disrespected the old army; he was politically schizophrenic, both progressive and Machiavellian. He was a demagogue who despised Sufism but could get Sufis' support. Ideology superseded the law. Despite warnings from the security services, young activists are now going into the market and speaking, but so are the Islamists. Sudan's political debate has continued to evolve. The government is not worried about social media, which only elite youth have access to, Battahani said. The political parties are being criticized by the youth for doing nothing. They should come out of their headquarters, the youth say, talk and take risks. Journalists are taking a leading role, talking about rights and criticizing the government. They are exposing corruption, getting the support of the people, and going to jail. Even within the government, officials are giving sensitive information to journalists. Usman Mirghani, a former Islamist, wrote a series of articles on corruption in the Cotton Company, and his office was attacked. The radio and television are all controlled by the government or its friends. The diaspora has failed to provide an alternative. But journalists need to get more support and training.[11] Another political scientist, and former Islamist scholar, confirmed that the Islamist experiment had failed. No one in the government really believed in it anymore, he said.[12]

The Dictator

Although President al-Bashir would be indicted by the ICC for genocide, and has become the caricature of a brutal military dictator, glimpses of his character are as paradoxical as Sudan itself. Admiring al-Bashir's gifts,

Alex de Waal notes that he "emerged as an unusually deft manager of his country's system, is well known for having an open door at his residence in the evening (at least for army officers), an extraordinary memory for people and events, and great sociability, including a famous sense of humour." He was also good at "anticipating multiple possible configurations of people and circumstances, and taking them into account." But when marking boundaries, al-Bashir was "both sparing and deadly serious."[13] One of al-Bashir's political associates and sometimes opponent, Bona Malwal, offers another take on his personality, which is recognizably Sudanese. In spite of their differences, "my personal relationship with President Bashir remained most cordial. He treated me with great respect during the six years that I worked with him as one of his advisers." Bona Malwal held that, unlike President el-Numeiri, who always "wanted you to know that he was the boss," al-Bashir "treated me not as the president of the republic would treat one of his subordinates, but rather as if I were his elder brother." Despite their differences, al-Bashir was always "human and personal."[14]

Whatever his personal qualities, true to el-Battahani's description of recombinant authoritarianism, al-Bashir has proved successful in surviving the enormous pressures that have assailed him domestically and internationally. If Islamism has ceased to be the glue holding the regime together, a pragmatic nationalism seems to be working better for him. In the view of some, al-Bashir's defiance of the ICC has given him a certain "street cred" in Africa. Receiving the Champion of Africa Pride award given by Addis Ababa University in July 2016, he vowed to liberate Africa from modern colonialism. "Western countries do not know that I represent the Sudanese people. We are bigger than the oppressors and arrogant circles," he is quoted to have said. "We stand firm like mountains and we will not be broken."[15]

Genocide

Having examined the question of genocide in the case of Rwanda and Ethiopia, we must now broach the question in the case of Sudan. To many observers, the decades-long war between northern and southern Sudan constituted a genocide against the South. Black African Christians were facing extermination by Arab Muslims. The death and destruction of the war compare to the death and destruction in Rwanda and the DRC; indeed, the conflicts in South Sudan and in Darfur have often been linked to the Rwanda genocide as part of an arc of death stretching across the Nile River and Great Lakes of Africa. From 1984 to 2005, out of an estimated population of eight million in the South, as many as two million died, mostly from starvation, and four million more fled into exile or were internally displaced, such as the famous Lost Boys. A related conflict in the Nuba Mountains of South Kord-

ofan took on a similar genocidal character with Nuba farmers supported by the SPLM/A versus Baggara Arab nomads supported by the government. Yet, although the government's policies provoked the conflict, and the government recruited PDF mujahidin to fight a jihad against the southern infidels, much of the actual killing was committed by southerners whom the government manipulated against one another. The intention of genocide was never clear. The government insisted it was simply fighting a civil war and suppressing a rebellion. War crimes were committed on both sides. Until the fall of Mengistu Haile Mariam in 1991, the SPLM/A had been supported by Ethiopia, and it later found shelter in Eritrea. The SPLM's allies, thus, were hardly paragons of democracy and human rights. Eventually the Clinton administration began supporting the SPLM/A, however, as well as providing billions of dollars in humanitarian aid. Allegations of slave trafficking by the North provoked international outrage. Evangelical groups such as Christian Solidarity International and Samaritan's Purse mobilized international support for the South. Millions of southerners fled either to Uganda or to the North, settling in vast camps around the outskirts of Khartoum. The oppression of southerners was apparent everywhere, from Khartoum to Kampala.

The conflict that erupted in Darfur in 2003 attracted much greater international attention, however. The charge of genocide was again leveled, and considerable debate ensued as to whether the definition applied.[16] Darfur is in western Sudan, not a part of the South, and it was once an independent sultanate. To grossly oversimplify, the conflict pitted nomadic Arab Janjaweed recruited by the government against darker-skinned, but still Muslim, sedentary groups, largely aligned with the Umma Party, as well as some who became aligned with JEM, associated with al-Turabi. Other groups multiplied over time. By some estimates, 300,000 people were killed, most by starvation, and several million were displaced, with, again, most fleeing to camps on the outskirts of Khartoum. Attackers were documented making racist statements, validating the charges of genocide. An international campaign, the Save Darfur Coalition, lobbied to have the conflict defined as a genocide, which US Secretary of State Colin Powell did in September 2004. The UN International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur published a report in January 2005 that failed to find the intention of genocide but did cite crimes against humanity. In 2009, the ICC issued an arrest warrant against President al-Bashir on charges of genocide due to the conflict in Darfur.

The experience of mass slaughter, whether it is officially determined to be genocide or simply war crimes, inspired yet another layer of psychological terror on top of what the *hudud* punishments and more general campaign of repression instilled in the population at the initial stage of the Islamist experiment. The constant state of war and the human rights abuses that accompanied it provide the "enabling environment" for the establishment of a totalitarian regime, evoking Hannah Arendt's depiction of the displaced

populations in Europe prior to World War II.[17] Yet, in the case of Darfur especially, the ideological content needed for totalitarianism is lacking. Arab nationalism was not sufficient to mobilize the masses or create a monistic society, although it motivated the Janjaweed. The devastation in Darfur was simply the means a dictatorial government used to impose its authority. It had attempted to do this on the cheap, arming undisciplined local militias, rather than employing a more expensive and unreliable regular army. The association with political repression is clear; that with totalitarianism is less so. Similar chaotic and bloody African conflicts, such as in Liberia, Sierra Leone, the DRC, Angola, and Mozambique, have not produced totalitarian outcomes, whatever other ills have been left behind. In the case of Sudan, the conflict has served to establish the control of the government, terrorize the population, and justify repression. It has also been enormously expensive, both in lives and money, has fueled resentment and rebellion, has brought unwanted international opprobrium, and, in short, has so distracted and weakened the regime that it has been unable effectively to carry forward its political program, whether totalitarian or not. Against great odds, the government has managed to maintain power, but genocide has not been instrumental in establishing a totalitarian system.

Sudan's Elections, April 2010

A field report of Sudan's 2010 elections, when the country was still unified, as well as interviews with more than 20 NGOs at several stages since the time of the South's independence referendum, provide evidence for the conclusion that political and civil society still enjoy significant autonomy in Sudan. Notwithstanding government efforts to impose a repressive political order that might have totalitarian features, a sustained, democratic popular resistance has succeeded thus far in forestalling such an outcome. Demographic, social, economic, political, historical, and international factors have also clearly contributed. In fact, despite, or perhaps because of, the system's dysfunction and the enormous challenges that Sudan faces, the basis for a free and democratic nation has been preserved.

Elections are a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for democracy. Although elections had almost disappeared on the African continent in the 1970s and 1980s, they made a dramatic return after Benin's breakthrough sovereign national conference of 1990, and they have since occurred in every country of Africa with some regularity, except in the case of Eritrea. Once again, the irony of Sudan's politics leaps out. Among the handful of African countries that enjoyed some experience of democracy in Samuel Huntington's first two waves during the postcolonial era and the 1980s was Sudan. Many of Sudan's political parties have deep roots in the history and

culture of the country, and Sudan's political leaders have demonstrated an equally remarkable staying power, all contesting in the 2010 elections. As has already been noted, the Umma Party led by al-Mahdi and the NUP of al-Mirghani each have their base in Sudan's two dominant Sufi sects, the Mahdiyyah (*ansar*) and the Khatmiyyah. The Communists helped el-Numeiri take power in a coup in 1969, but when pro-Communist army officers attempted yet another coup in 1971, el-Numeiri crushed it and expelled the Communists from government, executing thousands. Although its power has since dwindled, the Communist Party still remains influential in Sudanese politics. After el-Numeiri was finally overthrown in 1985 by the National Alliance for National Salvation, a civil society coalition that called for a return to democracy, the Transitional Military Council took power with a mandate to organize elections in 1986. These elections brought the Umma Party, DUP, and NIF together in an unstable coalition. The brief democratic interregnum ended with al-Bashir's coup of 1989, with the help of al-Turabi's NIF, betraying Turabi's former political rivals.[18] In 1998, the NIF changed its name to the NCP. Following el-Numeiri's promulgation of the September Laws, the SPLM/A was born from the legacy of the southern rebel Anya-Nya movement, later giving rise to a northern affiliate, the SPLM-N. Some versions of the Umma Party, DUP (formerly NUP), Communist Party, and al-Turabi's splinter PCP, as well as the ruling NCP, have thus vied for influence and competed in elections, despite military dictatorship and occasional bannings, ever since independence.

Although elections have been held in Ethiopia and Rwanda, the overwhelming margin of victory by the ruling parties in those countries has reinforced, rather than contradicted, the assessment that these may be totalitarian regimes. Since the coup of 1989, Sudan had held elections in 1996 and 2000 that were carefully controlled by the government. But the elections of 2010, which ultimately paved the way for the secession of the South, were the first to make a serious attempt at international legitimacy, including international observation by the AU, the EU, and the Carter Center, as well as domestic observation by many groups. The elections were mandated by the CPA that had been negotiated between the NCP and the southern rebel SPLM/A with international support. The observer missions' final reports found the Sudanese elections to have been peaceful but seriously flawed, "falling short of Sudan's domestic and international obligations in many respects: Intimidation and violence in some areas of Sudan undercut inclusiveness, civic education was insufficient, the inaccuracy of the final voter registry prevented full participation in the process, insufficient materials were provided to many polling stations, the environment in Darfur did not support the holding of democratic elections, and vote tabulation throughout the country lacked important safeguards for accuracy and transparency." Moreover, the National Elections Commission (NEC) and the government failed to gain the trust of

the opposition, leading to a boycott by many of the major opposition parties, undermining the competitiveness of the elections.[19] In effect, two elections occurred, one in the North and one in the South. The final results gave al-Bashir 68.2 percent of the 10,114,310 votes nationwide and Yasir Arman of the SPLM, who had withdrawn, 22 percent. In the South, however, Arman won 76 percent versus 14 percent for al-Bashir.[20]

I was an observer of the elections with a domestic civil society coalition known as Tamam. Its experience during the process illustrates the vigor of civil society and the relative tolerance of political pluralism in Sudan, especially during the five years of the CPA, despite significant constraints. In a presentation to the AU observers preceding the election, the group noted that the NEC had initially supported the initiative to form Tamam, a coalition of 120 civil society groups established to provide civic education and conduct election observation, but the coalition soon encountered obstacles. The commission could mount only a weak civic education program, especially neglecting radio, which would have been the most effective means of reaching the population. Mobile registration clinics proved difficult for citizens to find, and the commission was unresponsive to Tamam's requests to accredit its members to monitor the registration process. Tamam and the Carter Center raised concerns about the fairness and preparations of the process. They were concerned that the NCP conducted parallel registrations to press voters to support the party, that NCP officials were openly present in registration centers, and that NCP posters were ubiquitous around registration centers. Ballot papers were printed by an NCP campaign manager, excess ballots were produced and not numbered, and the complexity of the ballots and voting process had been underestimated, leaving too few polling places for the number of likely voters, especially in opposition-supporting districts.

Tamam conducted three mock elections and found that an average of 40 percent of the ballots were spoiled, and it took five minutes to complete the process compared to the less than three minutes estimated by the commission. Voter education programs on the radio and television mainly discussed general aspects of the elections and had not provided sufficient details. Tamam trained more than 2,000 election observers in the North and 2,000 in the South and attempted to get them accredited through two member organizations. The commission accredited only half of them, then attempted to revoke their accreditation since they were determined to be too "political." Although civil society had made considerable efforts to conduct civic education and reportedly reached outside of Khartoum and the big cities, it could not make up for the government's lack of effort. A representative from the Communist Party stated that although the party had been excluded from the CPA, it had accepted the election process to end the war and pave the way for democracy, but it was now calling for a postponement of the elections until November due to doubts about the census and registration and

due to the conditions in Darfur and South Kordofan. He said the Communist Party would boycott the elections on April 11 and asked the international observers to withdraw, citing the Carter Center's concerns.[21]

On the eve of the election, a new group at the time, Sudan Democracy First, held a public meeting. It is useful for the purposes of this study to provide some detail about the meeting, primarily to demonstrate the vigor of political discourse and activity in Sudan at the time and to provide a contrast to the other countries examined. Sudan Democracy First had issued some statements criticizing the US special envoy to Sudan, General Scott Gration, for being too close to the government and called for a boycott of the elections. The meeting was held in the evening in an outdoor courtyard and was attended by about 100 civil society activists from various political tendencies. The attendees decried the failure of Sudan's political parties to challenge the NCP and called for a boycott. They declared that the parties had lost their credibility by joining with the NCP despite the Juba Declaration they had signed and by their failure to join civil society protests in October. Sudan Democracy First therefore sought to fill the gap left by the parties and to promote democratic principles regardless of the elections, a long-term task. They accused the parties of not being clear about their positions and confusing their rank and file. Party leaders care more about their personal interests than their constituencies and are not committed to democracy, whatever they may say, the group complained. Sudanese culture has inhibited democracy, and there must be more education about it. Sudan Democracy First is not looking to blame, they said, but to find solutions. Mubarak al-Fadil, the presidential candidate of the Umma-Mubarak faction, which was boycotting the elections, then spoke. He had been imprisoned by both el-Numeiri and the current government. He expressed his gratitude for the initiative and stated that democracy is more than parties, including the judiciary, good governance, civil society, an independent press, and no nepotism. Only 30 percent of Sudanese belong to a political party. He said Sudan's parties may be weak, but at least they are stronger than those in Egypt. They are divided and inexperienced. The next generation of leaders needs to be trained.

During the question and answer period, Mubarak was given credit for being the only candidate of all those invited to show up for the forum, but it was also noted that Sudanese were still frustrated that all the parties are corrupt and had let the people down. There was a call for Sudanese to return to the street rather than remain cowards. There must be a return to the original spirit of the CPA. The first priority must be to get rid of the current regime and provide the Sudanese with alternatives. All of the campaign posters are of al-Bashir, they complained. Gration is naive and too willing to accept fake elections. The US policy will lead to war rather than avoiding it, as desired. Yet if the parties unite and boycott the elections, they might still rescue the situation. Although Sudan Democracy First criticized Barack Obama's policy,

Sudan's political parties bear the most responsibility for the failure of the process, they said. The political parties cannot be blamed because they are a product of the will of the community, and civil society cannot be an alternative to the political parties. Everyone, including the parties and the NEC, knows the process is broken. There is no point in monitoring the elections if the results are already known. The question is whether to participate.

Arman, the SPLM's presidential candidate who had just withdrawn from the race, then made a dramatic, late entrance to the meeting and spoke to the gathering. He told the gathering that the elections were a question of political power and Sudan had reached a fork in the road. The SPLM is willing to listen to criticism, but it must be constructive. Democracy is in the interests of all, he said, but it means different things to different groups in Sudan. For southerners, independence is more important and does not depend on democracy, but without it there will not be peace. Southerners speak of this election as the small one and the referendum to follow as the big one. The people of Nuba and Blue Nile will also have a referendum. In Darfur, peace is the priority and democracy is a luxury. But in the North, democracy is fundamental. The CPA tied everything to democratic transformation, but the process did not go deep enough and did not reach the government institutions.

The Islamist strategy was to control everything, then pretend to allow democracy. The government put civilian clothes over their military uniforms. They are trying to take over the idea of democracy at every level and are even hijacking Garang's vision of the CPA. There will not be an uprising in the streets due to the divisions between the rural and urban populations, and if there is war and no unity of the opposition, the government will eliminate everybody, he warned. The government is trying to bribe everyone, and the war is still going on in Darfur, making elections impossible. He said the political parties knew the process was flawed but fell for the petty tricks of the government. Within the parties, there was a debate between those who wanted to surrender and those who wanted to fight. The SPLM had to convince the people that it was necessary to pull out of the election. They had gone through the process to prove that the elections would not be democratic. Arman predicted that the NCP would now try to sabotage the referendum by destabilizing the South to show that southerners cannot govern themselves, so it is necessary to stay united.

Although the elections were thus thrown into disarray by the boycott of the SPLM and several other key parties, the government was determined to go ahead with the elections. The international and domestic observation missions were set to proceed as well. If we take a longer view, despite the breakdown of the process, the boycott could have strengthened Sudan's democratic prospects. When Ghana's opposition boycotted parliamentary elections in 1992, it forced both the government and the opposition to come to an agreement in the next round and ultimately established the basis for a

sturdy democracy. For very many Sudanese, however, the elections were by this time already an enormous disappointment, and for that, the blame can be widely attributed. The government might have won the elections fairly, but it was incapable or not willing to do what was necessary to assure the opposition that the process would be free and fair. The SPLM knew it would be unlikely to win and preferred to set the stage for the independence of the South by undermining the elections in the North by boycotting. The Umma Party was divided over whether to boycott; many of the local Umma candidates were very unhappy with the boycott, since they had invested much of their personal resources in the election, unlike the SPLM and NCP candidates. After the elections, they feared the NCP would be likely to co-opt the DUP and some of the smaller parties to create a greater veneer of legitimacy, while they would be left out.

Due to the boycott of the elections, much of the work and investment of civil society groups to support the process over the past several years had been jeopardized. Both the government and the opposition were to blame for the breakdown of the process, highlighting the need for more effort to go into building the capacity of the political parties and establishing their ownership of the process. The opposition parties had weak and personalized leadership structures and had done little campaigning. The situation had become tense and could have erupted into violence, a possibility that caused some residents of Khartoum to leave the city for the relative safety of their home villages. The ICC indictment of President al-Bashir for war crimes in Darfur did not help the process on balance, making him more desperate to hang onto power. The civic education effort, however valiant, was not enough. The elections were doomed before they began.

Just a few days before the election, the NEC finally approved the accreditation of election observers, including those of Tamam. Staff had been in the office past 1 a.m. the day of the election and were still busy dispatching badges to more than 2,000 domestic observers. More than 180 organizations gained accreditation as field monitors. Tamam staff said that despite the breakdown in the process, democratic political space had increased in Sudan as a result of the upcoming elections, and this was healthy. They predicted that violence was unlikely. The government had not declared a holiday for the elections, but this would not hurt turnout. In addition, the Umma Party might have difficulty informing its supporters not to vote, since the radio had reported almost nothing about the boycott.

Southern civil society groups based in Khartoum had a very different perspective on the elections. The leader of one such group expressed disappointment with the withdrawal of Arman from the election but professed to understand the reasons. He also predicted that violence would be unlikely, since no one would want to get hurt when the results are known beforehand and there would be no real contest. But he warned that if the SPLM thought

it was cutting a deal with the NCP, it was likely making a mistake, because the government could not be trusted. He said al-Bashir was unlikely to allow the South to secede on his watch, since he would go down in history as the one who lost the South. Instead, the government would consolidate its power in the North, and the SPLM and Umma Party would have only a small voice in the legislature due to the boycott. Repressive laws would be reinforced. His organization would move to the South, and rather than worrying about promoting reconciliation across the North-South divide, it would work on South-South dialogue, which would become more important.[22]

The role of women during the elections, and in Sudanese politics and civil society, deserves special attention and contrasts starkly with that of women's organizations in Ethiopia and Rwanda. The Babiker Badri Scientific Association for Women's Studies (BBSAWS), based at Ahfad University in Omdurman and one of the oldest NGOs in Sudan, if not the entire African continent, has pioneered the women's rights movement in the country. According to a leader of the group, BBSAWS had done a lot of work on the elections and was a leading member of both the Tamam and the Sudanese Group for Democracy and Elections (SuGDE) domestic monitoring networks. BBSAWS had developed a great deal of expertise in producing educational materials and training on elections and was in fact the first NGO in Sudan to begin working on elections, having started in 2007. Yet there had been many challenges, including late passage of the electoral law, as well as the security and media laws, which greatly affected the political situation and election stakeholders. There was not enough time to prepare for the elections, and despite the calls for delay, the NEC stuck to the April 11 election date. Finally the SPLM, the Umma Party, and the Communist Party dropped out. The census results were not seen as inclusive and its geographical distribution was skewed. Peace was not achieved in Darfur. The registration process was also unsatisfactory. Voter education was too little, too late. The domestic election observation would be inadequate. In other words, the BBSAWS representative said with academic precision, "when the process is not correct, the end result will be affected."

It was anyone's guess what would happen during or after the elections. On behalf of SuGDE, BBSAWS conducted four trainings in Khartoum and White Nile and was to hold four forums in the same two states as well, but the content of the meeting had to be revised due to the unfavorable context. SuGDE trained 2,750 domestic observers in the North, and its counterpart, the Sudanese Network for Democratic Elections, trained some 2,500 in the South. It was a very comprehensive training program, but the current situation was disappointing, casting all of their work into doubt. BBSAWS had worked hard for free elections. It was not all in vain, the group representative said, since women's awareness had been increased, and women are participating more in the political process. As others had noted, at least there would

be no violence, since the results were known and there would be no real competition. Now the get-out-the-vote effort would benefit mainly the NCP. Opposition supporters had been reached by their parties and would not vote.

After the elections, BBSAWS would continue to promote women's political participation and address challenges rising out of the referendum, and it would focus on conflict areas such as Darfur, democracy, and youth. The 30 percent quota for women in Parliament that had been included in the new constitution was an achievement, although it was not designed as BBSAWS had wished, and the many new women in electoral office would need training. There had been a tension between the interests of political parties and the women's agenda, and BBSAWS had been trying to find a consensus. The group's leadership had been active members in the Umma Party and had worked with the Communist Party in Atbara, the DUP in Kassalla, and all the parties in Gezira. Ahfad students learned about democracy in the university classroom and on field trips in the North and South, where they interviewed community leaders on the elections and the future of Sudan. The referendum would require more awareness-raising about the need for unity and the North's role. Other groups have made use of BBSAWS materials, and media coverage of BBSAWS activities has further expanded its impact, including five radio programs put together for Kassalla and the Nuba Mountains. BBSAWS usually works through local partners where they exist, and would create them in their absence, to ensure sustainability.

Election Day

On Sunday, April 11, I visited several polling sites in Khartoum with a colleague and a small team of Sudanese civil society activists. Typically, we found three polling stations at each polling center. The NCP would have a tent placed some distance away, where voters could get help finding their name on the registration list, which was usually also posted outside the polling center. The NCP would give voters a certificate with their voter's slip, water, and sometimes food, and also had an operation to bus voters to the polls. Polling was to start at 8:00 a.m., and the first center we visited opened on time, but the second did not have ink and was still not open by 9:30, so that several hundred voters were waiting in line under the hot sun. Total registration at the centers ranged around 3,000 to 4,000, but the voting seemed to go slowly, perhaps at the rate of 20 people an hour for each station. Roughly half the voters were women, queuing in a separate line, as is normal in countries such as Sudan. The police kept their appropriate distance, and security officials seemed to be present elsewhere. Generally, from what I observed, political posters had been removed from the immediate vicinity of polling centers, NEC officials seemed to understand their duties and performed properly, and

domestic observers and party agents were present. The Umma Party, SPLM, and Communist Party were not present with party agents, so that the DUP, PCP, JEM, Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Democratic Change, and United Sudan African Party were the parties representing the opposition. The NCP was, of course, everywhere. Voters received three separate groups of ballots—one for the national and state executive positions, one for the legislature, and one for the state assembly positions—and cast their ballots in three separate translucent plastic ballot boxes sealed with red plastic binders. They voted behind a cardboard partition. The ballots themselves were about a foot long with colored pictures of the candidates, the party emblems, and the candidates' names for the executive races, but they were only black and white without the pictures for the legislative candidates.

Back at the Tamam operations center, reports of various irregularities began to trickle in. Often voters were not able to find their names on the registration lists, candidates' names were missing from the ballot, and ballots had been delivered to the wrong centers. There were no reports of violence the first day. One observer with Tamam put some of the ink on her leg and was able to wash it off, and other reports of this were received, but others who tried the ink confirmed that it was indelible and could not be washed off. There were reports of low turnout in Omdurman and Bahri, two opposition strongholds, and of stations closing after only a few hours. In the afternoon, we visited the Haj Yousuf informal settlement on the outskirts of Khartoum. At one center, we heard that more than 100 individuals from outside the area had come and been allowed to vote, and we saw a group of about a dozen like this at the end of the day. Although there was some ruckus about the group, they had slips and identity cards, which may well have been fabricated, but they were allowed to cast their ballots.

The next day, April 12, we visited some polling centers in Omdurman. We heard reports of tampering with ballot boxes overnight. Centers in Darfur and South Kordofan had still reportedly not received their materials. I calculated the turnout in Omdurman to have been about 10 percent. If the registration figures were indeed inflated by the government, this would have lowered the percentage of the actual turnout. Because the main opposition parties had dropped out, if indeed the government had intended to use the inflated registration figures to add ghost votes at the end of the process, this would no longer be necessary and would in fact diminish the credibility of the vote if an overwhelming landslide were reported. But if not, the meager turnout would suggest that the opposition boycott had had an impact. We encountered only one other international mission, a Malaysian-sponsored group of British observers, who we were later told were of questionable objectivity. At another polling station we learned of an NEC official who had objected to some voters who had come from outside the area but was overruled by his superior.

On the third day, we visited several polling centers in the Dar es Salaam informal settlement on the outskirts of Khartoum. We heard reports of possible ballot stuffing overnight, accusations of double voting, and contradictory reports about whether the ink was indelible. One polling station seemed very suspicious about our monitoring, and we sensed something was amiss, but it was impossible to discern anything for sure. Indeed, in general in the North, although there may have been abuses, they were very difficult to confirm, and the issues seemed more localized than systematic. Logistical problems, rather than deliberate rigging, were most apparent. The number of voters seemed to have tapered off dramatically on the third day, and we saw very few voters in the stations. A typical center with some 1,000 registered voters claimed 280 voters on the first day, 222 on the second, and an estimated 70 on the third day. We saw many party agents and a few domestic observers. Voting in the South was evidently more difficult, so the NEC extended voting there for an additional two days.

The Consequences of Secession

On January 9, 2011, South Sudan voted by an overwhelming 99 percent margin for independence from the North, and on July 9, 2011, South Sudan became formally independent, remaining today the world's youngest country. In retrospect, the years of the CPA, 2005–2011, were the most open for both the North and the South since the fall of al-Mahdi's government in 1991. The government of national unity brought together the NCP and the SPLM in an unhappy marriage severely marred by the conflict in Darfur but nevertheless providing unprecedented space for opposition political parties, civil society, and the press. The CPA was a lost opportunity, not only because of Darfur, but because the government failed to make unity attractive to the South and failed to facilitate a more permanent democratic dispensation in the North. But it was still a salutary experience, comparable to the government of national unity in Zimbabwe that occurred at about the same time, introducing certain reforms as well as a fresh taste of democratic culture. To this day, the secession of South Sudan from Sudan reverberates with ever greater repercussions, for both the North and the South.

On December 15, 2013, fighting broke out in South Sudan between government factions aligned with President Salva Kiir and the vice president, Riek Machar. Eventually, after multiple failed attempts, the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan was signed on September 12, 2018, and the fighting finally showed signs of easing. Meanwhile, independent South Sudan has become a human rights catastrophe, and the democratic prospects for the world's newest country have grown dim. Freedom House has demoted South Sudan from a

5-6 in 2012 just after independence to a 7-7 for 2016, with an aggregate score of just 4, even worse than Sudan's 6. No totalitarian government presides over the civil war, chaos, looting, and destruction that have engulfed the young country once again. Nonetheless, like good totalitarians, the SPLM has extinguished its political opposition. Much of civil society and independent media have been harassed, killed, or chased out of the country. The government is able to do little more than wage war and steal what meager resources it can, including mortgaging the country's oil wealth. War crimes and other atrocities, massive flows of refugees and internally displaced persons, and famine have made South Sudan a failed state. New militias proliferate, while the government has gained the upper hand militarily and key individuals profit financially. Accusing the government of playing the political marketplace game, de Waal refers to South Sudan as the "rent-seeking rebellion followed by payroll peace."[23] The hopes at independence have vanished, and although Sudan has currently refrained from meddling too much in the travails of South Sudan, the fate of each must still be closely linked. South Sudan is learning all the worst lessons from its former overlord. But there is no ideology or mass movement evident. South Sudan is not totalitarian; rather, it is a perfect example of the kind of instrumentalization of disorder that Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz wrote about during the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone.[24]

During a visit I made to Sudan in January 2011, just a few days after the referendum that authorized formal separation of Sudan and South Sudan, I found the northern perspective melancholy, with an appreciation that the future would be difficult. But not all scenarios were pessimistic. The northern government was clearly strong relative to its opposition but still unstable and vulnerable. It could choose to consolidate power by re-invoking sharia, clamping down on the press and civil society, and co-opting or repressing the political opposition. Activists could strive for an alternative, however, and they cited Tunisia as well as the Egyptian uprising that began at that time and was inspiring student demonstrations across the country. A genie had been released from the bottle in the course of the more liberal space that opened up during the elections and referendum processes, and it would be difficult for the government to stop it up again. Opportunities might have been presented by the need for constitutional reform; the government could feel compelled to allow even more freedom, perhaps in the context of another national unity government. This would require sustained pressure from civil society and the political opposition. Problems such as Darfur, Abyei, the popular consultations mandated by the National Dialogue, citizenship, and wealth-sharing could now get more attention before turning into emergencies.

Southern independence would create many morbid symptoms. Rather than consolidating its power in the North, the government might lose con-

trol of the states outside of the center, one activist predicted, and grievances such as the increase in food prices were already leading to greater unrest around the country. The opposition had no viable leadership, however, and for most Sudanese, al-Bashir would be more reliable than al-Turabi, according to the activist. Al-Turabi has a core group of supporters, but he is not widely popular, he said. Both the North and South need to get along for the sake of northerners in the South and southerners in the North. Everyone is still Sudanese. The rights of southern students need to be protected. There will be clashes in both the North and South; the coming period will not be smooth. During this time, civil society needs to push for space. The government has said it wants to create a broad-based government, but it will just fill posts being vacated by the SPLM. Likewise, a journalist I spoke with was confident that independent media, including radio, would continue to gain ground, although it required constant pushing. He said the liberal media is struggling, however, while the most popular newspaper had become al-Turabi's, possibly as a backlash to southern secession.[25]

The politics of sharia had returned, but not without resistance. Another activist I spoke with was involved in a demonstration in front of the Ministry of Justice protesting the lashing of a woman. It was violently broken up by the police, but the activist and another woman managed to get into the ministry anyway and waited almost the entire day to deliver a petition. Sharia law mandates lashing only for a limited number of crimes, but Sudan's criminal act mandates it for many. The government is using it as a tool to threaten the population, but it will not be able to turn back the clock, she said. The citizenship issue will be critical, as well as the constitutional reform and bill of rights. The government will try to take away the most progressive parts. Many Sudanese NGOs are concerned that donors will abandon the North, she said, but this will not stop the NGOs. Further, Sudan's legal code regarding rape needs to be revised, since the definition is muddled with adultery. Tensions were high, she said. As food prices have risen, leaders have been afraid of an uprising such as occurred in Tunisia, and police are being deployed to keep the peace. A hopeful example of the response of civil society to the uncertain aftermath of the South's secession was a group working with women farmers' associations in Gedaref State that had trained its members as observers for both the elections and the referendum. Afterward, the governor of Gedaref attempted to reimpose the dress code in the state, but women did not like it and defied it. The group's leader said that women's main concerns have been socioeconomic issues, and they had gained confidence in asserting their rights.[26]

The space for academic debate seemed to be shrinking, according to the account of at least one researcher. Two books by Haider Ibrahim, published by the Sudan Studies Center (SSC), *The Collapse of Sharia in Sudan* and *The Crisis of Political Islam*, were seized by the authorities, and a book on

the role of China in Sudan was held at the airport but later released. The SSC allowed the authorities to review its books before publication, and they were invited to events but never came. Nor would they provide information for the SSC annual report anymore, formerly an indication of the respectful relationship between at least one NGO and the government. The elections were held just to satisfy the international pressure to complete the CPA and did not really matter to most Sudanese, he said; maybe next time they would be more meaningful. Now, the government feels no need to compromise. The population in the North did not protest because it did not want to spoil the CPA. But with the secession out of the way, unrest due to the rising food prices and the Tunisian "Arab Spring" example would likely increase. Civil society may be harassed, but it is still working and will be more of a target than the political parties. Indeed, some months later, the SSC would be forced to close down. Ibrahim now lives in exile again in Cairo.[27]

Debate among Sudanese was still frank and open, and often remarkably optimistic, such as evidenced by remarks I recorded at an NGO workshop at the time. Democracy is a work in progress, a participant said, and despite the flaws, this was the first time the president was up for election, the first time an election was monitored, the first time many Sudanese had ever had a chance to vote, and the first time there had been a quota for women. The political parties were weak, many mistakes were made, and communications were undeveloped. The workshop made many recommendations, including training of election staff, greater awareness, and reform of election laws. Voters were afraid of losing their jobs and suspicious of the registration process, which needs to be corrected. At a different forum on the future of US policy toward Sudan, which I described as largely dependent on the Sudanese government's continued good behavior, representatives from virtually every major opposition political party were present. Discussion included the apparent lack of US concern about human rights in the North, including Darfur, in preference for the independence of the South; a lack of appreciation for the complexity of Sudan and the opposition in the North; the failure to come up with a comprehensive and long-term solution; the need for a framework to deal with Blue Nile and Nuba; the economic problems of the North that will be intensified by southern independence; America's use of "carrot-like sticks"; the role of the ICC; fruitless sanctions; the unlikelihood of war due to the close relations between the border states and mutual dependence on the oil; US bias in favor of the South; the possible further disintegration of Sudan; the probability of real hardship for Sudan and the lessons of Tunisia; and an appeal that the United States should support the people, not the regime.

Although somewhat constrained, Sudanese civil society still demonstrated considerable dynamism and commitment to bridging the divide between the two countries. Even in sensitive areas such as South Kordofan, a lot of work could be done. One group, the Badya Center, has worked in

the area for two decades. One of the Badya activists said that as the CPA ended, the next steps had become clear: Good relations between the North and South must be established; the system of government in the North must be democratic and political marginalization must end, and a constitutional conference and elections should be held; the problem of Darfur must be dealt with holistically; restrictions on freedom must be ended; and peace must be maintained along the border, where 14 million of Sudan's 40 million population live. South Kordofan will be challenged by the popular consultation and state elections; these are likely to be delayed, complicated by the census being used by the government but rejected by the SPLM. There are divisions within Sudan, but as long as relations between the North and South are good, peace should be possible. Abyei is unlikely to explode, since the tribes do not want to be manipulated in a proxy war between the North and South. Although Governor Ahmad Harun appears relatively liberal due to his efforts to promote development, he is a hardliner with many resources with which he is trying to undermine the SPLM.[28]

Sudan's Political Economy

The conflation of economic, military, and political power is just as evident in Sudan as it is in all of the other five case studies in this book, but the particular structure of this arrangement in Sudan reinforces the conclusion that Sudan is not a successful totalitarian system. In a summary of the recent literature on Sudan's political economy, "Sudan's Deep State," by the Enough Project, the regime's reliance on the rents extracted from oil, gold, weapons, and agriculture is provided as evidence that Sudan is a "violent kleptocracy." Sudan enjoyed an economic boom from 1999 to 2011 from oil revenues mainly generated in the South, but most of this was expended on the military and the enrichment of Sudan's ruling elite, while the great majority of the population remained impoverished and inequality increased. When Sudan lost access to the South's oil, it gained a lifeline with the discovery of gold. In both of these instances, however, although the regime has managed to benefit from the resources, it has also had to concede some control to other powerful actors. In the case of oil, of course, much of the latter course of the civil war was fought over control of the oil fields, such as Heglig, on the southern side of the border between the North and South. In the course of the CPA, negotiations provided for sharing the income between the two. Thus, the largesse from oil was short lived. The disposition of the gold resource is more interesting. Musa Hilal, the former Janjaweed leader, broke with the NCP to found the Sudanese Revolutionary Awakening Council, seizing control in 2014 of four localities in North Darfur around Jebel Amer, where much of Sudan's gold is mined. Eventually

the gold mined at Jebel Amer, as well as gold controlled by various other Darfuri armed groups, makes its way into the Sudanese economy, but much of it is smuggled, and the government has difficulty taxing it. Thus, the gold economy is decentralized among various groups, generating violent conflict and frustrating the central authority.[29]

Land has long been at the heart of most of the conflict throughout Sudan, as has been the case in much of Africa. Land ownership is still largely informal, and the government can readily exercise control by dispossession and patronage. Sudan's weapons industry has also grown in recent years under the Military Industry Corporation, which is unsurprisingly controlled by the military and NISS. The direct control of politico-military institutions over other sectors of the economy, as is the case with Ethiopia's METEC and Rwanda's Tri-Star Investments, is not apparent. Enough's case for the kleptocratic nature of the Sudanese regime is well supported by Transparency International's corruption index, as well as the World Bank's Control of Corruption and Rule of Law indices, which rank Sudan near the bottom. The profit from much of this corruption is presumably channeled to President al-Bashir and the NCP, but the smuggling and economic chaos this generates creates leakages from the system as well. In contrast to Ethiopia and Rwanda, where relative stability and an absence of corruption are associated with a repressive political system, Sudan is characterized by violence and corruption. But the violence and corruption have mitigated the Sudanese regime's repressive control over the economy and the national territory, even though it has enriched and entrenched the ruling elite. Sudan's chaos has enabled autonomous groups, whether militias, business interests, political parties, or civil society, to exercise a greater degree of independence and more openly express dissidence than in the other countries examined thus far. Against its volition, perhaps, the violent kleptocracy engenders a more permissive environment for political space than the more stable and well-governed totalitarian systems.

De Waal's analysis of the political economy of Sudan traces the evolution of this economy from the competition between al-Turabi and al-Bashir over the regime's parastatal and military industries and the dependence on remittances from overseas workers and Islamic banks to the boom and bust of oil that gave rise to the dominance of the NCP. At the center, the Sudanese political marketplace runs efficiently. "Members of this elite pride themselves on their hospitality, civility and tolerance to those they consider peers." As a result, de Waal says, Khartoum is safe and has a sound infrastructure and functioning institutions. "Learning is prized and open debate takes place," and the elites "are cordial irrespective of political difference."[30] Despite the violence and dysfunction, he concludes that al-Bashir's business model is still working. "Their priority is the costly and mostly civil political market of the metropolis, and if Darfur and Southern Kordofan remain mired in turmoil and bloodshed, so be it."[31]

The Media

As evident in the case of political parties and civil society, the press in Sudan demonstrates the same paradox of defiant vigor in the face of persistent repression. Freedom House and Reporters Without Borders rate Sudan near the bottom of their lists for press freedom. Unlike Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Rwanda, however, where almost no private press remains or is subservient to the government, considerably more independent media has penetrated Sudan's system. Sudan still produces some 20 political dailies and dozens of sports and entertainment publications. Self-censorship is widely practiced, but one finds examples of investigative journalism and criticism of the government, such as the reporting around the DAL bread company scandal. Journalists have emerged as important champions of freedom in Sudan. The frequent accounts of their harassment and arrest suggest that the journalists are not always in accord with the government. Social media has opened even more space for expression. Internet penetration was 27 percent in 2015, and much greater in Khartoum, enabling online publications to become popular. Some of these are quite independent, such as *Altareeg* and *Altaghyeer*. Although the government dominates the radio and television, private commercial stations can operate; but they usually avoid politics. International broadcasts, such as Radio Dabanga, get considerable listenership, however.[32]

NED held a conference on the state of the media in Sudan in partnership with the Center for International Media Assistance in Washington, DC, in September 2007, at the time of the CPA. Participants included international and Sudanese journalists, as well as representatives of the Sudanese government and the South Sudanese mission in Washington, DC. The conference report concluded that the media environment in Sudan had "improved slightly in the past few years, but significant roadblocks remain to establishing a free, independent, and unconstrained media." As I noted at the conference, the governments of both Sudan and South Sudan should find a free media to be in their interests in promoting successful implementation of the CPA.[33] It is apparent 10 years later that the hopes the CPA had raised for a more liberal political system, especially freedom of the press, were largely disappointed. What was not anticipated was the flourishing of social media, which has superseded legacy media as a vehicle for uncensored information.

One prominent NGO working on the role of the media during the 2010 elections was SUDIA, the Sudanese Development Initiative. Founded in Cairo in 1995 with support from the Ford Foundation and registered in the United States before moving to Khartoum in 2005 and eventually registering as a Sudanese national organization, SUDIA escaped the problems faced by many international NGOs that were closed down in retaliation after the ICC indicted al-Bashir. During the 2010 elections, SUDIA conducted a civil society strengthening program, focusing on building the media capacity of CSOs.

Thus, SUDIA was the leading local partner in the Sudan Media and Elections Consortium, which monitored eight newspapers, five radio stations, and three television stations in northern Sudan. The results of this monitoring showed a dramatic increase in coverage as the elections drew near, in which the NCP was given 46 percent of total airtime on television and 53 percent on radio, versus 32 percent for the SPLM on television and 21 percent on the radio. Most other parties received only 1 or 2 percent of the coverage. Most of the coverage was positive, but there had been a rise in hate speech coming from some of the political parties and candidates. The print media showed a similar trend, with 43 percent of the space going to the NCP, 23 percent to the SPLM, and 6 percent to the Umma Party. Broadcast media was essentially controlled by the government, although Blue Nile radio was both the most popular and independent. Women candidates received only 4 percent of the time on television, 6 percent on radio, and 3 percent in print.

Space had opened during the CPA, but the challenges for the media remained formidable after the 2010 elections. For southerners, this was especially the case. According to one newspaper publisher, Alfred Taban of the *Khartoum Monitor*, government harassment was no longer overt, but taxes had almost doubled, and the pressures were great. Advertisers were not paying their bills. For more than a decade, the *Monitor* had mainly served the large southern community around Khartoum, and its editorials could be critical of the government, sometimes leading to harassment from the authorities, the seizure of print runs, and onerous fines. After the elections, Taban said he was ready to move his English-language paper down to Juba, where taxes and competition would be less and circulation more, despite the fact that there was still no working printing press there at the time. A large population of southerners in the North would still read and help sustain the paper, he was confident. As it happened, Taban succeeded in reestablishing his paper in Juba but soon fell afoul of the SPLM and was imprisoned for criticizing Salva Kiir. His hopes for South Sudan were crushed as the new government killed journalists and silenced the press.

Nuba Reports has provided independent coverage of the conflict in the Nuba Mountains from rebel-held territory and has expanded its reach throughout Sudan. After the 2010 elections, Ahmed Harun became governor of South Kordofan; and after many years of relative peace, conflict erupted again. In response, the Nuba Reports website was created to document the government bombings of the region and allow local reporters to tell their stories. Nuban journalists have received professional training, and their content has been published internationally, as well as reaching a growing Sudanese audience.[34] The Sudanese government has not attempted to shut down the internet in recent years, but revisions in the Press and Printed Press Materials Law in 2015 sought to expand the legal framework to prosecute online journalists. Freedom House reported that there were no blocks

on political or social websites in 2016, and that WhatsApp has become popular due to the relative privacy and anonymity it allows.[35]

This relative freedom to use the internet is confirmed by Sudanese activists, who have many stories about how the use of social media in Sudan has become increasingly powerful. Youth groups, such as Girifna ("Enough"), are more active in social media and are influencing others in political organization and awareness. Students are spreading messages about human rights and democracy, and these discussions have sparked not only awareness, but activism. Students documented the riots with photos and reporting, and they double checked the validity of information. Youth groups connected by social media helped during the flooding disaster that occurred shortly afterward by providing food and shelter. Students found they could become influential in helping local communities take the initiative in this regard in the absence of government. In another example, when one politically active woman was held incommunicado by the security services, an alert went out on Twitter almost immediately. The news soon spread around the world, leading to a demonstration outside the NISS offices. The woman was released within a week.

Digital mapping is being used in a variety of ways, including peacebuilding and human rights monitoring. Twitter has proved especially helpful. Hundreds of prisoners is just a figure, but the personal stories that can be told on Twitter get much more response, turning the tables on the security services. Migration routes and water sources can now be monitored. Microfinance can also be better managed with these tools. The quality of media has, however, gone down since the September protests, when the government told journalists you are either with us or against us. Al Ayam and Al Jadeeda closed down. Everything has become a red line, activists have said, including discussions about the reformists within the regime and the war in the Nuba Mountains. Journalists are being arrested on national security charges. Radio and television are all state owned, but online media is picking up, they concurred. The government is worried because online media is not easy to control, but NISS has established a "digital platoon" to spread disinformation and sabotage opposition websites.[36]

Civil Society After the September Protests

In September 2013, Khartoum was shaken by student protests that were violently put down by the authorities. This uprising might be compared to the protests in Ethiopia after the 2005 elections or the Oromo protests in 2016, which galvanized the government to crack down and precipitated the decline in freedom that followed. Whereas in Ethiopia the crackdown was initially severe and determined but later gave way for reform, in the case of

Sudan, it has been less concerted and more ambivalent. An opening has been much slower to materialize, however. Although in the years since the elections and secession of the South much of the progress made under the CPA has steadily eroded, many civil society activists nevertheless express a resolve to continue the struggle despite the obstacles, always looking for cracks in the system and signs of hope. One activist contended that the government's power base has shrunk as many prominent NCP intellectuals have defected, such as a former Islamic militia hero who had fought in the South and had published two books exposing problems in the military and the dissension within it. Sudanese activists are no longer fleeing the country, he said, but staying involved, presumably because they believe change is imminent. The detention of some activists at the time was unfortunate but mainly demonstrated the weakness of the government, as criticism of the government has become more open and common. Many of the victims of the September revolts are very angry. The government says it is going to raise the price of fuel and is threatening once again to kill anyone who protests in the streets, but it will face resistance, he said.[37]

Civil society activists are frequently harassed and detained by authorities, and although conditions can be harsh and treatment has been severe in the past, activists often describe such experiences with nonchalance, as if it were normal. A typical example at this time was that of the group of nine, mostly rather elderly, academics who had been discussing Sudan's political crisis and how the country might be extricated from it. They were preparing a press release. About 20 security police arrived, and after being offered tea, they accompanied the academics in their cars to a police station in Omdurman. The women were separated from the men, who sat with each other in a courtyard, each with his face to the wall. They were interrogated first by a group of junior officers and then by a group of more senior officers, who accused them of fomenting rebellion and receiving foreign funding. They were served some *ful* (Sudanese bread and beans) and tea and left in the courtyard until 3 a.m. and then were moved inside to a room where they were eventually given pillows on which to lie down. The next day they were taken to the security police station in Khartoum North, where they were placed in a room of the political and social department with a young armed guard, whom they befriended. They were questioned again and finally released after signing a statement vowing that they would not seek to undermine the government.[38]

Corresponding to the Ethiopian Charities and Societies Agency and the Rwandan RGB, Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Council (HAC) is the agency responsible for registering NGOs, and over the years, depending on who was in charge, it has had a reputation for doing an acceptable, if not liberal, job. But in a reorganization, HAC was moved to the Interior Ministry, and the HAC staff now live in fear because the reorganization implies greater

control exercised by Sudan's intelligence agency, the NISS. NGOs must now allow at least two months to get registered and try to get the required reports into HAC on time. Approval for programs must also be obtained from the local popular committee and the local authorities. Civic education programs are not considered a problem, and training on democracy and human rights is allowed. Typical of the complaints by NGOs is that the government wants to know all the details of NGO grants and projects and that these must sometimes go through four levels of approval, which can take up to a year. The Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organizations has resisted the new requirements, but many organizations attempt to comply. Projects based in Khartoum seem to get easier treatment.

A personal encounter with the HAC provided me with an opportunity to raise some of these concerns with the Sudanese authorities and serves as a way to compare the HAC to its Ethiopian and Rwandan counterparts. I was successful in getting an appointment with the director general of the HAC at the time, Ali Adam Hassan. As I waited for him, one of the female staff there vented about the poor morale at the HAC due to the increasingly useless bureaucracy. Several signs on the walls of the office admonished staff to work harder. Evidently, staff spend much of the day just drinking tea and looking for problems in applications. When the director general arrived, he was very friendly, and he assured me that he was quite familiar with NED, pointing to a row of binders in a cabinet along the wall and indicating one of them was devoted to NED. He thought we had applied for registration at one point, and he insisted he was not confusing us with our Washington-based partners, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) or the International Republican Institute (IRI), with whom he was also very familiar. IRI had had a particularly unusual status with both the HAC and the foreign ministry due to its efforts to train one of the Darfur militias to become a political party, but the workshops had not done much good and USAID ended the funding, which he thought made sense. He said that the government had held a meeting four or five years before to decide what to do about NED because it was not sure if NED should be considered an NGO or a donor. I said we were obviously a donor, but since we do not have an office in the country, we seem to be an anomaly. In the end, the HAC decided it had no responsibility for NED and handed it over to the foreign ministry, which has never followed up.

To broaden our range of partners, he also suggested that NED send out a request for proposals. I said we generally accept only unsolicited proposals, but the HAC was free to advise Sudanese NGOs that we were a potential funding agency. I expressed concern that some of our partners had found the bureaucracy with HAC increasingly burdensome, and he acknowledged that requirements had been tightened recently but that this was due to problems of accountability and a concern about funding for terrorists. He explained very clearly the process of registration and technical agreements at the

national and state levels, and the need for approval from line ministries. He gave me a copy of the technical agreement and a booklet on guidelines for NGOs. He said he would soon be leaving the HAC for another post. He was frank about the relationship between Sudan and the United States; it has had its ups and downs but now seems to be improving. He said "soft" projects draw more scrutiny than "hard" projects that deliver school supplies and dig wells. Sudan is not like most African countries due to the politics and conflict here, he concluded.[39]

The experience of BBSAWS provides an example of the contradiction many civil society groups have faced when navigating engagement with the government, advocacy for reform, and survival. The association has conducted research, created alliances across political party affiliations, held workshops, lectures, and seminars on election law, quotas, and socioeconomic issues, and published booklets, posters, and the *Women Magazine*. A reflection of its new approach was its work with parent-teacher associations at six schools in Damazeen, Blue Nile State, to strengthen their capacity to improve the school environment and quality of education. It could serve as a model applicable elsewhere. The HAC must approve all proposals, as well as the donors, for projects in Sudan and was pleased with this one. BBSAWS is considered a model NGO by the government, which twice has given it an award. Yet in the last couple of years, the bureaucratic burden had become increasingly onerous. In addition to signing a technical agreement with the national HAC, BBSAWS is required to work with a locally approved institution, which often has little capacity. The organization has to meet with the minister of social welfare, who must sign another agreement, which can take a month.

To compound this problem, Byblos Bank would not open an account until two months after BBSAWS's registration, and this is still pending. The HAC must attend the general assembly meeting of an organization in order to approve registration, and this approval is based on the discretion of the HAC with no set criteria. The HAC determines the themes that can be worked on, and democracy, human rights, and political participation are extremely sensitive. If other organizations are to be included in a project, these must also be approved. All NGOs are classified as either for or against the government, and permission for any project ultimately comes from the NISS. Even if an NGO has a letter of approval from the government, an activity can be stopped the day it is to take place. It is very difficult to get approval to work in Blue Nile, South Kordofan, or Darfur. Still, BBSAWS is far better off than most NGOs in Sudan due to its base at Ahfad University. Many NGOs have been shut down. GONGOs are increasingly competing with NGOs, and the government does not understand the role of CSOs, suspicious of their agenda and their foreign support. Yet communities are demanding civil society's help, and the effectiveness of CSOs was demon-

strated during the floods a few years ago, when NGOs provided more relief than the government could. Local governments are often very appreciative of NGO programs and maintain good relations. BBSAWS's projects supported by other donors have helped women's groups increase their income, fight gender-based violence, and increase awareness of their rights. Ahfad students benefit from the practicums required to work in communities on some BBSAWS projects, and Ahfad graduates provide a strong network of skilled women throughout Sudan and South Sudan, which even the government relies on for some of its best talent. Despite obstacles, BBSAWS will survive and its work will continue, the group assured me.

As some NGOs have been closed down by the authorities or have had their activities severely restricted, groups have adopted various stratagems to continue their work and often have succeeded in reinventing themselves to be stronger than before. Some groups have simply changed their names and statutes and re-registered with different agencies. As the government cabinet is being reduced in size, there are many new power bases emerging among the leadership, and it is necessary for groups to try to find sympathizers here and there in the government. Some groups are committed to engaging the government and trying to show that civil society is not the political opposition but is trying to help Sudan. Sometimes local authorities, who are suspicious about NGO activities at first, become pleased with the outcomes by the end. Because Sudan has many viable political parties, NGOs can be even-handed, conducting programs that reach across the political spectrum, especially with women and youth. Sudan's current constitutional reform process offers another opportunity for civil society to provide education and mobilization in a nonpartisan manner. Elections were scheduled to take place in January 2015, and a new constitution, election law, and census all had to be completed before the registration process and election. Some government authorities have been thankful for the assistance that CSOs were able to provide. Many activists recognize that any peaceful transition will have to include members of the NCP; otherwise, the only alternative is likely to be violence and chaos. They were concerned that Sudan may now be at a tipping point.[40]

The September protests were a decisive moment and stoked anger among the population rather than fear, some activists said. People were shot for no reason. Not only the military, but even the security services, were discontent. A coup is possible, but a peaceful transition is preferable. The 60 percent inflation rate was causing a lot of hardship for the average Sudanese. In the new political environment, the authorities have not spared even women from threats and abuse. Activists said they suspected that the university protests were stirred up by agents provocateurs; no one knows who gave the orders, the police used deadly force, and many students were hurt and one died due to asthma triggered by the tear gas. Al-Bashir attempted to

speak to the student union, but they could not come to an agreement. Because inflation has not kept pace with salaries, teachers have been leaving the schools in droves. Patients have to pay for their own bandages and injections at the hospitals, which sometimes go without electricity. The government no longer seems to care about people. Despite the challenges, activists persist. Women arrested for not covering up were acquitted, thanks to the independent Bar Association and a women's human rights NGO. People could still be arrested just for criticizing the government, however. Laws are vague, and judges can rule as they want. There must be legal reform so the laws conform to the international conventions enshrined in the constitution. There has been no formal engagement with civil society on the constitutional reform. A lot of work must be done, the activists concluded.[41]

Sudan's Democratic Prospect: The Way Forward

In mid-December 2018, protests broke out in Atbara, a city along the Nile in northern Sudan that was once the stronghold of Sudan's trade union movement and Communist Party. Sudan's economic crisis had become acute, and the government, under pressure from the World Bank, cut its subsidy of bread, tripling the price. It was the last straw. But these protests were different from those of 2013. They were bigger, attracting thousands. And they were everywhere. On just one day, January 24, 2019, 50 marches occurred across the country, and they did not die down. The marches were led by the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA) and mobilized by social media, uniting not just youth and professionals but tea-sellers and defectors from the army. One of the protest rallying cries became "We are all Darfur!" Another was "Just Fall, That's All!" Among the most telling was "You women, be strong. This revolution is a women's revolution!"[42] When al-Bashir declared a state of emergency on February 22, 2019, banning protests, they only became more intense. They remained nonviolent, although scores were killed and hundreds arrested.

At last, on April 11, 2019, after 30 years in power, al-Bashir was overthrown in a military coup that established a Transitional Military Council (TMC) led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan as the chair and the leader of the RSF, General Mohamed Hamdan Dagolo, known as "Hemedti," as the vice-chair. Hemedti's ruthless seizure of power brought the periphery, the Darfuri Arabs of the RSF, to the center, Khartoum, with bloody, and as yet uncertain, consequences.[43] Massive popular protests demanding a democratic, civilian-led government continued, punctuated by a massacre of 128 protesters by the RSF on June 3, according to the Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors. After a brief lull the protests resumed, and with pressure from Ethiopia, the AU, the US Special Envoy, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the

UAE, tense negotiations between the TMC and the opposition Forces for Change, including the SPA, finally led to the signing of an agreement on July 17 for a 39-month transition to culminate in democratic elections. The deal was shaky, but marked a breakthrough for democracy.[44]

This revolt had been simmering since the separation of the South. The recombinant authoritarianism had finally run out of steam. When I met with some Sudanese activists in September 2015, Sudan's political future appeared uncertain, but in retrospect, their observations were prescient, offering some parameters for the coming transition. The strategic thinking and preparations for change had needed only a spark to set them in motion. One activist opined that the United States seemed to have the mistaken assumption that the current government is here to stay, but they did not understand that the NIF is a minority of ideologues who will not share power. Hoping for succor once again from the international community, he said they need to be forced out with pressure from the ICC. Some in the government will lose out, but if al-Bashir's safety can be assured, he might be persuaded to step down. All of the politicians need to sit down together and negotiate a perestroika. At the time, according to this activist, the only one who was talking sense was al-Mahdi, as presented in his "Sudan: Social Impact Assessment." The regime was weak. There were four NCPs corresponding to the leaders of each: President al-Bashir; Ali Osman Mohammed Taha, then first vice president; Nafie Ali Nafie, former head of NISS; and Salah Gosh, also a former head of NISS. All are Islamists. But there is nothing in Islam that makes it a unique system of government, the activist said. The government lacks a political vision.

Before the 2013 riots, the government had planned how to act, but did not know why. Another activist, working in South Kordofan, proposed that either there could be a national political solution including civil society, the armed groups, the political parties, and the government creating a national unity government leading to free elections, or there could be a popular uprising in which many could be killed. A military coup could also occur, but that would be a bad scenario leading to chaos. There are some reformist voices within the government; the government is saying the door is open to national dialogue and elections, but on the ground it is not doing anything and there is no good will, no ceasefire, no release of prisoners, and no steps toward a transition. The people want to dismantle the regime, and the government strategy is to gain time until the elections. The problem is not the constitution, but enforcing it. Within the opposition national consensus forces, there are people with ideological and political differences, but al-Mahdi wants to dominate everyone, this activist complained. The civil opposition must maintain peaceful means but use more effective civil disobedience tactics, such as the general strike. There is currently some tranquility in South Kordofan despite the absence of a final settlement, but it could be the quiet before

the storm. The problem was aggravated by the secession of the South. There is agreement on some kind of federalism but differences on the number of states. Despite the fact that the government is not engaging with civil society on constitutional reform, it is still good to focus on a common vision for how Sudan should be ruled, not who should rule it, he said.[45]

Unrelenting conflict was sapping the government's power. There has to be a comprehensive approach to stopping the war, yet another activist advised. It is a problem for South Sudan as well. Popular sentiment opposes the war; the government's jihad has failed, youth are speaking against the government, and the government's prohibition of cross-border trade is being ignored. The Misserya believe the government is working against their interests. The parties lack leadership and are no longer representing the interests of the people. But overthrowing the regime is a delusion, the activist said; it is still strong compared to the opposition. It must be accepted that those in power are Sudanese, and the opposition must move to dialogue with them. In South Kordofan, a peace forum includes the government, army, NGOs, and students. It is sending a message to the government and SPLM-N that the people are done with the war, it is not taking the country anywhere, and they must go for dialogue. It is giving more visibility to the South Kordofan conflict both nationally and internationally. There is great hope in local processes; the war is only benefitting the warlords. Both the government and SPLM-N are under economic pressure. South Sudan wants to mediate between the two. Youth are talking about peaceful coexistence. Social media and radio are used widely, even in South Kordofan. Women leaders are playing a greater role. Civil society is increasing its capacity for nonviolence, including community projects. Relations between communities must be revitalized and their will to reject war strengthened. The relationship of this activist's NGO with the HAC was good, largely due to the social component. The group does not serve anyone as a political platform. Authorities are suspicious but are invited to programs. People appreciate the group's transparency. But Abyei had been too tense to work on. There, the Dinka will not talk, and the government is using the Misserya for its own agenda.[46]

At this stage, Sudan's fundamentalists have been given a chance and have been found wanting, according to an activist. If there is a coup, the fundamentalists are unlikely to increase their power. The power of the military has eroded, and it would also be difficult for them to maintain a government. Sudan is not the same as Egypt and Tunisia. The government's heavy-handed response to the September riots and introduction of Janjaweed into Khartoum have not been popular. Musa Hilal, the former Janjaweed leader, had gained control of Darfur and fallen out with the government. He is uniting the tribes of Darfur, and his militia is stronger than the government's army, the activist said. Sudan is beginning to fragment, but the United States and the EU seem to see no alternative to the NCP. More pressure is likely to

come from the youth. The war is bankrupting the government. A national dialogue is a prerequisite for change but is a long way off. There is no new constitution yet, and the NCP is just playing for time so it can push through its own draft at the last minute. There is still value in the electoral process, with 2010 as the baseline, the activist proposed.[47]

But the elections held in 2015 turned out to be much less credible than those held in 2010, and a subsequent cabinet reshuffle did little to upset the status quo. A national consultation garnered little legitimacy from the opposition but was continuing to generate discussion, at least. Rather than the collapse some activists had been predicting in the aftermath of the CPA, the government had maintained control. Despite pockets of fighting in Darfur, South Kordofan, and Blue Nile, the armed rebellions seem to be waning. Despite the drastic cut in oil production, inflation, and unemployment, massive protests had not materialized. Political space was shrinking, but not drastically. For example, a prominent human rights lawyer, Amin Mekki Medani, and other civil society activists who had been arrested remain incommunicado. The Sudan Human Rights Monitor, led by Medani, had had to suspend activity for the past couple of years since the government closed its office and seized all the computers. Amin was charged with treason due to an email he sent to the UN Human Rights Council. The case was slowly winding its way through the courts. The Monitor had applied to have its license approved and was trying to get its office reopened. It was working publicly to provide human rights education and conduct its other programs. It had been the convening organization of a civil society task force.[48]

Engagement with the ruling party at the time was not futile. The Sudanese Center for Democracy and Development (SCDD), led by Omar Al Khair, a young leader of the NCP, is proud of the multipartisan composition of SCDD, as well as its mission. The group trained more than 900 observers from 147 CSOs to monitor the April 2015 elections in nine states. Trainings have included the DUP and the Umma Party. SCDD mapped 264 NGOs, of which 207 were selected for training on management, networking, and peacebuilding. A national network was established, as well as coordinating committees in each state and a website with a helpdesk, and there was ongoing coaching of NGOs. SCDD partnered with the Life & Peace Institute to hold a student dialogue and is supporting an education project for South Sudan refugees, an example of a "non-soft" service-providing project. SCDD also had a project with Conflict Dynamics, another international NGO, on political accommodation in the national dialogue, which included a workshop and papers on the role of civil society and the concept of national dialogue. A clean-up Khartoum campaign was inspired by a similar project in Estonia.

Using a nonconfrontational approach, civil society can bring change to Sudan, Omar said; it will take time, but it will succeed, he insisted. Working

at the local level, the political parties and government can be brought together. By sharing experiences and mutual respect, it is possible to deal with issues such as elections and human rights openly and reach a common understanding. Omar had successfully appealed within the NCP for the release of a prominent civil society activist.[49] However, another group that engaged with the NCP had a less congenial experience. The group's office had been closed by the government after it organized a group of women, including many NCP members, to travel to Rwanda to learn about the women's empowerment programs there. The NCP women returned advocating for the Sudanese to do the same. The HAC was angry that the NGO had gone through the Ministry of Social Welfare instead of HAC to get approval for the trip. Security agents showed up and seized some of their equipment. But the group is now back in business.[50]

After a period several years earlier when activity had almost come to a halt, some CSOs were finding new ways to remain relevant, open more political space, and promote concepts of democracy and human rights. The focus had shifted to governance, emphasizing ways to make local government more transparent and accountable to communities, thus taking a bottom-up approach. It sometimes included nonviolent actions. The government usually approved anti-corruption programs, even though some government officials were presumably corrupt. But according to one activist, despite the respite given to some civil society organizations, the political situation was not making much progress in Sudan. The national dialogue has no real legitimacy as al-Bashir is insisting on leading it. The national dialogue process called for by the opposition has also yet to get off the ground. The economy continues to get worse, and the black market is growing as the government runs out of hard currency. The government was in a fight with DAL, one of the biggest corporations in Sudan, over the subsidized bread industry and the company's manipulation of the exchange rate. The youth have become apathetic, and some have joined ISIS just for the money, not out of ideological conviction. Al-Bashir has pushed all of the Islamists out of government and is drawing closer to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states and away from Iran. The government is engaging more with Europe and even the United States but is held back by the ICC indictment. Yet of all Sudan's leaders, al-Bashir is strong and in more control than ever, the activist said. Al-Mahdi is still active at 78, but al-Mirghani has not been heard from for a couple of years and may be quite ill. Before he died, al-Turabi had been trying to ally himself once again with al-Bashir.[51]

Civil society had begun to take a local governance approach as work on the national level failed to gain traction. Omdurman had become very dirty as the local government had stopped collecting refuse, the excuse being that the *Wali* (governor) had not yet taken up his post; but in fact the system had simply broken down. So one NGO stimulated community members to start

collecting garbage on their own and to start talking about cleaning up the environment. This was led by a woman Umma Party leader but included women from across the political spectrum. Due to the success of this effort, the NCP decided it needed to imitate it, and a competition ensued to see who could do the best job. Communities can demand services in such a nonpolitical way even if they cannot change the government. Similarly, such engagement has been stimulated by creating community centers, which have rehabilitated parks and provided equipment and programs to schools.

Other groups may remain active but must keep their programs discreet. According to one activist, instead of holding events in public, gatherings are held in private homes. The human rights and social media work was reviving, but there is not as much freedom as there was during the CPA, the activist reported. Yet a lot can be accomplished through persistence and careful navigation through the system. Activists have been detained for questioning, sometimes accused of receiving money from abroad for regime change activities. No sensitive information is kept on computers, in case they are seized. Despite harassment, the courts can be persuaded to drop charges, but trumped-up charges are simply refabricated, case files are lost, and NGOs get tied up in expensive and time-consuming legal proceedings, sometimes forcing closure. It seems NISS really is taking over the government, which no longer appears to be in imminent danger of collapse, the activist said. Despite the failing economy, there are enough resources to keep the ruling elite comfortable and in control. CSOs had come together in a couple of federations and aligned themselves with the Sudan Call, an opposition political grouping. A bill restricting civil society activity resembling that of Ethiopia is being reinforced to close loopholes. The HAC must approve all funding applications; the laws are not applied evenly but are being applied against only those groups the government does not like. This problem is spreading throughout the Horn and East Africa region, but Sudanese civil society seems to be much more resilient than some of its neighbors, the activist suggested.[52]

Similarly, an activist from a leading women's NGO described to me the problems the group had encountered in securing approval for its operations. It was working to reduce violence on the university campuses. Although the government has questioned and hindered the group's activities, it liked to point to the group's programs as a demonstration of its magnanimity in allowing the work to occur and refers various international agencies to it. Violence on the campuses has subsided due to the government's prohibition of student gatherings, but the underlying problem remains. The group's work in the women's prison and legal defense of women continues. The prison population has declined somewhat since many former inmates had been southerners imprisoned for beer-making, and most have returned to the South; but many women are still incarcerated for drugs, and some have been imprisoned for failing to pay off their microcredit loans. Much of the

organization's legal action now involves women who have not received their child support from delinquent husbands. The group had supported a coalition of NGOs promoting the national dialogue, but it soon became apparent that the government was not interested in real negotiations and had already determined the outcome. It is just going to be a matter of allocating seats in the government, dividing up the cake. A time limit of three months would not be enough for a process that must be comprehensive and given all the time necessary. The Umma Party and the Communist Party are not participating. The dialogue lacks an enabling environment. There is no free press, the opposition political parties are harassed, and the civil society is severely restricted. NISS seems to be involved everywhere; it is the real government, she said. Many other NGOs had been supporting the constitutional process, but this was put on hold pending the outcome of the national dialogue. The human rights provisions in the interim constitution must be preserved even if they are ignored. Some provisions of the current constitution are already being eroded, such as the law now giving the president the power to appoint the governors rather than having them elected at the provincial level.[53]

SUDIA collected data in North Darfur and conducted a civil society monitoring project. Although the overall space for civil society had declined since 2010, it fluctuates. The national dialogue and the opening of the human rights council have helped, and the government realizes that the hard approach of closing offices and arresting activists is not so effective. The new tactic is to use bureaucracy to harass and slow things down. SUDIA's license ran out in May 2015 and was taking a while to get renewed. There is a spectrum of attitudes among civil society regarding the national dialogue forum, with some totally rejecting it and others willing to engage it conditionally. It is shaping up to be a political dialogue among elites rather than one with the entire nation. SUDIA, through the Confederation of Sudanese Civil Society Organizations, organized six three-day civil society consultations in every zone of the country except Darfur (the Darfur society consultation was held in Khartoum for security reasons). The consultations focused on regional views of the national dialogue, issues and priorities, and the role of civil society in the dialogue. The Sudanese government had given Thabo Mbeki a roadmap, but neither the opposition nor civil society had provided an alternative negotiating position, just rejection. A conducive environment is needed for the dialogue, which the consultations sought to provide. Some of the issues raised in the consultations included the government giving land away to investors, irresponsible mining concessions in the North, and human trafficking in the East. The government has been dominated by security, security, security. The September 2013 uprising was put down by the RSF and NISS, not the police and military, which are weak. SUDIA provided data to the state radio station, which produces programs based on the data. Civil society must keep knocking on the door. Violence is not an option.[54]

Conclusions

The resilience of civil society versus the recombinant talent of the regime has come to define the protests of 2019. The confrontation between protesters and government forces boiled down to a contest of who could hold out longer. But the women's movement has shown its power. According to one report, half the demonstrators in the protests were women. They had suffered the most under sharia law, and no one wanted an end to the system more than women. Social media has documented women leading the chants, facing down tear gas, and being herded into police vans.[55] This study has noted the prominent role played by women's organizations in the evolution of Sudan's autocracy, implicitly challenging its ideological core.

Before the current uprising, one women's activist complained to me that it seemed the government would not change unless people go out into the streets. The intent of the national dialogue forum was to keep the government in place and for the opposition to surrender, she maintained. The government's strategy of biding its time was working. It will say what you want to hear, and do what it wants to do. If the government is wise and wants a peaceful solution, it will dismantle the current system for a broad, democratic government. But it will not touch its ideology, and al-Turabi's same old ideas are still around. The ideology is above the state, and such foolishness will bring it crashing down. As the Quran says, "God gives governance to whomever he wants to, and takes it away in a very dramatic and painful way."

Women have advanced over the past 20 years; they have more jobs in the government and the economy. Their level of education has increased. Women head some 60 percent of households, often because the men can no longer support them and have disappeared. There was debate over the inclusion of gender-sensitive language in the draft constitution, and the 1991 personal laws are still in effect, enabling police to arrest women if they disapprove of their attire, and only recognizing women's reproductive capacity, not their productive role. A 28 percent quota has been accepted, and UN Resolution 1325 supporting women's rights has been approved, but it has not been implemented. Reform initiatives by the minister of social welfare will face problems at the Council of Ministers. The government has a national strategy for women's empowerment, but it provides only lip service. Rape in conflict zones has been criminalized in Article 149. International pressure is critical, and it was a disappointment that Sudan is no longer under human rights observation at the UN, the activist told me. The right of expression and assembly has been curtailed, and discussion of sensitive issues suppressed. The Ministry of Health had commissioned the activist's group to do a study on HIV transmission, but the police stopped it.[56]

Some conclusions should be drawn from this analysis of Sudan. First, the Islamist project of the late al-Turabi, although it took on totalitarian features,

failed to take root in Sudan. Ideologically, political Islam has the potential to develop into a totalitarian system due to its all-encompassing, chiliastic belief system and capacity to mobilize masses of the population. Yet Sudan's traditional Sufi sects, although sympathetic to the Islamist appeal, have adhered in the end to a more tolerant and pluralistic version of Islam and have sought to compete for power with the NIF rather than succumb to it. The strong base of the traditional parties, despite their organizational weakness and susceptibility to co-optation, has made it impossible for either the Islamists or the military dictatorships of el-Numeiri and al-Bashir to eliminate them. This was amply demonstrated in the 2010 elections. In addition, within the NCP itself, multiple factions and tendencies compete for power, ranging from hardliners in the NISS to moderate reformists. Such enduring political pluralism must be a challenging obstacle to the development of any totalitarian system. Sudan's vigorous civil society, which also has deep roots, has survived repeated efforts to suppress it as well.

The women's movement, in particular, deserves credit for its role in highlighting the ideological contradictions of the regime and organizing a formidable resistance under the radar. As illuminated by the extensive conversations with civil society activists documented in this study, this tenacity is attributable to various qualities: civil society's willingness to both engage the government and defy it when necessary; its ability to work within a variety of established structures, local, national, and international; its encouragement of debate and consensus, both at the elite level and the grassroots; its search for alternatives, innovations, pragmatic solutions, and sometimes evasion. Neither Sudan's political society nor its civil society is united. Yet the frequent personal connections among individuals, cross-cutting religion, race, and politics, have enabled compromise and consensus, albeit not always without long negotiations. The economic costs of war likewise have drained the state's capacity to impose its will, both politically and ideologically. Thus, although the country's bewildering heterogeneity—ethnic, religious, and political—has caused much of the country's conflict and dysfunction, it has made it much more difficult to consolidate a totalitarian system. This heterogeneity could also be the basis for Sudan's eventual reconstitution as a democracy. It bears comparison with Ethiopia's equally heterogeneous ethnic, religious, and social demographics. Ethiopia has been more successful in imposing a totalitarian order than Sudan has been, but Ethiopia's historical legacy of the monarchy and the putative totalitarian rule of the Derg, in contrast to Sudan's experience of British colonialism and political pluralism, despite interludes of dictatorship, partly explain the different outcomes. But if Ethiopia is throwing off its chains, Sudan next door must soon follow. Clearly, the exhaustion of the totalitarian Islamist project in Sudan and the glimmer of a path toward a more free and democratic alternative offer some prospect for the future.

Notes

1. Freedom House, "Freedom in the World: Sudan," https://freedomhouse.org /print/46806.

2. US Department of State, "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014, Sudan," https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index .htm?year=2015&dlid=252733.

3. *Encyclopaedia Brittanica*, 15th ed. (1993), s.v. "Sudan."

4. Ibid.

5. Dave Peterson, "Peaceful Change and the Rise of Sudan's Democracy Movement," *African Security Review* 11, no. 4 (2002), 60–63.

6. Ruth Iyob and Gilbert Khadiagala, *Sudan: The Elusive Quest for Peace* (Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006), 119–123.

7. Francis Mading Deng and Prosser Gifford, *The Search for Peace and Unity in the Sudan* (Washington, DC: Wilson Center Press, 1987), 78–89.

8. Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, *Shari'a and Islamism in Sudan: Conflict, Law and Social Transformation* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co., Ltd., 2012), 48–80.

9. Atta el-Battahani, "The Post-secession State in Sudan," in *Sudan Divided: Continuing Conflict in a Contested State,* ed. Gunnar M. Sorbo and Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 32.

10. Fluehr-Lobban, *Shari'a and Islamism in Sudan,* 81–110.

11. Atta el-Battahani, in discussion with the author, Khartoum, October 2015.

12. Islamic scholar, in discussion with the author, Khartoum, October 2015.

13. Alex de Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2015), 8.

14. Bona Malwal, *Sudan and South Sudan: From One to Two* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 150.

15. Xinhua, "Bashir Vows to Liberate Africa from Neo-colonialism," *Daily Nation (Kenya),* July 31, 2016, https://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/Bashir-vows -to-liberate-Africa-from-modern-colonialism-/1066-3324832-bqhalr/index.html.

16. Julie Flint and Alex de Waal, *Darfur: A New History of a Long War* (New York: Zed Books, 2008), 179–187.

17. Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism, 276–290.

18. Iyob and Khadiagala, *Sudan*, 80–90.

19. Carter Center, *Observing Sudan's 2010 National Elections, April 11–18, 2010: Final Report* (Atlanta: Carter Center, 2010), 3.

20. Ibid., 50.

21. Ironically, Sudan's Communist Party (similar to the SACP) has long been one of the most consistent advocates of secular, progressive, even democratic policies, often in courageous opposition to the repression of the state.

22. Discussion with southern activist, Khartoum, April 2010.

23. De Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa*, 98.

24. Patrick Chabal and Jean Pascal Daloz, Africa Works, *Disorder As Political Instrument* (London: James Currey, 1999).

25. Discussion with the author, Khartoum, January 2011.

26. Discussions with the author, Khartoum, January 2011.

27. Discussion with Sudanese Study Center staff, January 2011.

28. Discussion with the author, Khartoum, January 2011.

29. The Enough Project, "Sudan's Deep State: How Insiders Violently Privatized Sudan's Wealth, and How to Respond," April 2017, 19–33, https://enoughproject .org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/SudansDeepState_Final_Enough.pdf.

30. De Waal, *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa,* 82.

31. Ibid., 90.

32. Freedom House, "Freedom of the Press 2016: Sudan," https://freedomhouse.org
/report/freedom-press/2016/sudan, and Freedom House, "Freedom on the Net 2016:
Sudan Country Profile," https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2016/sudan.

33. Center for International Media Assistance, *The State of Media in Sudan:
Special Report* (Washington, DC: CIMA, September 12, 2007).

34. Nuba Reports, "News and Films from Sudan's Frontline," https://www
.nubareports.org/about-us/.

35. Freedom House, "Freedom on the Net 2016," https://freedomhouse.org/report
/freedom-net/sudan.

36. Sudanese activists in discussions with the author, Khartoum, November 2013.

37. Discussion with the author, Khartoum, November 2013.

38. Discussion with the author, Khartoum, November 2013.

39. Director general of Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission, in discussion
with the author, Khartoum, October 2015.

40. Discussion with the author, Khartoum, November 2013.

41. Discussion with the author, Khartoum, November 2013.

42. Ryan Lenora Brown, "A Women's Revolution: Why Women Are Leading
Calls for Change in Sudan," *Christian Science Monitor,* March 2, 2019.

43. Alex De Waal, "General Mohamed Hamdan Dagolo 'Hemedti,'" World Peace
Foundation, Reinventing Peace: Occasional Paper, sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace
/2019/07/01/general-mohamed-hamdan-dogolo-hemedti/

44. Justin Scheck and Nicholas Bariyo, "Signing of Power-Sharing Deal in Sudan
Begins Anxious Wait for Democracy," Wall Street Journal, July 17, 2019. https://
www.wsj.com/articles/signing-of-power-sharing-deal-in-sudan-begins-anxious-wait
-for-democracy-11563380876.

45. Discussion with the author, Khartoum, October 2015.

46. Discussion with the author, Khartoum, October 2015.

47. Discussion with the author, Khartoum, October 2015.

48. Discussion with the author, Khartoum, October 2015.

49. Omar Al Khair, in discussion with the author, Khartoum, October 2015.

50. Discussion with the author, Khartoum, October 2015.

51. Discussion with the author, Khartoum, October 2015.

52. Discussion with the author, Khartoum, October 2015.

53. Discussion with the author, Khartoum, October 2015.

54. Discussion with the author, Khartoum, October 2015.

55. Ryan Lenora Brown, "A Women's Revolution." The Christian Science Mon-
itor, March 12, 2019. https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/2019/0312/A-women
-s-revolution-Why-women-are-leading-calls-for-change-in-Sudan.

56. Discussion with the author, Khartoum, October 2015.

7

Totalitarianism at Bay: Zimbabwe

On the morning of November 15, 2017, Major General S. B. Moyo, as spokesman for the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, announced on national television that the military had intervened to remove President Robert Mugabe from power after 37 years as head of state. The soft coup brought an end to the political impasse that had paralyzed the country for nearly two decades. Mugabe's regime once displayed totalitarian tendencies, but his grip on power had weakened as he grew older, the system had become steadily more corrupt, and the Zimbabwean economy had collapsed. His demise was a matter of time. Countervailing forces in civil society, in the political opposition, within the ruling party itself, and in the international community had long pressed for change. Zimbabwe's unique history and demography had also inhibited entrenchment of a totalitarian system.

At a conference organized by the SAPES Trust in Harare in May 2014, the third in a series of Zimbabwe conferences held in partnership with NED, I expressed concern that a new totalitarian model of African political systems seemed to be bucking the trend of democratization on the continent, yet some of these countries following the neototalitarian model were close partners of the Western democracies, particularly the United States. Zimbabwe, by contrast, had been isolated by the West due to its repressive government, even though the elements of this new totalitarianism did not seem present there. Instead, for all its weaknesses and dysfunction, I noted that Zimbabwe did have a multiparty system, even during the government of national unity (GNU). The elections, whatever their flaws, including unfortunate violence, bore some reflection of the popular will, especially when tracking them with credible polling data. Crucially, civil society was robust and operated with reasonable freedom. Freedom of

the press, despite some limitations, appeared substantial. There was a serious, if economically beleaguered, independent trade union movement and business community. Few remnants remained of an all-encompassing ideology, and the kind of compulsory mass participation identified with the neo-totalitarian systems was not apparent.

I concluded that a double standard was at work and suggested the need for more efforts to restore friendly relations between the United States and Zimbabwe, both politically and economically. With implementation of the new constitution and greater political will, I contended, Zimbabweans could make sustained progress in consolidating democratic institutions and culture. Freedom House had given Zimbabwe a modest arrow ticking up for 2013, but I urged that greater democratic progress could be made. In some other countries in this study, as has been shown, citizens are afraid to debate openly or express any criticism of the government. Other countries have been consumed with horrific civil war and even genocide. In Zimbabwe, by contrast, citizens can come together and discuss controversial issues openly and peacefully, just the way it should be.[1] Unfortunately, my optimism has yet to be fully vindicated.

When I began work on this book in 2012, Zimbabwe was rated by Freedom House at 6-6, "not free," right alongside Rwanda and Ethiopia. But while Rwanda and Ethiopia trended downward in recent years, Zimbabwe broke through to a 5-5 "partly free" rating in 2016 due to gains in civil liberties and increasing independence of the judiciary. The November 2017 military coup dropped Zimbabwe back into the "not free" camp with a 6-5 score, although political space expanded tentatively under the new regime, which moved quickly to hold elections in July 2018. Even as a "not free" country, Zimbabwe did not meet the criteria for a totalitarian state; but the country's struggles to evolve away from autocratic rule offer important lessons for the democratic prospect in Africa, especially regarding the role of political opposition, civil society, and independent media. Zimbabwe's democratic evolution has not been easy. Progress and retreat have occurred in tandem. A series of hotly contested, if flawed, elections from 2000 until the present have fostered a culture of criticism and debate, as well as a modicum of tolerance and peaceful competition. A strong civil society and the generous investment in it by the international community have also helped. The flourishing of social media, as has been the case during political transitions in other parts of Africa, has contributed to greater freedom. Ironically, as in Sudan, some of Zimbabwe's relative freedom may be attributed to the state's dysfunction and corruption. Politicians and generals have been more focused on lining their pockets than on exercising state power. The disintegration of the ruling party has opened up political space, fostering realignment and more political competition. As was the case in Sudan, economic crisis has made the government more amenable to

domestic and international pressure to institute political reforms in order to secure debt relief. But political gains have been hard fought, incremental, and fragile. Old habits die hard, a theme that recurs throughout this study, and Zimbabwe could still succumb to the selfish nostalgia of the old guard and the lure of postmodern totalitariansim.

The US State Department's 2015 Human Rights Report on Zimbabwe criticized the lack of political rights as well as human rights abuses. It declared the 2013 elections to have been neither free nor credible, citing the unilateral declaration of the election date by the biased Constitutional Court; the biased state media; a skewed voter registration process; the partisanship of the security forces; limits on international election observers; failure to provide a useful voters' register; and the separate voting process for the security forces. The State Department reported that during the 2015 parliamentary by-elections, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) engaged in intimidation and targeted violence. The main human rights abuses were targeted at government opponents and included abduction, arrest, torture, abuse, harassment, and partisan application of the law, as well as restrictions on civil liberties. The report also cited poor prison conditions, property seizure, restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly, and corruption, among other problems. It said the government had punished some abuses by security officials and ZANU-PF supporters, but for the most part, impunity still prevailed.[2] Thus have US sanctions been justified.

For all the criticisms and caricatures it deserves, Zimbabwe's government, led since the end of white rule by President Mugabe, was never quite totalitarian. Although Mugabe's ZANU-PF has been steeped in Marxist-Leninist ideology and may once have aspired with its military allies to the kind of absolute control of the state and citizenry found in Ethiopia and Rwanda, it could not achieve this. Monism has disappeared. The level of political competition, civil society agitation, and independent press is far greater in Zimbabwe than in the totalitarian countries. The Zimbabwean government has failed at mass mobilization, beyond coercing donations for Mugabe's annual birthday parties or efforts to bus in crowds for campaign rallies. ZANU-PF's formidable organization on the ground, especially in rural areas, has won elections, but not been enough to subdue its political opposition. Even though it has appropriated private property from white farmers, established a network of parastatal companies, maintained control of fabulous diamond mines, and attempted many other economic interventions, the Zimbabwean government has not been able to master the commanding heights of the economy, instead presiding over repeated economic disarray due to poor policies and rampant corruption. Although ZANU-PF has resorted to terror to intimidate its political opponents, and the military, secret police, and militia groups have committed

serious abuses, the 2008 elections demonstrated that the government had not been able to crush the opposition or brainwash the population with fear. An analysis of the 2013 and 2018 elections also discovers a flawed, but nevertheless democratic exercise, contrary to the common Western narrative. Zimbabwe's relative freedom owes little to the benevolence of the government, but must be attributed to the willingness of Zimbabwean citizens to defend it. As in Sudan, civil society has been critical. International pressure has also played a role.

Historical Context

Michael Bratton's power politics analysis of Zimbabwe's historical evolution provides a comprehensive review of the country's current political context. The ZANU-PF and its leader, Mugabe, ruled Zimbabwe since elections in 1980 completed the transition spelled out by the Lancaster House Accords, ending a protracted guerrilla war of liberation. The white settler government of what had been known as Rhodesia, led by Ian Smith, handed over power to the black majority. Consolidating ZANU-PF's control over the country, the Gukurahundi massacres of 1982 pitted the main rival party, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), led by Joshua Nkomo and dominated by the Ndebele, against the Shona-dominated ZANU-PF. This episode is examined in more detail later in this chapter. The Unity Accord of 1987 led to the merger and absorption of ZAPU into ZANU-PF, effectively, if not formally, making Zimbabwe a one-party state with Mugabe as president. Yet 59 percent of the population at the time did not favor a one-party state, and across Africa at the time, governments were just beginning to adopt multiparty systems.[3]

In the early years of independence, Zimbabwe enjoyed a reputation for good governance, as well as the highest literacy rate in Africa, but with the political opposition quashed, and the steady decimation of the independent press and civil society, corruption grew, the economy declined, and Zimbabwe began to take on many of the characteristics of a totalitarian regime. Only a couple of seats in the Parliament were held by opposition parties or independents. Some resistance to this authoritarian trend could be found in the church, student protests, and, increasingly, the independent trade union movement, under the mantle of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU).

Zimbabwe's intervention in the great Congo war in 1998 was a financial boon for the previously respected military, whose leaders reaped lucrative mining and other contracts, but it corrupted the military and proved disastrously expensive for the nation as a whole. This was compounded by an uprising on the part of the liberation war veterans demanding their

unpaid retirement benefits, which the government managed to pay only at great cost to the Treasury. In 1997, a civil society coalition, the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), led by Morgan Tsvangirai, the ZCTU president, came together to press for constitutional reform. In 2000, a constitution proposed by the government was defeated by the NCA in a referendum by 54 percent, the government's first-ever electoral defeat. A new political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), was soon established and elected Tsvangirai its president.

In response to these developments, the government announced a fast-track land reform and resettlement program that redistributed six million hectares from 4,000 white farmers to some 127,000 smallholder farmers and 7,200 black commercial farmers. This gained the government some popular support, but it came along with international condemnation, including expulsion from the Commonwealth in 2002. But the land reform did not prevent the MDC from winning 57 of 119 seats in its first parliamentary election in 2000. In subsequent elections, the MDC gained 42 percent of the vote in the presidential election of 2002, and it gained 41 of 120 parliamentary seats in 2005, when it split into two factions, one led by Tsvangirai and the other by Arthur Mutambara and Welshman Ncube.

Meanwhile, the government packed the Supreme Court, which had heretofore been independent; escalated political violence; and aggressively placed ZANU-PF loyalists in the university, police force, and many other institutions. Even more pronounced at this time was the politicization of the military; not only did the army swear loyalty to the ruling party, but current and retired military officers increasingly took on political positions in government. This culminated in the formation of the Joint Operations Command (JOC), which coordinated the efforts of all of the security agencies that dominated policymaking, including the Operation Murambatsvina, which expelled 700,000 Zimbabweans from informal settlements in 2005. On top of this, irrational economic policies resulted in economic contraction every year from 1998 to 2008, when the official inflation rate reached 231 million percent, leaving half the population dependent on international food assistance by 2009. An HIV/AIDS epidemic affecting more than 30 percent of the population compounded the misery, and life expectancy dropped from 61 years in 1985 to just 42 years in 2003. Zimbabwe's 2008 elections should have been a watershed, as the two MDC factions gained a majority in the Parliament, but Tsvangirai gained only 48 percent of the vote in the presidential election and was forced into a runoff with Mugabe. The escalation of violence, led by the JOC, became so unbearable that Tsvangirai withdrew from the race.[4]

The election results failed to bestow any legitimacy on the ZANU-PF government, domestically or internationally. Under pressure from the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the government was

thus forced into negotiations with the opposition, which led to the Global Political Agreement (GPA) granting Mugabe the presidency, Tsvangirai the new office of prime minister, and Mutambara the position of deputy prime minister. It called for a new constitution and elections at an unspecified time. On February 11, 2009, the GNU was sworn in. By 2013, few provisions of the GPA had been met, although dollarization of the economy helped it to rebound, violence declined, and the Parliament and some other state institutions incorporated former opposition leaders. The constitutional reform process likewise proved contentious and protracted. In vain, the NCA appealed for a "people-driven constitution" rather than one produced by the Parliament, leading to a split in civil society. A compromise draft was finally hammered out, a snap referendum abruptly held, and the new constitution was overwhelmingly approved by 95 percent of the voters. During this period, the Afrobarometer surveys reveal some striking popular attitudes regarding the state. For example, 88 percent of respondents said that one must "often" or "always" be "careful what you say about politics." Yet in a Freedom House survey in 2011, respondents expressed strong democratic inclinations: among provisions respondents wanted to see in the new constitution, 87 percent said it should call for independence of the judiciary, 77 percent for a two-term limit on the presidency, 77 percent for free expression, and 74 percent for the prohibition of detention without trial. Zimbabweans at this time might be characterized as afraid of the totalitarian menace but quite supportive of a democratic alternative.

Zimbabwe was about to embark on its first election following the GPA, the 2013 "harmonized" elections, which incorporated the presidency, national assembly, senate, and local authorities. As has been shown in the case of Sudan, even seriously flawed elections can demonstrate the relative level of pluralism and political space afforded in a particular environment. The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), a coalition of 32 NGOs, conducts voter education and election advocacy, as well as election observations. In the case of the 2013 elections, ZESN fielded 7,099 observers accredited by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. ZESN identified many flaws in the process leading up to the elections, such as the short amount of time allowed for registration and the lack of civic education. There was also ongoing fear of elections after the experience of 2008 and a clear bias in the government-controlled media, but incidents of abuse were much less in 2013 than they had been before. Vote-buying was done by both ZANU-PF and the Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T). On election day, few incidents were observed. The polls mostly opened on time. The two major parties had party agents represented at 97 percent of the polling stations; 99 percent of the ZANU-PF agents and 97 percent of the MDC-T agents signed the results forms after the counting

process, publicly verifying the results. According to ZESN, "Tabulation proceeded according to prescribed guidelines."

The results were a shock for the MDC-T. In the parliamentary results, the MDC-T garnered only 49 seats versus 160 for ZANU-PF. One seat went to an independent. In the presidential race, Tsvangirai received 33.69 percent of the vote, and Mugabe received 60.64 percent. ZESN's final analysis documented a record-high voter turnout of 53 percent of total registered voters, although the actual turnout was likely much higher, since the voter register was regarded as highly inflated. ZESN offered several possible explanations for the blow-out victory, including manipulation of the voter registration process by ZANU-PF in urban areas, traditionally MDC-T strongholds, muzzling the urban vote, and that ballot boxes had been stuffed. ZESN debunked the latter explanation, noting that the presence of observers and the fact that 97 percent of all polling agents had signed the results forms made it unlikely that ballot stuffing or manipulation of results at collation centers could have occurred. Rather than fraud, ZESN posited an alternative explanation—that MDC-T lost through failure to perform in the GNU, Tsvangirai had been consumed with personal scandals, and the party had failed to strengthen its base, while ZANU-PF concentrated on strengthening its structures and mobilizing its supporters to register and vote. In summary, although ZESN cited "glaring problems with the electoral process, sufficient to question the final outcome," the more worrying factor was the "very high levels of mistrust and suspicion between the key electoral stakeholders."[5]

Ideology

As has been the case with some of the other countries examined thus far, an ideology rooted in Marxism-Leninism has served to legitimize the state in Zimbabwe. ZANU-PF's drive for a one-party state was based on its claim that only such a system could guarantee peace and development. The party's 1990 election manifesto pledged "to establish a socialist society or system guided by Marxist Leninist principles," but it also included more prosaic commitments to land redistribution, price controls, and social services.[6] In contrast to the developmentalist theory that informed the regime ideology in Ethiopia and Rwanda, ZANU-PF adopted a national liberation focus. As the party sought to preserve its power after 2000, its credentials as the movement that had liberated the country from white rule, and its disparagement of the opposition as tools of the Western imperial powers, became the core of its platform. The party made effective use of its control of the media, appealing to pan-African ideals. It also resorted to coercion, whether by violence, the distribution of patronage, or peer pressure, to successfully win elections.[7] In fact, ZANU-PF enjoyed strong popular support,

especially in rural areas; polling around each of the elections consistently found the majority of the population in favor of the ruling party, results that were ultimately reflected in the elections. But several conversations about the totalitarian temptation that I had with some of Zimbabwe's leading political scientists elucidated that, whatever legitimizing role campaign propaganda attempted to play during the elections, ideology has lost any totalitarian force to move Zimbabwe's political system.

On a typically pleasant July day in 2012 on the grounds outside the SAPES Trust in Harare, in a long and continuing discussion that helped inspire this book, Ibbo Mandaza, executive chairman of the Trust, explained to me how there are variations of the postcolonial state. Just as in Ethiopia and Rwanda, Zimbabwe has suffered from the rise of the security state, which has pulverized civil society and forced much of the opposition to flee into the diaspora. Yet Zimbabwe is not totalitarian. One must avoid focusing too much on individuals, he advised. Ideology in Zimbabwe was an imposition of the white left. Zimbabwe had no bourgeoisie, just clerks and teachers who assumed control of the state. The state therefore became the locus of power and the center of everything, accounting for the parasitic pathology of the leadership and the preservation of the settler economy. Now it is necessary to highlight the pathology, keep space open, remain nonpartisan, and look to the younger generation. ZANU-PF tried to foster dependence on the state but could achieve only economic decline, he said.

Mandaza speculated that Paul Kagame has managed to get away with the imposition of a totalitarian order in Rwanda due to sympathy over the genocide. Likewise, Meles Zenawi in Ethiopia gained sympathy in the aftermath of Mengistu Haile Mariam's reign of terror. In contrast, without such a trauma to legitimize suppressing the population, civil society and some measure of freedom have survived in Zimbabwe, preventing consolidation of a totalitarian system, despite the attempts of the ZANU-PF leadership to do so. This was due to the rise of the opposition MDC, the regional and international pressure from SADC, the EU, and the United States, and the white factor, he said. Zimbabweans are too entrepreneurial and dedicated to private property ownership to accept the socialist doctrines of the early independence leaders. Ideology could not be pushed too far in Zimbabwe; there was no commitment to it below the surface. Mugabe is actually quite conservative, Mandaza said, and kicked out of government those who were too left. Instead, ideology has been used expediently for political purposes. During the independence war, ZANU was aligned with China and ZAPU with the USSR, but there was no genuine ideological commitment. Zimbabwe has retained its British state structure. In Ethiopia, Mengistu had social support; the USSR pushed its client states to conform. Ironically, Mengistu was quietly helped to flee

Ethiopia and settle in Zimbabwe by the United States, Mandaza noted. Ethiopia had been a conduit for Soviet aid to Zimbabwe and was thus paying back the favor.

Another political analyst, Eldred Masunungure, director of the Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI), affirmed that Zimbabwe's tradition of pluralism does not allow the imposition of a totalitarian system. Liberal democracy has always been an integral feature of Zimbabwe's history, at least for the white community, dating from the 1923 referendum on whether to join South Africa. The fatal defect was that this democratic dispensation was not extended earlier. But the infrastructure was in place and did not have to be built from scratch, as in the case of Ethiopia. Mugabe may have wanted a one-party system, but in practice and on the ground it was not possible. The market economy made it difficult. The ideology of socialism, which was part of the baggage of the liberation struggle, died by the first decade after independence. Former Information Minister (and leading ideologist) Jonathan Moyo has lamented that ZANU-PF is an ideologically "content-free" party. Masunungure had to agree with him that there is little that differentiates ZANU and MDC. Ideology has been instrumentalized, but empirically it does not stand for anything. Even the indigenization policy is not ideologically driven, but is simply self-enrichment. Mugabe stated in the 1980s that he would build on the capitalist system rather than destroy it, and the structural adjustment policy that followed buried socialism once and for all. Now ideology is only packaging for power. But ZANU has been effective at the packaging because it controls the levers of power, especially the media and security.[8]

Monism

The failure of ZANU-PF's one-party state project short-circuited any progression toward a monistic totalitarian outcome, despite the many other levels on which the government sought to impose such a system. The GNU could have caused the MDC to devolve into another ZAPU, absorbed by ZANU-PF, but it did not. The forces of civil society and an independent media had been unleashed, and a democratic culture had begun to mature, which no amount of coercion could completely suppress. Despite land seizures and the economic power of government officials over parastatals, economic crisis limited the government's control over the economy. Despite efforts to suppress the independent media, especially broadcasting, the rise of social media and the government's inability to control it ensured that an expanding segment of the population became better informed and better able to express itself. This was demonstrated dramatically by the #ThisFlag campaign that blossomed in 2016, led by Pastor Evan Mawarire,

who appealed to Zimbabweans' patriotism to restore dignity and hope to the country. Despite the defeat of the MDC in the 2013 elections and its partial disintegration, political pluralism flourished as ZANU-PF itself began to fragment in the competition over who would become Mugabe's successor. This fragmentation also applied to the security sector, which was divided in its loyalties to various factions in ZANU-PF.

During the GNU, it had been good for Zimbabwe to have the opposition MDC, even though the MDC had proven to be election driven and bereft of ideology, according to Mandaza. Both ZANU-PF and the MDC had attempted to conflate with the state. The trade unions and civil society had also suffered as a result of politicization at that time. Likewise, the process of public constitutional reform hearings, led by COPAC (the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Constitution), was a failure. It needed to be started all over again. Its approach had been too partisan. As for the 2013 elections, ZANU-PF did not have to kill anyone. The rigging was institutionalized, and everyone was terrified. The Israelis had advised the home affairs minister on how to maintain order. Zimbabweans have to assume everything is bugged. Mandaza discounted Chinese ideological influence; however, the Chinese economic agenda in Zimbabwe is clear. The Chinese are raping the country, Mandaza said. Even Mugabe had been outraged at their terms. But the Chinese strategy has been to start out by winning over the first family, then to go down from there. Relations had been beefed up with a new ambassador, and the Chinese will get their pound of flesh. Although Zimbabwe may have no permanent friends, the Chinese have gone deep, wooing the securocrats by providing military support and building a new military college. On one level, China's strategy makes sense. The securocrats are going back to school to get advanced degrees, preparing for government. They are insinuating themselves into political leadership. Yet it has been short term. The securocrats are more concerned with looting the country than consolidating their power. They have squandered all the diamond wealth for personal gain. At the time, Mandaza estimated the diamond wealth could be worth $9 billion a year, only a third of which might be staying in the country. The Kimberley Process is bringing more transparency, he said.[9] Only a few years later, Mugabe himself would announce that $15 billion had disappeared from the diamond mines.

Zimbabwe had already entered a post-Mugabe era, Mandaza contended, even as we spoke in 2012. The "Big Man" was losing his grip. The MDC was disorganized, unable to offer a strong opposition, but most members of ZANU-PF do not like the system either, he said. There is a national convergence; people are just tired. Violence is not Zimbabwean. Mandaza said that the GNU was underappreciated, that people had forgotten the runaway inflation, lack of services, and severe repression that prevailed before 2008. The security state had been on the verge of collapse and was rescued.

He thought the Kenyan/Italian model of technocratic government would work better for Zimbabwe. MPs should not run the government as ministers but should be paid well to represent the interests of their constituencies, including responsibility for constituency funds. National unity governments force parties to learn to live in coalitions and work together; Zimbabwe's political parties do not stand for much anyway. National unity governments get rid of the winner-takes-all mentality. Zimbabwe had become more peaceful and stable, but the dysfunctional social dynamic continues. Zimbabweans have great intellectual fortitude, coupled with a persistent optimism. This, Mandaza concluded hopefully, is due to their incessant belief that Mugabe is about to go.

Godfrey Kanyenze, director of the Labor and Economic Development Research Institute of Zimbabwe, concurred. Zimbabwe's liberation movements had inculcated a debilitating culture of entitlement, he said. Just because the military fought and won the liberation struggle does not mean the country belongs to the military. Instead, the state should be re-created as transparent, accountable, and ethical, he advised. Zimbabweans have the responsibility to mobilize and demand the right type of state. It was necessary to halt the reckless privatization policies once advocated by the IMF and World Bank. The privatized parastatals all went to Mugabe cronies and have since collapsed. There are better examples in the region. South Africa has followed a model of socially sensitive restructuring. A trade union delegation to South Africa at the time had shown that owning property is okay and that managing trust funds can be done responsibly. Botswana has also enjoyed growth, despite suffering high unemployment, the cost of which may prove to be unsustainable, he said. Unfortunately, Zimbabwe's trade unions are weak and dependent on donors.

ZANU-PF's worst enemies are those within the party, Kanyenze affirmed. Some ZANU-PF MPs are working for reform. The securocrats, led by Mugabe, may fight to the death to preserve their power, but the system is collapsing. Elections have been expensive, and the diamonds are not producing as much wealth as anticipated. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zulu, who had been South Africa's SADC envoy to Zimbabwe, stood her ground in insisting on reforms. No one wants a return to the violence. Much of the military no longer supports Mugabe, and the leadership of the securocrats is divided. The faction led by Vice President Joice Mujuru was not weakened by her husband's death. Ministers such as Gideon Gono remain in power only because they have the support of Mugabe; when Mugabe goes, so will they. Zimbabwe is a classic case of state capture by the political elite with Mugabe at the helm, but everything is crumbling and all the wealth has been wasted. Informal networks under ZANU-PF control got all the money, and the securocrats are trying to make their nests abroad because they know the game is up. Kanyenze reiterated how the Chinese

are riding on the support they gave during the liberation struggle, leveraging their economic investments through the state and building a new military college to maximize their power. It is no accident that Mugabe's daughter is studying in Hong Kong, Kanyenze said.[10]

Like Mandaza and Kanyenze, Masunungure speculated that ZANU-PF is on its deathbed as a political party. The GNU resuscitated ZANU-PF, and the securocrats have covertly taken it over. ZANU-PF's factions are fighting over the carcass. Mugabe has not allowed a successor to emerge, he said. He still leads at the strategic level, identifying the problem areas and what is to be done, but he is effectively as much a faction leader as Mujuru or Emmerson Mnangagwa, then vice-president. Little centers of power are decomposing from the middle. As an asset, Mugabe is depreciating with age and is losing his mental and physical stamina. The others know, and are repositioning themselves. The commander of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces is getting a master's degree in international relations; another top general is getting his bachelor's degree in political science; 35 other senior military staff are trying to catch up with the middle ranks, who are already better prepared. Exposure to theory on civil-military relations might be useful, but the military leaders are passionate about the China model. The military will be in charge, whoever wins the elections, he predicted.

Polling before the 2013 elections indicated that even though Tsvangirai's popularity was greater than Mugabe's, the trend had MDC's popularity going down and ZANU's going slightly up. The numbers were better for MDC in 2008, but MDC still lost due to the violence and rigging. Tsvangirai's personal conduct and trouble disentangling his love affairs were not helping but were not a big issue in Zimbabwe. Even if Tsvangirai had won in 2013, the problem of transfer of power would have been great. The top ranks of the securocrats have a psychological problem envisaging a system in which ZANU-PF is out of power. Their blood was spilled, so the country belongs to them, they think; if others want power, they must fight another war. As long as MDC was just a nuisance and did not threaten their power, they could tolerate it and be democratic. It is not ZANU-PF that must be negotiated with, but the security forces. Mujuru (whose murdered husband was former commander of the armed forces) could have served as an intermediary.

Zimbabwe is in search of a formula for civil-military relations. Perhaps the road to this is through Beijing, which is whom the hardliners listen to, and the road to Beijing may be via Angola. The MDC is now engaging the Chinese. It is time for the United States to rethink its policy. The British are already changing. The previous policy has failed. Masunungure noted that MPOI was conducting a poll exploring whether the population thinks the securocrats should be amnestied. Unlike Mandaza, Masunungure felt that technocrats could not manage the transition. It would require politicians;

the technocrats could come later. Mugabe retained Ian Smith after he took over. ZANU-PF has people with the skills to govern, and they will be needed for any transition.

Unlike in Eritrea, Ethiopia, or Rwanda, intellectuals in Zimbabwe are not harassed due to their opinions, Masunungure said. (The US State Department's 2016 Human Rights Report, however, did cite excessive government influence and surveillance over public schools.) ZANU-PF is not concerned about academics, so at least there is academic freedom in Zimbabwe, although intellectual debate on the campuses is not as vigorous as it should be. The securocrat hardliners are not homogeneous, and some are interested in genuine debate. This willingness to engage gives Zimbabwe an advantage. Tsvangirai might have been able to make a pre-electoral pact with the securocrat hardliners to guarantee their role should he have won. The military's professionalism has been corrupted, and there has been an unhealthy fusion of the military-security-police-prison-Central Intelligence Organisation-army-air force with the party and the state. The challenge will be to disentangle it. The bureaucracy is also controlled by ZANU-PF at every level. The electoral commission members may represent all parties, but the commission's bureaucracy is controlled by ZANU-PF. It will take a generation to remove ZANU-PF from the bureaucracy. Mugabe's Independence Day speech had stressed peaceful and violence-free elections. They might not have been free and fair, but they would be "credible." The elections will not be violent, Masunungure correctly predicted, but the psychological fear is still there. He faulted civil society, which he said had become too partisan. Civil society is driven by a pecuniary imperative, he complained; it has no passion for the work, just money.[11]

Polling by MPOI has shown that Zimbabweans are primarily concerned about human security, a concern that has been promoted by ZANU-PF. The military is more popular than either of the political parties or any other state institutions. ZANU-PF effectively used community-share ownership schemes to win support, especially in mining districts where companies were providing housing and services. MDC could not compete. But economic exigencies have compelled ZANU-PF to change its behavior and improve relations with the West. MPOI had predicted the election results clearly beforehand, but no one in MDC would believe it.[12] Civil society was divided and politicized and now does not know which faction to align with, Masunungure said. The embassies were using civil society as a tool against the government and have now abandoned civil society. ZANU-PF may be softer, but its supermajority makes it dangerous. Zimbabwean civil society emerged in the mid-1990s with the human rights movement, labor, the church, the students, and business to coalesce into the NCA. But the government opposed this with the state-party-military fusion, which remained throughout the GNU.[13]

An NCA critic of the constitutional reform process at the time lamented that it had been a lost opportunity, that the process had been hijacked by Mugabe once again. The draft constitution was hardly better than the current one, he contended. It was the product of an elite pact, not a political compromise, and the process had completely alienated the population. At the grassroots, people were not happy with the GNU and continued to suffer hardship and unemployment. The politicians of both parties just wanted to get the constitutional reform done with so they could go into elections.[14] A youth activist echoed Masunungure's assessment of civil society, complaining that there had been a disconnect between what CSOs had been doing and what the grassroots wanted, which is more focus on bread and butter issues. The government's National Youth Policy had provided funds to ZANU-PF partisans, wooing many, even though only $14 million of a proposed $200 million was spent. The opposition's loss in the elections provided an opportunity for introspection, and to grow stronger.[15]

Diplomats concurred with much of this narrative during the GNU. ZANU does contain progressives, they said, and the political climate was getting better, but there was still fear of election violence. Although there was gridlock in the business sector, this served the interests of some in the regime. The NGO crowd was mainly peddling doom and gloom. No one who knows what they are talking about is making political forecasts, they said. One must learn how to work with political uncertainty. Despite the griping about the state of the economy, the economy was getting better, and investment was increasing. But the unresolved political issues were holding everything back. Development partners were all associated with the NGOs, which were all associated with the opposition—hence, the perception that the international community is partisan, they said. But ZANU-PF's monopolization of power is at the root of Zimbabwe's difficulties. ZANU-PF hates bad publicity, and the atmosphere has changed a lot since 2008. ZANU was more relaxed since it had lost its monopoly on power, and the independent papers were back. It is a fantasy that outsiders can save Zimbabwe, they said. The average Zimbabwean does not like the Chinese, who are associated with cheap products and poor working conditions. But the Cold War is over and Zimbabweans can no longer play the balance of power game. Indigenization has not really been implemented and is not the main problem. Electrical supply is a bigger concern to most businesses. Diamonds have not been a bonanza, and during the GNU, the finance minister, Tendai Biti (MDC-T), estimated they contributed only $600 million to the budget. The Marange mine was still marked by a lack of transparency, but the violence had gone away at least. The Kimberley Process was bringing greater transparency. There were some ZANU-PF moderates in the security sector, the diplomats acknowledged, but it was difficult to know whom to work with. Representation in local councils crosses the partisan divide.[16]

At the end of 2014, ZANU-PF held a party conference that effectively purged more than half the leadership of the party, including Vice President Joice Mujuru, and elevated Grace Mugabe, the president's wife, to head of the ZANU-PF's Women's League. Mujuru's rival, Mnangagwa, was restored to his former favored status as vice president. Mugabe's governing style may have resembled the totalitarian model of inner circles and ruthless purges, but it was in fact a symptom of the weakening grip on power and the intensifying machinations of individuals and factions within the government and ruling party. By the end of 2015, the fragmentation of ZANU-PF threatened the hegemony of ZANU-PF despite its supermajority in the Parliament. Ironically, it further opened up space for civil society and the independent media, but the parallel fragmentation of the MDC prevented it from being able to take advantage. The political fragmentation was dangerous, producing a kind of paralysis throughout the state and civil society. Mujuru had many sympathizers in the security forces, and the fear was that if Mugabe were to depart from the scene, conflict could erupt between the various factions, as had occurred in recent by-elections. Engaging the government, CSOs had to navigate the terrain very carefully, because no one could be sure who was aligned where, and how they would emerge in the event of a conflict. Yet, as the factions of the ruling party fought one another and the opposition grew increasingly enfeebled and divided, civil society became depoliticized and, as a result, found more space to work. There was greater collaboration among civil society groups, not only because it was encouraged by some donors, but because it seemed to make sense, and it was happening organically as well. More groups were sharing offices, not only creating synergies but reducing costs, a necessity as donor funding dwindled.

According to Masunungure, after Mugabe's victory in the elections, for civil society, 2013 demanded a rapprochement with government, uncharted territory with an erstwhile pariah. The GNU was not helpful. Changing mind-sets would be difficult. Groups must be seen as nonpartisan; service and socioeconomic rights are now the bywords, he said. Civil society is keeping an arms-length distance from the MDC. ZANU-PF infighting could spin out of control, but the party is the most powerful political institution and is omnipresent. It is premature to celebrate its fragmentation, he counseled. All Mugabe has to do is utter one sentence, "This is my successor." The process has to be carefully managed, and the retirement option is not likely because of the incentives to stay. In the invisible process, Mnangagwa is the regent, but Grace Mugabe's Generation 40 (G40) faction wants to give him a fight, and Mugabe likes to let them fight; his survival is based on manipulating the factions. Mnangagwa has taken over most of the state duties, such as appointments and running the army, but at the party level, Mugabe is allowing the rival G40 to flex its muscles. However, the powerful tend to get into road accidents

in Zimbabwe, Masunungure warned. Elections are necessary, but not sufficient for democracy; democracy requires good citizens, not just voters.[17]

Grace Mugabe's G40 faction almost won out. Her criticism of her rivals in Mnangagwa's Lacoste faction (Mnangagwa is also known as "the crocodile," a reference to the Lacoste company icon) grew more intense until Robert Mugabe forced Mnangagwa to resign the vice presidency on November 6, 2017, and Mnangagwa fled the country in fear of his life, making a stop in China on the way to South Africa. But the securocrats felt threatened, their extensive financial stakes in the diamond fields and other sectors were in jeopardy, and in less than two weeks they intervened. Now, it was the G40 leaders who were detained or fled the country, massive demonstrations called for Mugabe to step down, and ZANU-PF began impeachment proceedings. Mnangagwa returned to Zimbabwe in triumph, Robert Mugabe resigned the presidency, and an extraordinary party congress endorsed Mnangagwa's leadership of the party and candidacy for president in the 2018 elections. The military was careful not to characterize its intervention as a coup, which would have triggered sanctions from the AU and SADC. Upon assuming the presidency, Mnangagwa called for economic reforms and adherence to Zimbabwe's constitution, but he did not initially reach out to the opposition.

Meanwhile, 4,000 members of civil society gathered at what was called the National People's Convention on November 24, 2017, in an attempt to influence the new government's agenda. They called for devolution of power according to the constitution, empowerment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and reform of state institutions, including the security sector. Other demands included repeal of laws restricting freedom of assembly and freedom of speech, depoliticization of civil service, measures against corruption, and greater inclusiveness for women, youth, disabled persons, and workers. "We commit ourselves to continuously work together to contribute towards a collective and progressive national agenda: to facilitate the empowerment of citizens and to honestly engage the newly established government to find shared solutions," their declaration concluded.[18]

The Leader(s)

Although Robert Mugabe has rightly been vilified by his critics, having survived in power for 37 years until the age of 93, he must also be regarded as extraordinarily successful. His ascent to power from being a shy schoolteacher in Ghana to becoming an early independence leader and Zimbabwe's first prime minister provides some insights regarding the development and personality of a quasi-totalitarian leader, reminiscent in some respects to Isaias Afwerki, Meles, and Kagame, but Mugabe came onto the

scene a generation earlier. Heidi Holland's biography, *Dinner with Mugabe*, depicts an initially sympathetic, idealistic, and courageous man who little by little succumbed to the demands and temptations of power to become what she considers a monstrous tyrant.

Mugabe's father left the family when he was 10. Holland describes Mugabe's first wife, Sally, whom he met while in Ghana, as a bit flawed but supportive and his only real friend. His greatest personal tragedy was the death of their child, Nhamo, when Mugabe was serving 10 years in prison. In Holland's interviews with Mugabe's acquaintances, he emerges as a solitary and detached figure, haughty, superior, bordering on paranoid; but also modest, polite, and fair. If he was with the right people, he could be friendly and charming, but more often than not, he was surrounded by the obsequious, power hungry, and corrupt, who sought to use him for their own purposes and led him astray. He rarely wore a military uniform, admired British manners and styles, and was a deeply religious Christian; he was bookish and intellectual; he liked Marxist rhetoric but did not really believe it. He was insecure, rewarded loyalty, and was unable to tolerate criticism. Others she interviewed described him as disciplined and respectful, creative and passionate, a cattle enthusiast; yet he had delusions of unlimited power, as if he were a king.

His second wife, Grace, who succeeded Sally when she died of kidney failure in 1992, gave Mugabe three children, but has been blamed for bringing out the worst in him. Jonathan Moyo, a former information minister and G40 leader, described Mugabe to Holland as "a shrewd politician, a great survivor, but very, very ruthless. There is nothing to commend him except his eloquence with words. He is mean-spirited even towards his own people."[19] In Holland's final interview with Mugabe, he described himself as "just an ordinary person. I feel within me there is a charitable disposition towards others, just as I find charitable positions towards me from others. And I don't make enemies, no. Others may make me an enemy of theirs," but Mugabe could not see himself as anything but good. Holland's final assessment is harsh: "In the end, Robert Mugabe is a disillusioned man surviving on omnipotence and distortion as he approaches the end of his life. He will be remembered by most as a tyrant; by some as a sad figure who suffered and sacrificed."[20] Some years later, during the power struggles to succeed Mugabe, Derek Matyszak characterized Mugabe as "viewed as a clever Machiavellian schemer by admirers and detractors alike," for example, contradicting his finance minister, Patrick Chinamasa, who was attempting to negotiate with the IMF and World Bank by cutting civil service bonuses, cunningly portraying himself to civil servants as their savior, versus his evil finance minister.[21]

Holland noted that Mnangagwa was Mugabe's likely successor, as his longtime personal assistant in many capacities, from secretary of finance

for ZANU-PF to national security minister and vice president. Mnangagwa has not been a popular politician, however, having been beaten twice in his races for Parliament, and has been closely associated with the Gukurahundi massacres. He was also an early leader of the independence struggle and was arrested and tortured for blowing up a train in 1965, suspended by butchers' hooks on a track, and beaten back and forth across the room. He was left unconscious for days and partially lost his hearing as a result, but he was not executed because of his youth, and like Mugabe, he was sentenced to 10 years in prison instead. He later reconciled with his torturer.[22] Zimbabwe's oldest human rights organization, ZimRights, honored him with an award for his opposition to the death penalty, a stance due to his own close call with execution.

On February 14, 2018, Mugabe's nemesis for the past 20 years, Tsvangirai, died of colon cancer while being treated in South Africa. Tsvangirai lived to know of the departure of the dictator he had opposed for so long, but his passing was expected to further fragment and weaken the MDC in the face of elections anticipated for later in the year. He saw the promised land but would not live to cross the Jordon.

Genocide

The Gukurahundi massacres in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces from 1982 to 1985 were the closest Zimbabwe has come to an experience of genocide, although they were not on the scale of the killings documented in the other five case studies in this book. Originating out of the rivalry between ZANU and ZAPU and their armed wings, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army and the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) respectively, and exacerbated by South African dirty tricks, the conflict was sparked by government claims of having discovered ZIPRA arms caches in February 1982, leading to the arrest of ZIPRA leadership and the kidnapping and disappearance of six tourists by dissidents calling for the release of the ZIPRA leadership. In 1984, two men were tried and executed for their role in the kidnappings, but Mugabe used the incident to attack ZAPU, and ZANU-PF leaders began to politicize ethnicity by associating ZAPU and the 300 or so dissidents with Zimbabwe's Ndebele minority. In August 1981, Mugabe had announced the creation of the Fifth Brigade, the members of which were almost entirely of the Shona ethnic majority and who were trained by the North Koreans. It was deployed to Matabeleland in 1984, where its members killed an estimated 10,000–20,000 Ndebele civilians and tortured many more. The killings were closely associated with the 1985 elections and Mugabe's ambitions for a one-party state.[23] The marginalization of the Ndebele, who constitute 20 percent of

the population, continues, and the need for reconciliation and reparations is still raised in Zimbabwean political discourse,[24] reinforcing the salience of the new government's initiative to revive the constitutional provision for a truth and reconciliation commission.

Zimbabwe has not demonstrated imperial ambitions. The costly deployment of the armed forces to the DRC to support Laurent Kabila's forces in 1998 proved to be little more than a lucrative opportunity for a few generals and ultimately a fiasco for the country's economy.

Civil Society

In the cases of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Rwanda, this study has identified the suppression of civil society as a determining factor in the imposition of a totalitarian government, alongside the elimination of political opposition and silencing of the media. Although Zimbabweans are frequently self-critical, and weaknesses in civil society are not difficult to point out, it is worth focusing at some length on the current role of civil society and the media in Zimbabwe to better understand how they have managed to operate in the current environment, take advantage of opportunities, expand political space, and, at this juncture at least, thwart the totalitarian menace. In fact, Zimbabwe has benefited from a vibrant civil society for nearly as long as the ZANU-PF government has been in control, including human rights organizations, trade unions, church groups, youth groups, women's groups, election groups, community-based organizations (CBOs), think tanks, conflict resolution groups, and one of Africa's strongest LGBTI movements. Zimbabwe's diverse media has emerged gradually, with social media steadily growing in importance, but broadcast media is still dominant, especially in politically important rural areas. Indeed, ZANU-PF's control of broadcast media explains much of its hold on power. Civil society's facility with social media has countered this. International funding for civil society and independent media has fluctuated over the years, and legislation has been promulgated to rein both in, but civil society has persisted, searching for some degree of self-sustainability. Social media, including hash-tag movements, has flourished. Some of the groups are as sophisticated, innovative, and full of talent as any elsewhere in the world. The following discussion is a small taste of civil society's work in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe's recurrent economic crises have clearly had an impact in opening political discourse for civil society as well as for the political opposition. For example, at a Media Centre forum in Harare in 2014, Eddie Cross of the MDC-T noted that the Chinese had recently told Mugabe they could not invest in Zimbabwe until he had set forth a succession plan to assure stability, revamped economic policy to do away with

indigenization and respect property rights, and fixed relations with the United States, with its massive reach and intolerance of corruption. He said the international rules are cast in stone, and those who violate them will be severely punished. Zimbabwe thus needs a new political road map, he contended; it must be run as a real democracy. Negotiations in Lima, Peru, with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other donors might lead to some relief, but the Obama administration was taking a hard line. Reforms thus far had been minimal, and Mugabe was blocking the fundamental changes needed, despite the efforts of his new finance minister, Patrick Chinamasa. The government would seem to have its back against a wall, since dollarization of the economy means it cannot print money to pay civil servants and the army, and it had received only $200 million in capital inflows the previous year. Billions of dollars' worth of diamonds had been siphoned from the mines with no benefit to the country or local communities. Drought was compounding the plight of agriculture, unemployment was estimated at 90 percent, and a ruling by the Supreme Court on labor law had led to 30,000 layoffs. The government was happy with the layoffs, Cross said, since 80 percent were in government parastatals controlled by officials, for whom the downsizing would provide relief. But the civil service and military would also soon have to be cut, with an uncertain political impact.[25]

Masunungure, among others, has already pointed out how, in this context of economic collapse and political fragmentation, much of civil society, after a period of introspection, was finding greater opportunity and concentrating its energies on socioeconomic issues, including advocacy for service delivery, accountability, and implementation of the constitution, as well as civil, political, and human rights. A specific example of this is a group called Youth Forum, which has trained peer-to-peer educators throughout the country on understanding the budget and resource allocation, and how youth can advocate for their priorities. The group has organized activities such as a Youth Story Festival exhibiting pictures, videos, and archives, which the group members reported had gotten a lot of attention. The group also had an exchange with Swazi youth and anticipated expanding such meetings throughout southern Africa. According to a survey the group commissioned, 60 percent of youth have smartphones, but very few senior decisionmakers use social media, so Youth Forum had started training them. As the economic suffering of youth was growing, Youth Forum incorporated livelihood activities in its programs, such as community peace gardens. Donor funding may be shrinking, the group members said, but much can be done without money.[26]

When I met with them in 2012, members of Youth Forum lamented that the GPA had weakened CSOs and created divisions between those for and against the constitutional reform process, and that funding partners had

exacerbated the problem. Civil society was not as energetic as it used to be. People had become tired of the constitutional process; 60 youth participating in an event the group had organized were simply not interested in the topic. There was considerable apathy in 2008, and it would get even worse in the 2013 elections. The problem was not fear, but apathy. ZANU-PF voters were registered, but not the opposition. Voter registration efforts had been expensive and inefficient. Workshops were becoming monotonous. The MDC needed to do a better job of engaging and mobilizing youth.[27]

But when we met again a couple of years later, a new discourse was emerging, similar to that in Sudan and some other countries. As Youth Forum was a membership organization, most of its work was now being done by the local leadership, not the national headquarters. This was creating challenges, but it was also making the organization stronger. Youth Forum was providing a nonpartisan platform and was trying to work with all relevant stakeholders, even if the group did not agree with them. The police were being invited to meetings and, on issues such as gender, would participate in the discussions; on the downside, the police could also be an inhibiting factor in discussions of corruption and governance issues. Youth were mostly concerned about unemployment, and Youth Forum members described a trend of demobilization around governance issues; nevertheless, members still had energy for political action, they said. The political parties had failed to engage youth positively. Youth were looking for answers and lacked leadership. CSOs needed to find one another. ZANU-PF's wide margin of victory in the 2013 elections had been a shock, and the party was continuing to win by-elections, as the opposition had fallen into disarray and ZANU-PF had all the leverage. Change would remain a gradual process; national dialogue does not mean trying to unseat the government, but dealing with issues around which consensus can be found. There is a danger of colleagues being co-opted as they engage, but enough will remain faithful, they said. There may not be an implosion when Mugabe dies; the factionalism has been exaggerated, and the succession can be managed as clearly provided for by the constitution, they said. Within the government, there are moderates versus hardliners, but it is not always certain who is who. Civil society has to build its own power base and not worry about political factions, they concluded.[28]

Likewise, the Institute for Young Women Development (IYWD) has charted an innovative approach of engagement with the authorities, while sacrificing little in terms of its integrity or its commitment to democracy. IYWD works with young women in rural areas to increase their presence in both local community activism and national politics. Based in Mutare, a small city in Mashonaland Central, hardcore ZANU-PF territory, the IYWD has nonetheless succeeded in creating dialogue between young women and their local and traditional leadership, which have historically been quite

patriarchal. Led by Glanis Changicherere, a charismatic young activist who overcame the obstacles of growing up in a subsistence farming community to make her way to university and later to found IYWD in 2009, the institute now claims 3,000 registered members, some of whom have made their way into politics. Initially, the group met resistance from the local authorities and struggled to break through ZANU-PF's system of community cells, reminiscent of those described in Ethiopia and Rwanda, that kept close tabs on the type of grassroots activities IYWD would organize.

Rather than confronting the authorities head-on, the institute found "more subtle ways to navigate the different power structures," which it called "strategic engagement." IYWD identified the formal and informal gatekeepers in the community and approached them in a constructive dialogue around the problem of domestic, gender-based, and political violence. Using positive, diplomatic language and emphasizing their "Ubuntu," or traditional community values, the institute managed to secure an agreement to establish peace committees, "making our adversaries our allies." The institute has made effective use of other traditional systems, which it describes as "activism with a soul." These include *Bira*, a ceremony that facilitates the resolution of family or community problems, as well as *Mushandirpamwe*, a form of collective work, and *Nhimbe*, which refers to collective farm work. As a result, roads have been fixed, fish have been raised, and senior citizens have been helped to cultivate their fields. These systems are reminiscent of the Rwandan *Umuganda* brigades, the main difference being that the Zimbabwean version is noncoercive and community based rather than something imposed by the national government. Yet another tradition, *Jiti*, which is a ceremony to thank the ancestors, involves a lot of singing and drumming and dancing, which has helped to bring people together across the political and gender divides.[29]

At the rural, grassroots level, Zimbabwe's turmoil has been both empowering and threatening. For example, the work of the Zimbabwe Community Development Trust (ZCDT) with internally displaced persons has shifted from humanitarian assistance to policy, a new kind of engagement with government, ZCDT staff told me. The fighting within ZANU-PF could lead to more displacement. Both the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) and the Ministry of Justice have a formal relationship with ZCDT. A land reform bill must be passed, and ZCDT's action-based research will serve as a basis for advocacy around it. ZCDT's policy dialogues focus on alternatives and solutions. Evictions have been outlawed by the constitution, but they are happening anyway. Former perpetrators of violence are now victims, and ZCDT's workshops have helped to open their eyes, the staff said. CBOs are delivering demands from the bottom up. ZANU-PF's patronage network has increased its power, but this is not sustainable. The research ZCDT has commissioned on internal displacement

takes a positive approach, "towards harmonious and secure communities," rather than attacking the government. Usually IDPs are the product of armed conflict, but that is not the case in Zimbabwe, where they have been displaced from their land by the government and there are no big IDP camps. The government does not even recognize their existence, instead calling them "vulnerable people." Its so-called land reform has been purely political, but the ZCDT research attempts to show the advantage of real land reform, ZCDT staff said.[30]

Also in the policy realm, the Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI) is attempting to provide thought leadership, setting the policy agenda and mapping scenarios and their probable outcome. The government's legitimacy is no longer in question after the 2013 elections, so the international community is seriously reengaging, ZDI staff told me. The hegemony of ZANU-PF had been restored, they said. The national question has now shifted to the political economy of livelihood and the struggle between the government and the non-state. There has been a fundamental informalization of 80 percent of the economy, and socioeconomic issues have now superseded the civil-political rights debates of the past; the gap must be bridged. New social bases have emerged, such as vending, artisanal mining, transport, and cross-border trade. It is necessary to take programs to rural areas, where there has been much disinformation and patron-client networks dominate. The development space needs to be broadened by getting into these areas and addressing the accountability of the authorities for service delivery. Economic reform must be pursued with political reform. Zimbabwe cannot resist democratization as China has; it is too small. Authoritarian regimes are based on the supremacy of politics. "We should not be interested in creating voters, but in creating citizens," they said, with an expression gaining currency in activist circles.

The ZHRC benefited from ZDI's research on the home demolitions issue, representing an incremental change in policy. ZDI's analysis of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission showed how its members' association with the security services influenced the outcome of the elections. ZDI's research on civil society's efforts during the 2008 elections showed CSOs had a greater impact than the parties. By dealing with issues not directly political and building mass groups of informed citizens, civil society can prepare the ground when elections come around. Empowered citizens will have agency and can assess the performance of politicians, they stated. There is an opportunity now for civil society to do work on the ground, there is relative peace, and human rights abuses have decreased. The fragmentation of political parties has taken the pressure off civil society, which is better organized but not seen as a threat, they said.[31]

Freedom House's upgrading of Zimbabwe to "partly free" status in 2016 was partially attributed to indications of greater independence in the

judicial system. The willingness of the courts to buck the executive, such as allowing opposition demonstrations to proceed, indicated that the judicial branch of government was not completely subordinate to President Mugabe's whims, as has been the case in the totalitarian systems. CSOs have been helping make this happen. One NGO has even managed to conduct conflict resolution and human rights training with the Zimbabwean police. Its respected multipartisan board of directors has enabled it to gain access and credibility. Initially, the police had not wanted the program publicized, but they are opening up. They value the training certificates as a professional credential and are demanding more. The NGO must navigate carefully given the splits in the military, and it avoids offensive terminology, such as "security sector" and "human rights." Rather, the group talks about leadership qualities and how to treat someone who is being arrested. The group has developed a training manual and training of trainers approach to make it more sustainable. The NGO provides trainers from international experts, local universities, and the police force itself. Trainings mix commanding officers and the rank-and-file and enable everyone to speak frankly about issues within the force.[32]

Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) is one of the country's strongest NGOs, and among many projects, it has focused on the civilian monitoring of police, since the internal mechanisms within the police have not been working. Across Zimbabwe's legal terrain, old laws need to be brought into alignment with the new constitution, and new laws need to be drafted. Civil society initiatives are frequently seen as sinister by the government. But persistence in engaging the police has borne fruit, and progress is being made, staff said. Legislation for judicial reform can now be drafted, and civil society has a position that can serve as the basis for it. Looking at regional trends, Kenya is a success story; a constitutional body holds the state to account. The same is true in South Africa. Zimbabwe could be next. The ZHRC participated in a program at which ZLHR presented a paper advocating litigation for institutional reform of the justice sector. ZLHR is also interacting with the Judicial Service Commission, the Legal Aid Directorate, and the National Prosecuting Authority. The prosecutor's strategic plan is to appoint better judges, so the system can be made to work better. A ZLHR prison working group has developed a monitoring tool and is making recommendations. ZLHR lawyers are litigating noncompliance and delays in constitutional implementation. The case management system is improving with the use of ICT. Help desks have been established at the magistrates' courts. The Legal Aid Directorate has a financial task force to represent poor clients. ZLHR is advocating for a human rights institute to be set up. An enormous amount of work must still be done, the ZLHR staff said. Structural governance reform is needed, as is constitutional and public interest litigation, a communication referral network, and support for human rights defenders.[33]

One of the institutions established by Zimbabwe's new constitution, the ZHRC, has emerged as a credible interlocutor of the country's human rights movement. It has managed to preserve its independence despite limited funding. The chairman when I met with them, Elasto Mugwadi, acknowledged the universality of human rights and the commission's mission to support democracy and fight corruption, engaging the government to ensure respect for the law. Unlike the human rights commissions in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Rwanda, it has been less reticent to call out the government. It had issued statements criticizing the authorities' eviction of vendors and demolishing of shacks, as well as asserting the government's need to take responsibility for victims of recent floods.[34]

Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) has 16 chapters around the country and is building its capacity in the areas of law, security, legal assistance, health, and other issues. It documents human rights violations and provides training to journalists. ZLHR is facilitating its human rights sensitization training. It engages with the government and other organizations on health issues, especially HIV. Mugabe has politicized the issue of sexuality, the staff said; but the government, especially the Ministry of Health, makes efforts to include LGBT persons. The situation in the prisons is especially concerning, and access is needed. In rural areas, people are more tolerant of LGBT persons, because that is where they grew up; whereas in volatile high-density areas, "toughs" can cause problems. Relations with the local police are good. The GALZ offices have been raided, not for homosexuality, but for violations of the Private Voluntary Organizations Act. LGBT persons are sometimes harassed by the police for bribes, and the previous year 30 members were beaten at a Christmas party. There is a challenge from religion, but being gay is not a criminal offense, and the police and families need to be sensitized about this. Other CSOs are not quite conversant in the issues, a problem GALZ is addressing with sensitization meetings. GALZ wants others to speak out on LGBT issues. It is not easy to work in public spaces. Media is improving, however, including a sympathetic article on the Herald (government) website, they were happy to say.[35]

The ZCTU provided most of the muscle and leadership for the NCA and the MDC, but as the Zimbabwean economy has withered and tens of thousands of workers have been laid off, the trade union movement has suffered grievously. According to one trade union adviser, the challenge is how to keep ZCTU functional. Wages are not getting paid, making it difficult to pay dues. ZCTU has followed up on broad strategies, including structural changes and cutting the staff by half. The International Labour Organization, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Danes, Canadians and others have been brought in to coordinate support. Shop stewards are getting training, and inactive districts are being revamped. Progress is being made despite the

challenges. Mugabe shed crocodile tears over the Supreme Court's ruling liberalizing the labor law. In fact, the bloated work force of many parastatals is being cut, including 90 percent of the Grain Monitoring Board. Most of the 30,000 laid off are from government agencies, and the powerful government ministers who control them have thus benefited. The ZCTU's recommendations for a bottom-up, regionally-integrated and redistributive economy were ignored.[36] Everyone knows the labor law is bad, the trade union advisor said. ZCTU continues to engage business and government, but the economic situation is simply bad, and no end is in sight. The government cannot pay its own people, and companies are all closing down. Leadership disputes had hurt, but the splits in ZCTU have been resolved, and ZCTU remains relevant. The ZCTU is putting effort into organizing an informal workers group. Morale is low, however; staff are not getting paid, taxes are owed, and the old headquarters had to be abandoned.[37]

The Media

Zimbabwe's media environment has been restricted, and it has been roundly criticized by the US State Department's Human Rights Report, the CPJ, Reporters Without Borders, and Freedom House's Freedom of the Press report, which gave Zimbabwe a total freedom of the press score of 74 (with 100 being the lowest possible), ranking it as "partly free" in 2017. Journalists are often harassed; government maintains a monopoly on broadcast radio; and a recent cybersecurity law has been invoked in an attempt to silence criticism online. Rural areas have been particularly limited to government communications, but social media and the printed press are expanding their reach.

Economic hardship has also challenged the media. Advocacy by the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ) had helped enshrine freedom of expression and the rights of journalists as workers in the new Zimbabwean constitution. Now these rights just need to be implemented, the ZUJ leadership told me. Many private and public sector journalists have been laid off, including, at that time, 200 at the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, the state broadcaster; but ZUJ was making sure this was done fairly. Fear of losing work, ZUJ leadership said, can compromise freedom of expression and increase corruption. Private papers struggle to get advertising, and the first lady had threatened them. The growing and powerful charismatic churches also pose a threat to any journalist who writes negatively about them. With 1,000 dues-paying members, ZUJ is the strongest journalists' union in southern Africa and provides an array of benefits to its members. For example, ZUJ helps journalists access legal assistance, a concern aggravated by Zimbabwe's many restrictive media laws. The union

has engaged the ZHRC with a human rights visuals project, promoting space for media. NED funds had supported the purchase of blue safari jackets prominently labeled "PRESS" to identify and protect journalists, especially women, and the ZUJ leadership said these had proven quite popular. ZUJ held a workshop for female journalists on how to protect themselves from sexual harassment. It has also held workshops on various other topics, including business journalism. A ZUJ awards program promotes professional and ethical standards. An association of citizen journalists is associated with ZUJ, expanding the union's reach.[38]

Another media institution, the Media Centre, suggests what was possible in the aftermath of the 2013 elections, despite all of the limitations on the press in Zimbabwe. According to staff, the Media Centre's citizen journalism program was having an impact, exposing corruption scandals and the conditions of communities in diamond mining areas. They noted that the economy was adversely affecting the media environment after some improvement, leading to the closure of a couple of private papers such as the *Southern Eye* and *Flame*, as well as layoffs at the *Daily News* and *Financial Gazette*. The government papers had not been affected yet. Many freelance journalists and international correspondents take advantage of the Media Centre's space, they said. It is also popular for press conferences and roundtables, such as the one on the political parties' economic programs that I observed. WhatsApp groups have been formed by women and citizen journalists. Some government officials come to the centre to reach the media. The centre also rallied journalists in solidarity with displaced vendors and protested xenophobia in front of the South African Embassy.

Now that the MDC has disintegrated, the Media Centre staff said, activists are free to advocate on issues without being politicized. The current system was not at all totalitarian, but it can be categorized as competitive authoritarianism, they said. There are some liberties, such as the private press, but there is a lot of window dressing, and the government still tries to maintain tight control over protests. There was more space in cities such as Harare and Bulawayo than in rural areas. The government does not consider the printed press to be a threat since it reaches only a small audience. Radio was still a no-go area, and licenses are given only to the ideologically friendly. Local government structures and traditional leaders are also tightly controlled. People live in fear, and the police monitor public meetings. From a media perspective, there is space now, they said; it is possible to move around the country, but the government will become more repressive around election time, they predicted. The government has lost its appeal for the common citizen, so it is just holding onto power through force. Cracks are appearing with Mujuru's departure. Mugabe knows he lost the elections. The state is crumbling, they said.[39]

Humor, satire, and entertainment have not figured prominently in any of the countries thus far described, but they can be powerful weapons against repressive systems. In most of Africa, dance and street theater are common. Musicians and athletes have been implicated in protests in Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Sudan. But in the case of Zimbabwe, musicians such as Thomas Mapfumo exemplify a long history of protest music, while social media has accelerated the reach of some very sharp humor and satire far beyond the stage and street corner. Magamba Network has been at the cutting edge of such activism since 2007, producing a satirical news program, *Zambezi News,* reaching 200 million viewers in Zimbabwe and beyond. Among many other activities, it organizes arts events such as the annual Shoko Festival in Harare and so-called Hub Unconferences throughout the country. It is based in an avant-garde space called the Moto Republik that has been the object of some harassment by the authorities, but it is still open and gradually gaining respect. The notoriety from being ridiculed on *Zambezi News* is not always unwelcome. But Magamba has also incubated imitators, fueled online citizen movements such as #Tajamuka and #ThisFlag, and has succeeded in attracting thousands of youth, especially, to not only talking about, but getting involved in, politics.[40]

Reflections on the Elections in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's "harmonized" elections of July 30, 2018, were marred by the violence that followed them two days later, when opposition protesters marched on the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, and six protesters were killed when they were fired upon by soldiers using live ammunition. At the time, the results being announced by the commission were giving the ruling party, ZANU-PF, a greater than two-thirds majority in the Parliament. ZANU-PF had lost some seats, but if it wanted to do so, it would still be able to change the new constitution, jeopardizing all of the democratic reforms contained therein. To compound frustrations, a couple of days later the commission would confirm the victory of the incumbent president, Mnangagwa, by 51 percent, enough for him to avoid a runoff.

Although these results angered the main opposition, the MDC Alliance, which refused to accept them, and disappointed its international sympathizers, they were not unexpected. Their credibility was confirmed by an independent assessment conducted by ZESN, the respected domestic observation group.[41] Government critics before the elections had argued that too much rigging had occurred and that the elections were fatally flawed from the outset. Incidences of "soft" intimidation, a legacy of violence in past elections, media bias in favor of the ruling party, control over traditional leaders, and the use of food aid to influence voters were the

violations most frequently cited. During the election itself, the high rate of assisted voting in rural areas and suspicions about tampering with the results were also of concern. Zimbabwe should be held to the same standards that apply elsewhere, critics demanded.

But it was too late to rerun the elections. The most that could be hoped for was that, as the US Embassy appealed, the victors would reach out with magnanimity and the losers would accept their defeat. Instead, the government chose to prosecute opposition party leaders accused of inciting the violence, and a government investigation declined to call out the army or hold anyone responsible for firing on unarmed protesters.

The government had squandered its hard-earned opportunity to reengage the international community and to set Zimbabwe on a course of democracy and economic recovery. It was apparent that the government had spent a lot of money to support almost the entire process on its own, and it had reached out to the international community, inviting international election observers for the first time, to prove the election's legitimacy. I was a member of the joint observer mission of the IRI and NDI. We found election day itself to be remarkably peaceful, and the voting process we observed was well organized and transparent. The electoral commission could have done more to instill confidence in the opposition that the process would be fair, however; the opposition's demands, such as for greater access to the registration list, should not have been difficult to address. It is impossible to know how much of a margin ZANU-PF gained from the tilted playing field, but my personal assessment was, not very much.

There is an enormous amount of hypocrisy going around. Zimbabwe has long been held to a double standard. The fact of the matter is, Zimbabwe has considerable democratic political space. The Zimbabwean opposition political parties campaigned freely throughout the country during the period leading up to the election. The NGO ZimRights held rallies that brought together ZANU-PF and MDC supporters united in calling for peace. Although state media was slanted, it by no means had a monopoly on communications. Civil society groups covered the country with their voter education efforts. Most impressive of all, some 85 percent of registered voters turned out to vote. Their commitment and enthusiasm would be enviable anywhere in the world, and the electoral commission staff were well trained and dedicated to their task. Those voters who received assistance tended to be the elderly, and observers found no reason to believe that these voters were not assisted of their own volition. These were by far the best elections Zimbabwe had ever had. With the exception of the violence that concluded them, they were as good as almost a score I have observed in Africa.

The government's opposition put up a good contest but once again failed to unite behind a single candidate. The MDC Alliance's 40-year-old

leader, Nelson Chamisa, was charismatic but impetuous. Although his opposition in rival parties gained few votes, they detracted from his efforts on the ground. Reliable polling indicated that he was closing the gap with Mnangagwa in the final days of the campaign, encouraging him to stay in the race, but 20 percent of voters remained undecided or declined to reveal their preference. ZANU-PF's strength in rural areas and among older voters remained formidable. Mnangagwa took credit for deposing his longtime patron, Mugabe, and his election promises of reform and stability resonated with some voters. He even solicited the support of the LGBTI community, very unusual in Africa. ZANU-PF could credibly claim victory. Mnangagwa's claim to legitimacy was thin, but he made the best of it. The Chinese endorsed the elections and announced their strong support for the government, having few qualms about the quality of the process or the fate of democracy.

International observers are at pains to avoid the facile labeling of elections as "free and fair." That is for Zimbabweans to decide. It is easy to denounce unlevel playing fields, but many democracies are compromised by problems with gerrymandering and campaign finance, which lock in incumbents and heavily favor the rich and special interests. Zimbabwe's failings pale in comparison with those of such US allies in Africa as Chad, Uganda, Rwanda, and Angola, among others, which give little room for opposition political parties, independent media, or free civil society. Elections in those countries are shams. Elections that I observed around the same time in Liberia and Nigeria, ostensibly democratic countries, were demonstrably inferior to those held in Zimbabwe in almost every respect. Yet only Zimbabwe gets ostracized. Zimbabwe's securocrats now rule openly, including, in addition to Mnangagwa, the retired general Constantino Chiwenga, who is vice president, and Foreign Minister S. B. Moyo, who had announced the coup. Although Mugabe had finally departed, by the end of 2018, the military appeared more entrenched than ever and firmly in charge of Zimbabwe's politics.[42]

Or not. By early 2019, economic crisis had forced Mnangagwa to increase fuel prices, leading to massive protests. The government backed down and rescinded the price increase, but as was happening in Sudan at the same time, the protests did not relent, and the government's dubious legitimacy was leading to paralysis. While Mnangagwa was out of the country, acting as a voice of moderation, the generals in charge back in Zimbabwe showed little forbearance. Opposition leaders were arrested and harassed. The government attempted to increase restrictions against NGOs, accusing them of being conduits for money laundering and terrorist activity, and presented a report to the AU that alleged hostile NGOs were "key proponents of the protests that have been interpreted as part of a Western funded regime change agenda."[43] Some NGOs were closed by local government offi-

cers, but the closures were overruled by the courts. Activists resumed a low profile. But the government was clearly reeling. In other words, the contest over Zimbabwe's political evolution was far from settled.

Concluding Observations

Around the world today, it has become increasingly difficult to defend some of the core values of democracy and human rights that have been taken for granted for a long time. As Mandaza observed, the neoliberal world order has been crumbling for some time, but in its stead the rise of ethnic nationalism, religious extremism, kleptocracy, and authoritarianism have come to pose a serious threat. Democratic progress has ground to a halt, and the edifice of international solidarity is crumbling, as borders close, foreign aid dries up, and diplomacy is abandoned. Africa, in particular, has come to be regarded as a source of undesirable immigrants, terrorism, disease, and obscure wars. It is a backwater, an afterthought, barely registering in the news. Its strategic value is measured in barrels of oil, tons of gold, and bushels of tea. Perhaps the Chinese have the foresight to invest, but the optimism about the continent that was touted just a few years ago has largely dissipated.

Zimbabwe's democratic movement has successfully resisted the encroachment of a totalitarian system, but it has a long way to go in pursuit of a democratic alternative. Frustration at the slow progress is understandable. But Zimbabwe still has a chance. As this study has found, Zimbabwe is not starting from scratch.

First, Zimbabwe has a viable political opposition. Democracy gains strength with the peaceful alternation of power, but it easily vanishes in the absence of a functioning multiparty system. The debate, the choice, the competition, the watchdog role, and the experimentation that accompany a multiplicity of parties not only strengthen the political system but increase the legitimacy and popular support for the government. Although Zimbabwe has yet to experience an alternation of power, it has come close, and the government is getting used to the idea. Politics in Zimbabwe is not a zero-sum game. Whatever grievances the opposition may bear, the spirit of dialogue and respect, which must be further cultivated, is a dependable safeguard. Progress was evident during the 2018 elections. An alternation of power would serve as an example of political maturity and the economic and social benefits that come with it, but Zimbabwe still waits.

Second, Zimbabwe has growing freedom of speech. This is particularly impressive in the case of social media. The printed press can also claim some independence, despite the economic challenges with which it must contend. Broadcast media, the radio and television, need to be opened up

more, but the alternative broadcast outlets have nevertheless grown in number and accessibility. Even more important is the lively debate and discussion that occurs, not only in formal events but in everyday encounters wherever Zimbabweans gather. That freedom from fear, that eagerness to express an opinion, that readiness to dissent, is critical. It did not come without sacrifice, and it must be extended, but it is evident. Freedom of information is enshrined in Zimbabwe's constitution, and the pernicious criminal defamation laws have been abolished, but other such laws that do not align with the constitution must also still be scrapped.

Third, Zimbabwe's civil society still flourishes. The self-criticism, innovation, and constant challenges have made it stronger and more sophisticated. There have been some hard lessons, but civil society has not given up. Civil society is the mother of democracy. It nurtures the leadership, generates the ideas, gives voice to the grassroots, empowers the masses, and guards against error. Civil society in Zimbabwe is alive and well, as this study has documented. As long as it thrives, democracy will find fertile soil.

Fourth, Zimbabwe's new constitution, a document achieved only after a long process of debate and compromise, upholds human rights and establishes the checks and balances that are essential to a democratic system. It must be preserved, taught, promoted, and respected, and it will serve Zimbabwe well.

Fifth, the Zimbabwean government includes officials who have engaged, shared, and learned, even with those with whom it is in opposition. Institutions such as the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission serve as platforms to bring government and opposition together. There are those who are proud of their country who continue to pursue the vision of a free and prosperous nation across the partisan divide. The growing strength and independence of the legislature and the judiciary, accounts of MPs speaking for their constituents and of the courts defending the peoples' rights, the growing accountability of local government, and accounts of local officials making sincere efforts to serve the needs of communities around the country also suggest that democratic institutions can be revived.

Finally, the courage, resilience, intelligence, and faith of the Zimbabwean people will be needed for them to make the Zimbabwe they want. From what the polls have found, Zimbabweans want a democracy. That 85 percent of registered voters turned out on election day is powerful testimony. An engaged citizenry, not one cowed by government repression, is wresting control at all levels.

Serious problems, such as the plague of corruption, the threat of political violence, the dominance of the military, and the poor governance and misguided policies, will not be easily addressed, and a lot of hard work lies ahead. No one can predict whether Zimbabwe will fail or succeed, but

the progress must be recognized. That is why Zimbabwe matters. The international community needs Zimbabwe, not for its resources but for its inspiration. It needs Zimbabwe not because of its problems but because the struggle in Zimbabwe—the hard slog, the ups and downs, all the complexities and contradictions of Zimbabwe's determined transition to democracy—shows the way to freedom elsewhere.[44]

Notes

1. Ibbo Mandaza and Dave Peterson, eds., *Zimbabwe: The Challenges of Democratisation and Economic Recovery* (Harare: SAPES Books, 2015).

2. US Department of State, "2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practice," http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm.

3. Jonathan N. Moyo, *Voting for Democracy* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1992), 22–32.

4. Michael Bratton, *Power Politics in Zimbabwe* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014), 51–97.

5. Zimbabwe Election Support Network, *Report on the 31 July 2013 Harmonised Elections* (Harare: ZESN, 2013), 51–52.

6. Ibid., 40.

7. Brian Raftopolous, "Nation, Race and History in Zimbabwean Politics," in *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, ed. Brian Raftopolous and Tyrone Savage (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004), 160–161.

8. Eldred Masunungure, in discussion with the author, Harare, July 2012.

9. Ibbo Mandaza, in discussion with the author, Harare, July 2012.

10. Godfrey Kanyezi, in discussion with the author, Harare, July 2012.

11. Eldred Masunungure, in discussion with the author, Harare, July 2012.

12. For additional discussion of Zimbabwean public opinion polling, see Masunungure, E. V., and J. M. Shumba, eds., *Zimbabwe: Mired in Transition* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2012), 1–28.

13. Eldred Masunungure, in discussion with the author, Harare, May 2014.

14. Ibid.

15. Discussion with the author, Harare, May 2014.

16. Discussion with the author, Harare, July 2012.

17. Eldred Masunungure, in discussion with the author, Harare, October 2015.

18. Global Ministries, "The National People's Convention Declaration," Harare, November 24, 2017, https://www.globalministries.org/the_national_peoples_convention_declaration.

19. Heidi Holland, *Dinner with Mugabe: The Untold Story of a Freedom Fighter Who Became a Tyrant* (Johannesburg: Penguin Books, 2008), 186.

20. Ibid., 244.

21. Derek Matyszak, *Succession and the ZANU-PF Body Politic* (Harare: Southern African Political Economy Series, 2016), 188.

22. Ibid., 198, 199.

23. Cater, Charlie. *Choosing the Path to Peace and Development: Coming to Terms with Human Rights Violations of the 1982–1987 Conflict in Matabeleland and Midlands Provinces* (Harare: Zimbabwe Human Rights Association, 1999), 3–23.

25. Notes from Media Forum event, Harare, May 2014.

26. Discussion with the author, Harare, May 2014.

27. Youth Forum staff, discussion with the author, Harare, July 2012.

28. Youth Forum staff, discussion with the author, Harare, May 2014.

29. Glanis Changicherere, *Towards Young Women's Political Participation: Approach and Strategies* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for Democracy, International Forum for Democratic Studies, 2016).

30. Zimbabwe Community Development Trust staff, discussion with the author, Harare, May 2014.

31. Zimbabwe Democracy Institute staff, discussion with the author, Harare, May 2014.

32. Discussion with the author, Harare, May 2014.

33. Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights staff, discussion with the author, Harare, October 2015.

34. Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission staff, discussion with the author, Harare, October 2015.

35. Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe staff, discussion with the author, Harare, October 2015.

36. For a comprehensive statement of ZCTU's economic reform proposals, see Godfrey Kanyenze, Timothy Kondo, Prosper Chitambara and Jos Martens, eds., *Beyond the Enclave: Towards a Pro-Poor and Inclusive Development Strategy for Zimbabwe* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2011).

37. Discussion with the author, Harare, October 2015.

38. Zimbabwe Union of Journalists staff, discussion with the author, Harare, October 2015.

39. Media Centre staff, discussion with the author, Harare, May 2014.

40. Magamba Network staff, discussion with the author, Harare, June 2017.

41. Zimbabwe Election Support Network, *Report on the 2018 Harmonized Elections* (Harare: ZESN, 2018).

42. Alex Magaisa, "Zimbabwe: An Opportunity Lost," *Journal of Democracy,* 30, no. 1 (January 2019), 156.

43. Leopold Munhende, "Watch: Government to Track NGOs Accounts, Alleges Funds Might Be Used for Terrorism," March 14, 2019, https://www.newzimbabwe.com/category/top-story/.

44. Dave Peterson, "Why Zimbabwe Matters," adapted from a paper delivered at SAPES Trust conference on "Zimbabwe in Transition: Reform and Reconstruction," June 30, 2017, Harare.

8

Totalitarianism, Sultanism, and Kleptocracy: Equatorial Guinea

John Heilbrunn describes Equatorial Guinea as "an extreme authoritarian state," and it has long ranked at the very bottom of Freedom House's index. The regime of President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo is nearly as closed as that of Eritrea. But it is not totalitarian. Rather than depending on a party apparatus to assert control over the society, the Equatoguinean regime relies on nepotism within the Mongomo (or Esangui) clan of the Fang ethnic group, which the regime keeps loyal by its control over the country's enormous oil wealth. Like the totalitarian regimes, the Equatoguinean regime makes considerable use of violence and terror. There is little attempt at ideological indoctrination or mass mobilization, however. Near total control over the property and economy of Equatorial Guinea resides with the president, who only occasionally resorts to the pretense of constitutionalism or populist rhetoric.[1]

Equatorial Guinea thus corresponds well with Juan Linz's description of sultanistic regimes: a dictatorship based not on tradition, ideology, personal mission, or charisma, but on a combination of fear and rewards to collaborators. "The ruler exercises his power without restraint at his own discretion and above all unencumbered by rules or by any commitment to an ideology or value system. The binding norms and relations of bureaucratic administration are constantly subverted by personal arbitrary decisions of the ruler, which he does not feel constrained to justify in ideological terms."[2] Sultanistic systems lack the restraint of tradition found in patrimonialism. The bureaucracy is not based on merit or loyalty to the party, but solely on fealty to the ruler, and it is often composed of family, friends, cronies, and "the men directly involved in the use of violence to sustain the regime." The methods of a sultanistic regime resemble those of

the worst totalitarian systems, but the absence of ideology and mass mobilization gives rise to a form of governance that is uniquely devoid of legitimacy. The state is essentially the ruler's personal property, to do with as he pleases. Linz suggests that such systems are more likely in poor, agrarian countries with access to means of wealth, such as oil, to purchase loyalty.[3]

The Equatoguinean regime may not be totalitarian, but it is so closely related to totalitarian regimes that an examination of its structure and function will contribute to an understanding of Africa's totalitarian temptation. The conflation of government, party, security, and economy; the suppression of political opposition, civil society, and independent media; and the use of terror, propaganda, and bureaucracy are all the same. It is also interesting for the purposes of this study because, like some of the other neo-totalitarian systems examined here, it enjoys friendly relations with the West, including the United States, despite legal problems members of the ruling family have encountered in US courts. Like some of its totalitarian kin, Equatorial Guinea has devoted considerable financial resources to polishing its image, presenting itself as amenable to reform and democracy and, of course, to international investment. Superficially, it resembles the new generation of successful authoritarian systems due to the apparent development and economic growth that have taken place in the last couple of decades. But the high level of corruption, poor governance, and income inequality point to the system's inadequacies.

Freedom House places Equatorial Guinea in the same 7-7 company as Eritrea, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan. The current president, Obiang, has held power since 1979, when he deposed and executed his uncle, Francisco Macías Nguema, Equatorial Guinea's first president. Although the country officially became a multiparty system in 1991, elections since then have never been credible. In May 2008, the ruling Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea (PDGE) swept legislative and municipal elections, while the sole opposition party, the Convergence for Social Democracy (CPDS), gained only one seat in the 100-member Parliament. In the November 2009 presidential elections, Obiang won 95.4 percent of the vote. A constitutional referendum on November 13, 2011, imposed a limit of two consecutive terms for the presidency but lifted the age limit, making it possible for Obiang to run for a third term. The new constitution created a two-chamber Parliament with a directly elected 100-member Chamber of Deputies and a 70-member Senate. The PDGE won the May 2013 elections with 98.7 percent of the seats in the bicameral legislature and 98.1 percent of city council seats throughout the country. According to the US State Department Human Rights Report, "Foreign diplomatic observers noted numerous irregularities," and the lopsided results "raised suspicions of systemic vote fraud."[4] Obiang won the presidential elections of April 24, 2016, by 94 percent. The National Election Commission is composed largely of members of the ruling party and is headed by

the minister of the interior, thus still lacking independence despite electoral reforms that were recently approved. Voters took three ballots into the polling booth, discarding two on the floor and dropping one into the ballot box, negating any privacy, a problem that was compounded by reported intimidation of voters by soldiers. The opposition CPDS denounced the results as unsurprising "after 37 years of totalitarian power," as they put it.[5]

President Obiang is head of state, commander of the armed forces, head of the judiciary, and founder and head of the ruling party. The absence of significant political opposition and the control of the executive, judiciary, military, party, and legislature correspond with what prevails in the totalitarian systems, but with a key difference. The monism is dominated by the president's family. The government's cabinet includes many of Obiang's close relatives, and the vice president is his eldest son, Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, known as Teodorin, who has been charged with corruption in the United States and France.[6] The October 2011 legal filing against Teodorin accuses him of extorting funds from timber and construction companies, fraudulently inflating contracts by up to 500 percent, and funneling public funds into his private account while serving as minister of agriculture and forestry. Conveniently, the presidency and prime minister's office are the lead agencies for anti-corruption efforts. Thus, along with this nepotism typical of sultanistic systems is another attribute, grand corruption, that is at the heart of yet another overlapping regime type, kleptocracy.

Not all kleptocracies are as repressive as Equatorial Guinea's version; others such as Angola, allow somewhat more political space, and even certain democracies, such as Nigeria and Kenya, exhibit kleptocratic attributes. Kleptocracy has not been a notable feature of the regimes thus far identified as totalitarian, but the sultanistic kleptocracies do share with them the same tendency to monism and extreme repression. The sultanistic regimes are not subject to the totalitarian temptation—they have no interest in or need for ideology or mass mobilization—but there is a convergence of methods and interests that makes them look similar and sometimes brings them together.

The security forces of Equatorial Guinea routinely commit human rights violations against the population with impunity, and a weak judiciary fails to provide any protection, frequently engaging in corruption and enabling abuses. Citizens may be arbitrarily arrested, detained, and beaten by police. In 2015, several individuals peacefully handing out leaflets protesting the Africa Cup of Nations football tournament held in Equatorial Guinea were arrested and held without charge for two weeks. Random roadblocks manned by soldiers were used to extort money from travelers, including foreign nationals such as a Nigerian diplomat who was severely beaten in such an incident despite producing his diplomatic identity card. No apology was offered by the government. Several instances were reported of children as young as nine being arrested and beaten by police due to disturbances

around the Cup of Nations tournament or for alleged thefts. The courts authorized the detention of children under the age of 16 to Black Beach prison, which is designated for convicted adult prisoners. President Obiang dissolved the judiciary for two weeks in May 2015 on accusations of corruption, leading to a backlog in the courts. Demonstrating the conflation of the ruling party and the judiciary, the courts in Malabo initiated an investigation of an opposition leader, Andrés Esono, for attempting to spread the Ebola virus, forbidding him to leave the city even after charges were dropped.[7]

A Legacy of Terror

The abuse of human rights and the absence of the rule of law are ongoing problems in Equatorial Guinea, but Obiang's predecessor and uncle, Francisco Macías Nguema, had operated on another level altogether and was "considered one of Africa's most demented rulers." Nguema's 10-year reign of terror from 1969 to 1979 has put him in the company of the most despotic rulers Africa has known, including Idi Amin and Jean-Bédel Bokassa. Upon Nguema's ascension to power, he immediately ordered the arrest and brutal execution of all of his political rivals. All schools, newspapers, and printing presses were closed down for a decade. Almost the entire pre-independence Cabinet was killed, half of Nguema's subsequent Cabinet was killed, as well as two thirds of the pre-independence National Assembly and a large percentage of the civil service. Thousands more were massacred by the unaccountable army or on the orders of Nguema. By the end of this "holocaust," as it has been described, nearly every intellectual had been killed or had fled the country, and the government had been decimated and nearly ground to a halt. When the last remnants of the civil service collectively issued a petition to relax the country's international isolation, every one of the 114 signators was arrested, tortured, and disappeared. The state descended into chaos. "Rational decisions concerning either public administration or foreign policy were all functionally superfluous" as Nguema renounced the 20th century and consigned the country to "a system of pure unmitigated lawlessness, terror, arbitrary murder, rape, theft, and slavery under the ad hoc control of a recluse."[8]

An extended and intense experience of terror thus unites all six of the case studies. Although Equatorial Guinea has had 37 years to heal, the legacy of terror has left behind a regime that is exceptionally repressive and firmly entrenched, if not as horrific as it used to be. Repression of opposition political parties, civil society, and the media is severe. The CPDS retains one seat in both the National Assembly and the Senate. The secretary-general of the youth wing of the CPDS, Santiago Martin Engongo Esono, has been imprisoned frequently, such as in January 2015 when he was imprisoned under suspicion of preparing to organize a demonstration against the Africa Cup of

Nations football tournament, which he denied. In the days prior to the April 2016 elections, Rafael Mbela, campaign coordinator of the opposition Unión Centro Derecha, was detained and beaten. The headquarters of the opposition Ciudadanos por la Innovación was attacked by police who fired bullets and tear gas, wounding six party members, while 40 were arrested.[9]

Wenceslao Mansogo, a medical doctor, CPDS opposition party leader, and human rights activist, is one of Equatorial Guinea's most prominent dissidents. He was released by presidential pardon from Bata prison in 2012, where he had been imprisoned for 4 months on trumped-up charges after a patient died under his care. In an interview, he said prison was not as bad as he expected, but his description still sounded pretty grim. There were about 300 prisoners, probably double the prison's capacity, but the prisoners kept it clean, and for those fortunate to have family members on the outside, they could get enough food. The government provided very little food, and prisoners without family had to depend on the generosity of other prisoners for survival. There was only one other political prisoner, a former assistant to the president's son, who had had a falling out with him. Security was low. During his time in the prison, he counted 47 prisoners who managed to escape over the barbed wire wall. The worst part was the heat, so that many prisoners slept on the floor of the inner corridor rather than in their cells. Women and children were kept together with the men. He said one woman about 20 years old was raped a dozen times a night every night for the year and a half she was in prison, noting that she was being held without charges ever being brought against her. When Mansogo was released, he brought her case to the attention of the justice minister, who investigated and ordered her release. Other women became pregnant and gave birth in prison, and HIV/AIDS was prevalent. An epileptic man had seizures frequently throughout the day but never received help. There are two other prisons in Equatorial Guinea, one in Malabo and one in Black Beach, which is the biggest. These need more international scrutiny, Mansogo said. The president had said he would allow international observers for the upcoming elections, and Mansogo's party, the CPDS, was encouraging observers to come, not to validate the elections but, if for nothing else, to witness how bad the electoral system is.

Activists agreed that space for civil society in Equatorial Guinea is meager. Only a few NGOs gingerly touch on issues of human rights, women's rights, or democracy. Their membership may amount at best to a couple dozen, and the number of active members is much less. Citizens are afraid to meet together. Fear pervades the country, a legacy of the Spanish fascist colonial rule and the brutal tyranny of Nguema, as well as the repression of the current regime, which only recently seems to be relaxing its grip ever so slightly. The handful of activists working in Equatorial Guinea may no longer face prison, torture, and death, but they are still likely to lose their jobs because of their activism and may be prevented from getting another

job, even in the private sector. This can cause great stress within the family. President Obiang has found he can maintain control just as surely by buying and co-opting his opposition as he had with harsher methods, or maybe he is just mellowing with age. Obiang has skillfully managed the ethnic tensions in the country, activists told me. The Equatoguinean government bureaucracy is huge, including some private critics of the government. Some of the wealth may thus be trickling down. Of course, Obiang has also deployed his wealth to curry favor internationally, such as with the Obiang UNESCO (UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) prize and the Sullivan Foundation, which held its biannual conference in Equatorial Guinea (and was discredited as a result). Not to mention Obiang's handshakes with Barack Obama, George W. Bush, and many other US politicians.[10]

The recent constitutional reform may not be much of an improvement on the previous version, but it has provided a platform for unprecedented civic education. NGOs have been able to broadcast programs on the state radio explaining the new constitution to the population, and thus all of the provisions for various rights can be elaborated. Civil society groups were also campaigning for an independent electoral commission that would include members of the opposition and civil society. Some groups were talking about human rights and providing independent news outlets, some were focused on the environment. Groups expressed a need for training and more international contact. The president himself is suspicious of civil society, but here and there ministers and other functionaries were subtly expanding what small space exists on behalf of civil society. There was no popular participation in the development of the constitution. In Obiang's version of democracy, everything emanates from him. His autobiography outlines his vision for the country with himself as a father figure, and he may in fact be revered by the people. Nguema was thought to have supernatural powers enabling him to know everything going on in the country and thereby to eliminate his enemies. Obiang might be a slight improvement, but he was the one in charge of internal security under his uncle, presumably carrying out Nguema's repressive orders before deposing and executing him. The president's son, Teodorin, has been the anticipated successor, even though many in the party disdain him due to his lavish lifestyle and sexual behavior. Obiang has been assured that his son will get a fair trial in the United States on corruption charges. The president seems to be more unhappy with the French, who have also seized Teodorin's properties. Indeed, a large protest was staged in front of the French Embassy.[11]

Equatorial Guinea's population is less than one million, but the country is the third largest producer of oil in Africa at 430 million barrels a day, and the United States is its main customer. Driving through the new part of Malabo, the capital, one encounters rows of gleaming corporate headquarters and government ministries lining the empty six lane highway into town from the airport. Obiang's sultanistic proclivities are well suited to his interna-

tional associations. Relations with the Gulf oil shaikhdoms, the late Muammar Qaddafi, and Obiang's fellow kleptocrats in Gabon, Brazzaville, and Cameroon are very close. His wealth is such that he has built 52 castles, one for each of his fellow African heads of state, which are carefully maintained for whenever they care to visit. Much of the real estate of the country is owned by the president or family members. The country is filled with enormous white-elephant projects such as the World Cup stadium and an Olympic swimming pool, a vacant shopping center, a luxurious restaurant atop a structure that looks like the Eiffel Tower, and huge apartment complexes that are nearly empty because no one can afford to live in them. Whoever got the contracts to build all these structures must have made a lot of money.

Equatorial Guinea gets no international aid because its per capita gross national product is too high, some $35,000 a year, yet its human development statistics remain dismal. Despite Equatorial Guinea's small size and great wealth, 77 percent of its citizens live on less than $2 a day. Unemployment and prostitution are rife. In Bata, the principal city on the mainland, there is a huge new hospital, but almost no one uses it because it is too expensive. Patients must pay for everything up front, including the rooms at $160 a day and even IVs and bandages. There is no health insurance; in fact most Equatoguineans have no access to clean water or electricity. Most children cannot afford to go to school due to fees, even though compulsory, free education is guaranteed in the constitution.

Prospects for change might seem remote, but largely due to international pressure and a desire to burnish his image, Obiang has hinted a willingness to reform. More recently, the drop in the price of oil has added another incentive for the government to open up. A handful of individuals have made the most of the small political space that exists to carve out some prospect for change. Anastasia Nze Ada, the leader of Igualdad y Derechos, a women's rights organization, is also a part-time consultant with the women's affairs ministry. She had previously held a position in the ministry but was kicked out for her outspokenness, then called back. She has criticized the ministry and the government in general, partly due to her many years working in France and other parts of Africa as a development specialist, where she grew used to enjoying freedom of speech. Her organization was the strongest in the country, but it claimed just 14 members, of whom only a few were active.

In Equatorial Guinea, there is a network of 10 women's organizations, but most are relatively informal associations of illiterate peasant women. Ada said she was not afraid of losing her job at the ministry at the age of 63. She has made speeches and written reports decrying the nation's social problems, and she will submit the alternative human rights report for Equatorial Guinea's Universal Periodic Review. Women are abused in many ways in Equatorial Guinea and get no protection in the courts, she said; domestic violence can be brutal, but women do not know their rights and accept it as normal. Her women's rights advocacy is also a means to raise the issue of

human rights in general. Her public advocacy for ratification of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women was unprecedented; no one from civil society had advocated for anything in Equatorial Guinea before. There is new language in the constitution for women's rights, and Ada was negotiating with Radio Bata to produce a program explaining these. The radio is starving for real programming; when I spoke with Ada it was mostly providing only music interspersed with the president's speeches.

Another example of a functionary who nevertheless had become a relatively independent voice is Bernadino Biyua, publisher of *El Lector* newspaper. He had refused to accept funding from the government, although he was in charge of accrediting foreign journalists for the Ministry of Information, where the newspaper is based. The paper had obtained a small space for the office away from the ministry, however, and the staff were preparing to move into it to increase their independence. Otherwise, there are no independent newspapers or radio or television in the country; all are essentially propaganda for the government. Biyua said the paper attempts to remain objective and nonpartisan in its coverage, providing space for the opposition and raising the issue of democracy and human rights. It publishes 1,000 copies twice a month and sustains itself from sales and advertisements. Printing is a big cost, and its journalists are paid very little.

I also met with two activist lawyers, one of whom had been imprisoned and tortured and had his law office closed. He provides pro bono legal assistance to prisoners. A new prison maintained by the police, called "Guantanamo," has the worst conditions, and prisoners are not fed at all, he said. There are many foreigners in the prison, and women and children are kept with the men. He noted that President Obiang had offered to allow international inspections of the prisons, leading a US group to request unfettered access. He said there is an opportunity now to press the government to open up. Mansogo had been released because of US pressure, and there were no more political prisoners at the time, strictly speaking. But if Obiang feels his security is threatened, he will clamp down. Many Equatoguineans feel US companies are complicit in the repression. They must also be pressured to support change, he said.

I met a young blogger who wanted to set up a website. It would provide an independent and objective news source based in Equatorial Guinea as an alternative to the partisan websites produced by the exile community. Although social media and the internet were not yet very popular in Equatorial Guinea due to the lack of infrastructure, he said, this was expected to change as a new fiber-optic cable would help connection speeds get faster. Youth were becoming more politicized, but they were constrained due to poverty, he said. Thus far, the government has made no effort to restrict internet access. Youth have been timid, but they may be less in awe of Obiang than their parents have been.

Kleptocracies and Other "Not Free" Regimes

Equatorial Guinea qualifies as the ideal type when it comes to sultanistic regimes in Africa, but it is not the only such regime. Most of the other polities registering in Freedom House's "not free" category bear many of the same characteristics. They tend to be less vicious, closed, and absolute than Equatorial Guinea, but they are all dominated by a single strongman, depend heavily on a network of family and clan loyalists, and derive much of their support from the economic power of a single commodity, usually oil. They are all kleptocracies as well. Angola, Gabon, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Chad, and, to a lesser extent, Uganda and Cameroon fill this bill. Two other countries in the "not free" category, Swaziland, which is officially a monarchy, and Gambia, are not oil dependent. Swaziland is neither totalitarian nor sultanistic, because King Mswati derives legitimacy from his traditional claim to the throne. Unlike the totalitarian regimes, but like Equatorial Guinea, all of these regimes make little pretense at promoting a grand ideology, nor can they be bothered with mass mobilization. They are notorious for their corruption.

In 2014, out of 175 countries ranked on a corruption scale by Transparency International, Angola placed 161, Chad 154, Brazzaville 152, Cameroon 136, Gambia 126, and Gabon a moderately corrupt 94. Interestingly, of all of these "not free" regimes, Swaziland placed the best on the corruption scale at 69. For the record, Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea all also ranked below 100 on the corruption index. Rwanda performed the best of any of the countries in this study with a decent rank at 55. Beyond the oil and corruption, all of these governments, whether totalitarian or sultanistic, repressed political opposition and abused human rights. Elections are relatively meaningless, and the courts lack independence. The government, ruling party, military, and economy tend to be conflated. Tolerance for civil society and independent media is mixed, but never great.

Because the kleptocratic, sultanistic regimes dominate the "not free" bottom of the Freedom House index along with the totalitarian systems, some discussion and comparison of the two is warranted. Jean-François Revel has linked kleptocracy and its subversion of both Western and third world governments to the disaffection with democracy that makes the totalitarian alternative attractive.[12] Thus, totalitarian states such as Rwanda present themselves as an antidote to corruption and kleptocracy. At the same time, the kleptocracies have imitated the totalitarian systems by adopting such methods as promulgating restrictive NGO legislation, controlling the press and cutting off social media, harassing the political opposition, dominating the economy, and buying international favor. Like totalitarianism, the kleptocratic urge has long been felt in Africa, which produced one of the world's most renowned kleptocrats, Mobutu Sese Seko, of the former

Zaire. Kleptocracy, not simply grand corruption, is a massive and growing problem in Africa. It implies rule of, by, and for thieves—a government based on corruption, not just a government that happens to be corrupt. It can describe a spectrum of regime types, from democracies, such as Nigeria and Kenya, to the worst sultanistic dictatorships, such as Equatorial Guinea. It undermines both democracy and human welfare.

Although the scale of kleptocracy in Africa may not be quite as big as that in some other parts of the world such as Russia, its impact on Africa can be seen and felt everywhere. It has long been suggested that small African economies are less able than rich countries to absorb the damage caused by corruption. Figures are a bit hard to come by, but according to Global Financial Integrity, an estimated $1 trillion flows out of Africa every year by corrupt means. According to the AU, more than $148 billion is stolen from the continent by its leaders each year, representing about one quarter of GDP. According to a report by the UN Economic Commission for Africa, as much as half of all tax revenue, and $50 billion annually, is lost due to corruption.[13] Corruption hinders trade, as merchants pay bribes at customs. It undermines the rule of law, as criminals pay judges to let them free. It undermines democracy, as politicians pay voters for their ballots, raise funds from corrupt patrons, and pay back favors out of the public purse.

Few African countries are immune from the kleptocratic scourge. According to Transparency International, 40 out of 43 African countries have serious corruption problems. African countries dominate the bottom of Transparency International's index. The question is not so much "does kleptocracy exist in Africa?" but "where does it not exist?" One can go country by country to identify the long list of African leaders and the various scandals in which they have been engaged. There are just too many tales of woe.[14] Some 90 percent of Somalia's foreign aid has been stolen. Mozambique's previous government corruptly acquired $1.4 billion in undisclosed debt, 10.7 percent of GDP, and further loans have been cut off as the new government struggles to repair the economy and a new civil war is brewing. Robert Mugabe himself reported $15 billion missing from Zimbabwe's diamond mines. In Kenya's Anglo-Leasing scandal, government officials may have stolen $100 million. In Uganda, a similar scam involving national identity cards and Muhlbaurer Technology also cost $100 million. Malawi's Cashgate cost $75 million. These are all poor countries that can ill afford such losses.

The stark juxtaposition of the super-wealthy and the impoverished masses is a common sight in Africa, but the wealthy displays at home barely hint at the money spirited out of the continent. Some 32 percent of African assets are held in offshore bank accounts. The kleptocrats are enthusiastically enabled by the international system, including lawyers, consultants, banks, real estate brokers, and politicians. In some cases, such

as Liberia during the civil war, targeted sanctions may have benefited the country because they made it more difficult for the kleptocrats to invest abroad. Otherwise, Africa figures quite critically in the international dimensions of the kleptocratic phenomenon.

African kleptocracy is about more than diverting billions of dollars to enable corrupt leaders to buy mansions and yachts. It is above all about leaders deploying those resources to do whatever it takes to hang onto power. It is about war, famine, poverty, human rights abuses, repression, and the steady erosion of social norms and behavior. Petty corruption is pervasive in Africa. Police shakedowns, demands for bribes for bureaucratic services, and under-invoicing of business transactions are common. But as they say in Africa, the fish starts rotting from the head down. Petty corruption is just the symptom of a problem that emanates from the very top. It is like a disease that sets in and gets progressively worse. The Enough Project has produced reports on South Sudan and the DRC that link kleptocracy and the deaths of tens of thousands of citizens of these countries due to war and famine. Both catastrophes have produced huge flows of refugees and suffering for literally millions of human beings. The Enough Project research also documents the role that international banks and real estate agents play in enabling the massive theft. Regional actors, as well as the international community, are complicit. Most importantly, the reports recommend a series of actions, such as freezing bank accounts and other sanctions, that could begin to rein in the problem.[15]

Kleptocracy afflicts both democracies and dictatorships. The Transparency International index shows Rwanda, although one of the most repressive countries in Africa, to be among the least corrupt. Ethiopia also has a relatively good reputation, about the same as Ghana. Even some of Africa's strongest democracies, such as South Africa, Benin, and Ghana, have serious corruption problems among high-level government officials; and among the putative democracies, such as Kenya, Nigeria, Liberia, and Mali, state-perpetrated corruption has been even more pernicious, often blamed for leading to the violent crises suffered in those countries. But the focus here is on the unapologetic kleptocratic dictatorships that are generally functioning in the traditional sultanistic fashion. Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville, Chad, Cameroon, Uganda, and Togo fall into this category. Most of them survive from oil wealth, distribute most of the proceeds to family members and close friends, and use the rest to maintain a repressive security apparatus.[16] Another favorite mechanism used by kleptocrats to siphon public funds is the arms trade, which has the added harm of reinforcing the control of the securocrats, with their means of repression and capacity to destroy, as seen in South Sudan.

Some innovative and courageous initiatives to fight kleptocracy are beginning to gain traction. The Enough Project efforts demonstrate one commendable initiative. The US Treasury Department's use of the Foreign

Corrupt Practices Act in recovering $30 million in ill-gotten gains from Teodorin Nguema, the son of Equatorial Guinea's president, represents a modest success. The fierce courage of bloggers such as Marques de Morais in Angola and Omoyele Sowore in Nigeria have uncovered many crimes and mounted significant pressure. Legal anti-corruption campaigns by civil society groups such as the Socio-Economic Rights & Accountability Project, also in Nigeria, have chipped away at the problem. The Center for Research and Development in Zimbabwe was instrumental in mobilizing the Kimberley Process to combat corruption in Zimbabwe's diamond mines.

Some governments have joined the battle, but this is tricky. I have already noted Rwanda's no-tolerance approach. Copying Paul Kagame, President John Magufuli in Tanzania has mounted an anti-corruption campaign that he has used to quash his political enemies and construct an increasingly repressive authoritarian regime. This has been a tactic in many other countries in the region as well, including Malawi and Zambia. Muhammadu Buhari's anti-corruption drive in Nigeria is making only very slow progress and is also sometimes accused of being targeted at Buhari's political enemies, just as his predecessor, Goodluck Jonathan, was accused of doing.

Kleptocracy is not simply a problem of rule of law, one that is amenable to legal resolution. It is not simply a matter of exposure, of naming and shaming. It is a problem that is most effectively dealt with by political means, including the defeat of kleptocrats in democratic elections, if possible, and their removal from power. It was hoped that the change of regime in Burkina Faso and Gambia from dictators to democrats was going to end kleptocratic government in those countries. But even where political change has occurred, the corrupt networks and ethos are firmly entrenched and difficult to eradicate. Rwanda had the opportunity to completely wipe out the former regime's structures, and Kagame's single-minded ruthlessness has managed to inhibit the new structure from becoming infected. This has proven rare elsewhere, nor is it necessarily desirable, as the traumatic experience of Rwanda attests.

Angola

Upon taking power in 1976, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) proclaimed Angola to be a one-party state and adopted Marxism-Leninism as its official ideology, linking itself to Cuba and the former Soviet Union. Party infighting and a coup attempt in 1977 led to mass arrests and executions, as well as a consolidation of the regime and "a mood of fear that endured until the 1990s, deterring Angolans from dissent and instilling a culture of conformism, dependence on the state and lack of initiative."[17] But while the regime nationalized much of the economy and attempted to govern in a monistic fashion, including a growing personality

cult around President José Eduardo dos Santos and a powerful security sector, it also had to contend with a civil war. Led by Jonas Savimbi, the opposition movement, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) was even more intolerant. Although Tony Hodges describes the MPLA government as "an overtly totalitarian one-party system," he accuses UNITA of practicing "even more violent forms of political totalitarianism within its own movement and in the areas under its control."[18]

With the end of the Cold War, under the Bicesse peace accords, Angola abandoned Marxism-Leninism in 1990, adopted a democratic constitution, and competed with UNITA in elections in 1992, which unfortunately ended with a resumption of the civil war before a second round could be held to determine who would be president. UNITA became divided, much of the opposition was co-opted, massive and grave human rights abuses were committed, civil society was constrained, the press was equally shackled, and Savimbi was finally killed in an ambush in 2002. This enabled the MPLA to consolidate its power, along with the regime's access to abundant oil resources, which further served not only to buy off opposition but to amass extraordinary levels of personal wealth for President dos Santos and his family. For all practical purposes, any pretense of the old ideology and any new democratic accountability were abandoned in the corrupt pursuit of wealth.

The Angolan government continues to be repressive, but the vestiges of totalitarian power have faded. Instead, like Equatorial Guinea, the kleptocratic centralization of wealth and power around one family bear all the hallmarks of a sultanistic regime. Like the situation in Zimbabwe, the MPLA has dominated the country since independence and its subsequent victory in Angola's long civil war. The main political opposition, UNITA, is weak but functions with limited freedom along with several other parties, which altogether held 45 of 220 seats in the unicameral legislature. Angola therefore also resembles Zimbabwe in that despite the regime's former aspirations to impose a totalitarian system, it has failed not only due to the corrupt pursuit of wealth, but also due to the tenacity of the political opposition, as weak as it is. Likewise the press and civil society are weak or have been co-opted by the government, but they are not subject to the same repression that has been found in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Rwanda, nor Equatorial Guinea, for that matter. The Angolan government has tried to control social media in the wake of protests in the capital and has used its massive oil wealth to buy control of the press, not only in Angola but in Portugal, the former colonial power, as well.

The government has also invested much in international lobbying and image laundering. Former President dos Santos, members of his family, and a central core of loyalists became enormously wealthy, monopolizing state power. Dos Santos' daughter, Isabel, was named by *Forbes* magazine as the wealthiest woman in Africa with a fortune of $3 billion, and her father made her head of the state oil company, Sonangol, in June 2016. Dos Santos's son,

José Filomeno dos Santos, was chair of Angola's sovereign wealth fund, worth $5 billion. Angola thus also resembled the sultanistic system of Equatorial Guinea due to the dominance of a single family and its extraordinary dependence on oil, as well as diamonds. It is not totalitarian, since there is no longer any ideology at work, nor is there a mass movement; and the country can claim a political opposition and at least some semblance of a civil society and independent press, indicating the failure of the monist project. Rather than a totalitarian developmental state, Angola has been classified as a predatory state; the "rent from oil is used primarily to satisfy elite interests and finance the means of retaining power, through expenditure on security and patronage, rather than to promote social and economic development."[19]

Political space in Angola had been closing, however, as Freedom House's downgrading of Angola in 2015 from a 5.5 to a 6 indicates. Freedom House cited the government's increasing repression of journalists, young political activists, and some religious groups as the justification for Angola's declining score. Yet as in Zimbabwe, the situation is changing. The regime of President dos Santos, the long-ruling gerontocrat, has given way to a younger generation that is bringing change. Whether this leads to greater openness and democracy, or a less corrupt but more repressive regime, remains to be seen. Angola's new 2010 constitution ended direct election of the president, shifting this responsibility to the otherwise almost powerless National Assembly. Although the new constitution also imposed a limit of two five-year terms beginning in 2012, which would have enabled dos Santos to stay in power until 2022, he announced his successor as chairman of the party, General João Lourenço, in 2016, setting the stage for his departure. Elections in 2017 thus produced the expected results, but subsequent actions by Lourenço, including the removal of Isabel as head of the state oil company and the prosecution of José Filomeno for corruption while he was head of Angola's sovereign wealth fund, should improve governance, as well as consolidate Lourenço's power.

Angola's only daily newspaper, all national radio stations, and all but one national television station are still controlled by the state. Most other private media were owned by the dos Santos family or senior government officials. Independent journalists and bloggers were frequently harassed. In March 2016, 17 youth who had organized a discussion of Gene Sharp's book, *From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation*, were sentenced on various charges to two to eight years in prison. The trial was denounced by AI and other human rights organizations, but as one of the defendants, rapper Luaty Beirão, said, "Whatever happens will be what (President) Jose Eduardo decides. This is a show trial, everyone knows that and understands how it works. No matter what arguments are presented at this puppet show, and however difficult it might be to prove anything, if he decides it, we will be found guilty. And we are mentally prepared to be found guilty."[20] A peaceful demonstration on their behalf was violently sup-

pressed. Angola's courts have been dysfunctional, corrupt, and lacking independence from the executive, especially in the case of political trials.[21] Following the growing trend across Africa, the Angolan government promulgated new NGO regulations in March 2015 that require NGOs to secure approval from the government before implementation of projects, mandate local authorities to supervise projects, and require frequent financial reports to the government. As usual, the justification is that the regulations combat money laundering and terrorist financing.[22]

Although China has been implicated in the authoritarian resurgence in Africa due to its heavy economic investment and the political model it offers, Russia's presence since the end of the Cold War has been negligible—until recently. Angola is notable in this regard, as it is Russia's number-one arms buyer on the continent, including a $1 billion deal with the Russian contractor Rosoboronexport in 2013. Angola's oil and mineral resources are also of obvious interest. Russia has been a friendly political collaborator. Russian navy vessels visited the port of Luanda in July 2015, for the first time in 25 years, to celebrate 40 years of diplomatic relations. Like China, Russia has little concern for democracy and human rights. In 2016, Angola was among the first countries visited by Vladimir Putin, and Angola supported Russia's fight against Ukraine. Russia has also supported Angola's first telecommunications satellite, AngoSat1, which was launched from Russia in 2017 and which could serve as a tool for Russian military and intelligence, as well as hackers.[23] Just as has been the case with China elsewhere, however, the military, economic, and political support Russia has provided Angola does not necessarily provide a clear ideological model. Cuba also continues to maintain friendly relations, as it has since the civil war, when it provided troops and doctors. But the Angolan kleptocracy bears little resemblance to Cuba's decrepit totalitarian regime and has nothing to learn from it beyond the techniques of repression.

The struggles of the intrepid blogger, human rights and anti-corruption activist, Rafael Marques de Morais, well illuminate how the Angolan regime has functioned, as well as illuminate the state of civil society, the respect for human rights, the independent press, the judicial system, the military, the economy, and the problem of corruption. Marques de Morais also exemplifies the courage required to challenge such regimes. Beginning in 1992 as a reporter working for the state newspaper, *Jornal de Angola*, Marques de Morais discovered that reporting on corruption could get him in trouble, and in 1997 a story he wrote in the independent weekly, *Folha 8*, about discrimination in the military led to his first confrontation with the police. By 1999, he had written a famous article, "The Lipstick of Dictatorship," criticizing the president, which landed him in preventative detention for 40 days, including 11 days being incommunicado followed by a six-month sentence for defamation, which the UN Human Rights Committee ruled illegal.

Marques de Morais continued to act as a thorn in the regime's side, escaping at least one assassination attempt. He published a book in Portugal in 2011 that exposed the corruption and human rights abuses committed by diamond companies owned by nine Angolan army generals. The generals sued him for defamation, but the Portuguese public prosecutor dismissed the case, ruling that his book was rigorously documented and in the public interest. Angola's attorney general then charged him with malicious denunciation in 2015, and the court handed down a six-month suspended prison sentence, despite an intense international outcry. Most recently, Marques de Morais was again on trial in Portugal, where he was being sued by the public relations consultant of Isabel dos Santos, as well as in Angola, due to an article he had written about the attorney general's corrupt acquisition of beachfront property. Another lawsuit was threatened in early 2017 by the British libel tourism firm Schilling on behalf of a business partner of President dos Santos's son. Ironically, Marques de Morais has found that the more the authorities pursue him, the better he is enabled by the judicial system to get access to documents exposing their misdeeds, as well as to attract international attention and condemnation of the sordid character of the regime.[24]

Several lessons can be drawn from the experience of dissidents described throughout this study. First, despite all the repression, communist ideology, and single-party state aspirations that may once have existed, and despite the continuing democratic facade that must describe the current dispensation in Angola, dissidents such as Marques de Morais have survived. Marques de Morais is not just alive and well, but is still working in Angola, fighting the corruption, fighting the human rights abuses, fighting for justice and democracy. Such dissident voices, often very lonely, but often very courageous, manage to preserve some hope, some vision for an alternative that is free and democratic. As long as their voices can be heard, as long as there is a flame still burning, it can spread. Indeed, Marques de Morais is not so lonely any more. New voices are following his example. Young rappers, bloggers, and activists of all kinds are standing up and joining the fray, carving out more political space, demanding change. Likewise, the political opposition in Angola has also survived. It was weak, but it may be growing stronger. It has been able to move around the country, to campaign in elections, to maintain offices, to participate in government. The political playing ground is far from free and fair. But the opposition has not been extinguished. By the same token, civil society has survived, and information space has grown. This is not to acknowledge the benevolence of the government, which surely would have preferred a more authoritarian scenario. But the tenacity and struggle of independent parties, groups, and news outlets are notable.

Second, the dictators get old. They may grow weaker. They always die. Some will groom successors to protect their legacy. Change may take many years, maybe decades, but change happens, and it is important to be prepared for it. Like dos Santos, Mugabe was ousted from power by one of his

longstanding henchmen, who has now assumed the mantle of reform. In Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi died in office, but his carefully chosen successor could not hold onto power, and a reformer has emerged from within the ruling party to embark on a democratic transformation. Elsewhere in the world, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Malaysia, and Armenia also show that even the most entrenched dictators are not forever. The dissident voices must find their opportunity to move quickly, strategically, and carefully. They must have laid the foundations, identified the entry points, and understood the levers of power. But this study has found that these regimes are vulnerable, susceptible to pressure, ultimately mutable. It is never easy to govern, and there will be resistance to democratic reform, so the democrats must have support, training, money, patience, advice, discipline.

Third, it is incumbent to acknowledge the importance of solidarity. Marques de Morais's bravery, talent, and charisma won him many admirers outside of Angola as well as within. And it was this growing public support, certainly internationally, but also domestically, and even within the regime, that served to protect him. There have been assassination attempts and arduous legal battles, constant harassment and threats, but the regime had to be cautious, it could not risk international condemnation, and Marques de Morais has survived to this day. The general fecklessness of the international community, greedy for a share in the oil wealth that the regime has so liberally deployed to consolidate its rule and enrich its friends, is deplorable. But not everyone was on the take, not everyone could be silenced. Governments could be shamed, news media could spread the word, and judicial systems could be forced to rule freely and justly.

Kleptocrats and dictators have become skilled at buying collaborators, silencing critics, and deceiving the people. Some of them have even been successful in generating security and economic development. Democrats have often failed. But freedom is not just a competing political system. It has intrinsic value. Some human beings will always rebel, preferring freedom over tyranny. Even if change starts out with just a small band of true believers such as Marques de Morais, as shown throughout this study, a peaceful, nonviolent, democratic path to freedom is possible. It takes courage, creativity, and sacrifice, but it is possible.

Republic of Congo (Brazzaville)

Congo-Brazzaville was the home of the communist-leaning African countries during the Cold War. It also provided General Charles de Gaulle shelter during the German occupation of France. The country once modeled itself as a communist dictatorship, but its neocolonial relationship with France mitigated its purity. Like Angola, the country has dropped most of its ideological pretensions, practically if not rhetorically. In fact, for a few

years, it could claim to be a leader of the democratic wave in Africa, holding one of the first sovereign national conferences in 1991 as well as a series of democratic, but ultimately flawed, elections. However, since the return of the former dictator, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, after a civil war that culminated in democratic elections in 2002, political space has steadily diminished. The ruling Congolese Workers Party has taken a controlling 117 out of 139 seats in the Parliament, and regime loyalists have succeeded in changing the constitution to allow the president to run for a third term. Similar to the situation in Equatorial Guinea and Angola, the Congolese state is essentially controlled by the Sassou-Nguesso family, in sultanistic fashion, almost entirely on the basis of oil revenues.

The Republic of Congo is yet another example of a country emulating, at least in some respects, the totalitarian example. Sassou-Nguesso's effort to change the constitution to end term limits bears comparison with Kagame's gambit to do the same. Likewise, the Congolese government's measures to shut down the internet during the 2016 national elections, its military campaign to crush the opposition, its repression and co-optation of the press and civil society, and its international image laundering all imply lessons learned or shared with totalitarian governments. Yet the government of Congo-Brazzaville does not qualify as totalitarian, a finding that must once again be attributed to the abandonment of ideology or a mass movement, as well as the persistence of some political opposition, civil society, and independent press.

Chad

Chad, which scored 7-6 by Freedom House in 2017, declining from the 6-5 it had maintained until 2006, now resembles an old-school African military dictatorship. It has not had a democratic alternation of power since independence. The current president, Idriss Déby, overthrew his predecessor, the notorious dictator Hissène Habrè, in 1990 and rules the country to this day. Term limits were removed in 2005, and presidential and legislative elections held in 1996, 1997, 2001, 2002, and 2011 were all marred by either fraud or opposition boycotts. Although the EU endorsed the 2011 elections, the opposition protested the government's use of state resources and media during the campaign as well as irregularities with the electoral commission. The ruling Patriotic Salvation Movement won 117 seats in the National Assembly, and its allies won another 14 out of 188. The largest opposition party won just 10 seats. A political opposition is active, but weak, therefore. Private radio and newspapers exist, but they are subject to restrictions. Likewise, civil society groups, including human rights organizations, are active and can be critical of the government, but authorities sometimes harass them, and they are circumspect.

Here again, although weak, media and civil society preserve some autonomy from the state. Human rights abuses, especially in the prisons, are common. Corruption and insecurity plague the country. The government sometimes imprisons political opponents, the military clearly dominates the country, and a privileged elite controls the economy, but the Chadian regime has not conflated society into a totalitarian, monistic system. Similar to the way next-door Sudan was before the separation of the South, the population of Chad is slightly more than half Muslim with the remainder largely Christian. The government is dominated by the Zaghawa ethnic group, which is predominantly Muslim. Nevertheless, unlike Sudan, Chad is a secular state, and political Islam does not play a strong ideological role in its functioning. Nor does the government attempt to mobilize the population around ideological goals. Thus, as repressive as it may be, Chad is not a totalitarian state.[25] Its reliance on oil and its kleptocratic governance, as well as the lack of democracy, the nepotistic and narrow ethnic basis of the ruling class, the dominance of the security forces, and the repressive policies of the state, all qualify it as a sultanistic electoral dictatorship.

Cameroon

The Cameroonian electoral dictatorship, scoring a 6-6 from Freedom House, has been led since 1982 by President Paul Biya, who was 86 in 2018 when he announced that he was running for yet another term in office. Cameroon might thus be described as not only a dictatorship but a gerontocracy. The political elite, including the opposition and Biya's likely successors from within his own party, is overwhelmingly dominated by men 70 and older. Although oil, patronage, and corruption are intrinsic to the regime, the nepotistic networks characteristic of sultanistic regimes are not as pronounced, perhaps because of its larger size and greater diversity. Attacks by Boko Haram have enabled the government to declare a terrorist threat, not only distracting the population from the country's many governance problems, but also serving as a means to clamp down on opposition. Unrest in the anglophone region of the country has led the government to shut down the internet to put a lid on the protests, and an array of restrictive laws have steadily eroded political space. There is no ideology or mass movement, however, and although the political opposition, civil society, and the media are weak and constrained, the country exhibits enough pluralism for it not to be considered totalitarian.

Gabon

Gabon is yet another sultanistic dictatorship. The ruler's son, Ali Bongo, inherited the throne from his father, Omar, in 2009. By some accounts, Ali

lost elections in 2016 to his challenger, former AU Commission chair Jean Ping, but managed to hold on to power anyway, shutting down the internet as riots engulfed the capital, Libreville. Oil is the basis of the economy and of Ali's ability to distribute patronage. Ali has allowed some political reforms, reducing the size of the Cabinet and taking some measures against corruption; nonetheless, Freedom House gave the country a 6-5 in 2016, just like Congo-Brazzaville. No ideology or mass movement is evident, and the country enjoys sufficient pluralism so that it need not be labeled totalitarian.

Swaziland

As Africa's last monarchy, one that is not particularly constitutional and certainly not benign, Swaziland is neither a totalitarian nor a sultanistic system because its legitimacy is based on tradition, not simply personal power. It is nonetheless tyrannical. King Mswati and his family firmly control the country and have kept civil society and the political opposition down. Unlike most of the sultanistic regimes, the king has no petrol largesse to bankroll his extravagant lifestyle and co-opt his opponents. Tradition suffices. Freedom House ranked Swaziland a 7-5 in 2016. As a small country dominated by neighboring South Africa, its ability to resist outside, democratic influences from the media, trade unions, and civil society is limited. Although loyalty to the monarchy functions as a kind of ideology, and much of the royal pageantry resembles a mass movement, this is stretching the definition.

Gambia

Yahya Jammeh could have been typecast as the stereotypical tin-pot tyrant. In the same vein as Nguema, Bokassa, and Amin, the Gambian dictator has espoused kooky ideas, such as herbal cures for HIV/AIDS, even as he has brutally murdered and suppressed his opposition. Gambia did not quite conform to the sultanistic systems of Equatorial Guinea, Angola, Chad, and Congo-Brazzaville, however, largely due to the country's dependence on tourism revenue rather than oil or some other natural resource, as well as the absence of nepotistic networks. Nor was it totalitarian, since ideology and mass movements have not been apparent, and pockets of social autonomy such as a political opposition and civil society, although limited, still existed. Freedom House scored Gambia as a 6-6 "not free" country in 2016. The US State Department reports and those from the international human rights watchdogs have been harsh in their condemnation of the government's repression of political opponents, civil society, and the press.

That all changed when, surprisingly, an over-confident Jammeh was defeated by his opponent, Adama Barrow, in elections held on December 1, 2016. Initially, Jammeh conceded, but after opposition figures proposed

that he should be prosecuted for the crimes he had committed while in office, he changed his mind, challenging the election results. Intense pressure from the international community, especially the Economic Community of West African States and Senegal, which surrounds Gambia, as well as domestic pressure and defections from his own regime, compelled him to give up the fight. He boarded a flight to Equatorial Guinea on January 21, 2017, carrying $11 million from the country's treasury and taking a fleet of luxury cars with him, according to the new government. He was welcomed by Obiang, who reportedly gave him one of his presidential palaces to stay in as well as a new farm.[26] Barrow's government thus started out broke and faces many challenges, but international enthusiasm for a rare democratic triumph has generated considerable support for the transition. Assuming the new government goes forward with democratic reforms as it has committed to do, Gambia may soon depart the "not free" camp.

Somalia

The transitional federal government of Somalia is far more interested in corrupt rents from the international community and clan identity than in any ideological considerations or mass movements. The extreme Islamist ideology of al-Shabaab, which controls large parts of Somalia, is nevertheless in contention with the more moderate Sufi version of Islam practiced by the majority of Somalis. Fundamentalist Salafism is also gaining adherents due to years of proselytism from the Gulf states. Otherwise, there are no traces of monism or any other features of the Somali state that could be deemed totalitarian. Somalia's dismal Freedom House score, 7-7, reflects the weakness of the Somali state and its inability to stem the violence, corruption, and anarchy that have engulfed the nation since the fall of Siad Barre in 1991. Indeed, the level of corruption attributed to the succession of Somali governments propped up by the international community, including troops from Ethiopia and Burundi, indicate a kleptocratic style of governance. Yet Somalia could not be considered sultanistic, because no single individual or family maintains control. Various clans and subclans vie for power, along with al Shabaab. Somalia thus represents a third variety of "not free" states, neither sultanistic nor totalitarian, but rather a failed state slowly emerging from anarchy, most comparable to South Sudan, the Central African Republic, or the eastern DRC.

Notes

1. John R. Heilbrunn, "Equatorial Guinea and Togo: What Price Repression?" in *Worst of the Worst: Dealing with Repressive and Rogue Nations,* ed. Robert I. Rotberg (Cambridge, MA: World Peace Foundation, 2007), 223–246.

2. Juan Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 151.

3. Ibid., 152–154.

4. US Department of State Bureau of Democracy, "Human Rights and Labor, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015, Equatorial Guinea," http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm.

5. Convergence for Social Democracy of Equatorial Guinea, National Executive Committee, Press Release, Malabo, April 28, 2016. www.cpds-ge.org.

6. Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2013: Equatorial Guinea," https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2013/equatorial-guinea.

7. EGJustice, "Human Rights Annual Report of Equatorial Guinea 2015," www.egjustice.org.

8. Samuel Decalo, "African Personal Dictatorships," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 23, no. 2 (June 1985), 221, 227.

9. EGJustice, "Violence and Retaliation Against Political Opposition," *Press Release,* tutu@egjustice.org.

10. Wenceslao Mansogo, in discussion with the author, Malabo, July 2012.

11. Discussion with the author, Bata, July 2012.

12. Jean-François Revel, *Democracy Against Itself: The Future of the Democratic Impulse* (New York: Free Press, 1993), 225–254.

13. African Union/Economic Commission for Africa, *Illicit Financial Flows: Report of the High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa* http://repository.uneca.org/bitstream/handle/10855/22695/b11524868.pdf?sequence=3.

14. Tom Burgis, *The Looting Machine: Warlords, Tycoons, Smugglers and the Systematic Theft of Africa's Wealth* (London: William Collins, 2015).

15. The Enough Project. Among many, see for example, *Sudan's Deep State: How Insiders Violently Privatized Sudan's Wealth, and How to Respond,* April 2017. https://enoughproject.org/content/reports.

16. Nicholas Shaxson. *Poisoned Wells: The Dirty Politics of African Oil* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

17. Tony Hodges, *Angola from Afro-Stalinism to Petro-Diamond Capitalism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 46.

18. Ibid., 47.

19. Ibid., 171.

20. Quaresma D. dos Santos, "Luanda Book Club Dissidents Convicted," MakaAngola, March 29, 2016, https://www.makaangola.org/2016/03.

21. Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2016: Angola Country Report," https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/angola.

22. US Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015: Angola* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2015).

23. Gustavo Plácido dos Santos, "Russia's 'Charm Offensive' in Africa: The Case of Angola—Analysis," *Eurasia Review,* October 19, 2015, https://www.eurasiareview.com/19102015-russias-charm-offensive-in-the-africa-the-case-of-angola-analysis/.

24. Rafael Marques de Morais, "From Being Bullied to a Dictator's Nightmare," MakaAngola, March 9, 2016, https://www.makaangola.org/category/articles/democracy/.

25. Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2016: Chad." https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/chad.

26. Colin Freeman, "Gambia's Ousted Dictator Is Living the Good Life in a Palace in Equatorial Guinea," *Foreign Policy,* https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/04/03/gambias-ousted-dictator-is-living-the-good-life-in-a-palace-in-equatorial-guinea/.

9

The Future of
Totalitarianism in Africa

The three modern African candidates this study has identified for totalitarian designation differ from the classical cases of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia in several notable respects. All three have promoted an ideology, but the chiliastic pretensions, strident anti-Semitism, class warfare, and aspiration for world domination that fascism and communism were known for are absent. The doctrines of revolutionary democracy, authoritarian development, and national sovereignty provide some structure to policy and popular mobilization, but they seldom approach the religious fervor stirred up by Joseph Stalin and Adolf Hitler. These countries do not seek global conquest. Only the Islamist movement in Sudan demonstrated both chiliastic and expansionist tendencies, as well as monistic and mass mobilization ambitions, but its inability to combine religion and the secular demands of government in a sustainable way or to overcome the resistance of political opposition and civil society ultimately exhausted the experiment.

Nevertheless, intriguing similarities remain between Africa's postmodern totalitarian states and the earlier European exemplars. All three African states have, for example, engaged in extraterritorial, even imperialistic, adventures. Eritrea has fought Ethiopia over boundary issues and meddled in Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and Djibouti in barely a quarter century of independence. Ethiopia's more ancient imperial expansion during the monarchy, incorporating scores of national groups, and its invasion of Somalia and peacekeeping role in Sudan in recent times hint at some hegemonic inclinations. Rwanda's invasion and virtual conquest by proxy of the neighboring DRC have been construed as an indication of imperial designs, perhaps even an effort to find some "lebensraum" for Rwandaphones from the

densely populated Rwandan heartland. Although the expansionist drive of totalitarian systems is emphasized by Hannah Arendt, it is not a necessary condition for totalitarianism. China under Mao Zedong and the North Korean regime are more notable for their "socialism in one state" policy, as was the isolated totalitarian regime of Albania under Nicolae Ceausescu, once an inspiration for Meles Zenawi. The "hermit kingdom" is an appellation equally befitting North Korea and Eritrea, demonstrating that such unquestionably totalitarian states need not aspire for world domination. Still, the fight against external enemies has provided a convenient means for the state to mobilize support.

Likewise, anti-Semitism is not especially salient in Africa, but the manipulation of nationalism and ethnicity is apparent in all of these regimes, although in contrasting ways. Eritrea was the first country in Africa to abandon the sacrosanct boundaries established under colonialism to declare its independence from Ethiopia. Eritrean nationalism and antagonism toward Ethiopia and much of the rest of the world are a unifying and legitimizing basis for the regime and its repressive policies. Mengistu Haile Mariam allowed the flight of the Falasha Jews to Israel, but the small community that remain in Ethiopia have not been a target of the government. Ethiopia's federal system is unique in Africa due to the ethnic basis of each of its provinces. Its recognized political parties, as well, are established along ethnic lines, although they all have been tightly controlled by the EPRDF, which had been dominated by the ethnic-Tigrayan TPLF. Ethnic identity remains strong in Ethiopia, as the Oromo, Somali, and Amharic uprisings show.

Taking the opposite approach, but for the same ends, the Rwandan government, which is dominated by the anglophone faction of the Tutsi minority, has relentlessly suppressed any expression of ethnicity, resorting to euphemisms instead—for example, "autochthone" for Batwa, "génocidaires and their families" for Hutu, and "survivors" for Tutsi. Discussion of ethnic differences in Rwanda can lead to charges of "divisionism" and "promoting genocidal ideology." Paul Kagame has allied Rwanda, especially the beleaguered Tutsi, with Israel and its struggle against genocide and hostile neighbors. As one critic stated, "Despite Kagame's totalitarian regime being infamous for horrendous human rights abuses inside the country and in DR Congo, Rwanda is now a member of the UN Human Rights Council. Rwanda has signaled that it will use its seat to defend its friend, the colonial state of Israel."[1] This study has also highlighted ethnic and racial discrimination and conflict in the cases of Sudan and Zimbabwe.

Of course, ethnicity pervades politics throughout Africa, sometimes, although not always, in harmful ways. Demagogues have been successful in mobilizing supporters around ethnicity even in democratic regimes. That ethnicity has been used by Africa's totalitarian systems for ideological

purposes comes as no surprise. The initial democratic experience of Burundi, a country that neighbors Rwanda and has similar demographics, obviated the ethnic conflict between Hutu and Tutsi, relocating political contestation among the Hutu.[2] It inspired hope that African politics could transcend ethnicity, but the experiment is now faltering.[3]

Although it bears further study, the emergence of a totalitarian government in Rwanda in the aftermath of genocide would not seem to be coincidental. The genocidal campaign carried out by the RPF in neighboring DRC, or Zaire, as it was known when the campaign began, cannot be coincidental either. The vicious fury unleashed in these bloodbaths both planted the seeds for a totalitarian system and served to reinforce the system after it had been established. Many of the 20th century's other great genocides can be linked to the establishment and consolidation of a totalitarian regime, such as Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, Stalin's massive purges, Mao's Cultural Revolution, and Hitler's gas chambers. The intense suffering Eritrea endured during its long wars of liberation, the Red Terror of Ethiopia, the Gukurahundi massacres in Zimbabwe, the civil war in South Sudan and the slaughter in Darfur, and the terror inflicted by Francisco Macías Nguema on Equatorial Guinea all shaped the regimes that emerged from them or perpetrated them. Some acquired distinctly totalitarian systems, others only certain aspects. Many other African countries have endured traumatic wars that included genocidal features, especially ethnic conflict, such as the Biafran war in Nigeria, the civil wars of Liberia and Sierra Leone, as well as the civil wars of Angola and Mozambique. Although these countries still suffer the consequences of these conflicts, they have not become totalitarian. Thus, genocide also qualifies as a phenomenon that is often linked to African totalitarian systems but is not exclusive to them.

Another intriguing commonality among the regimes is the use and control of information technology. This characterizes the postmodern manifestation of the totalitarian temptation that has spread to many other countries across the continent and the globe. While Africa's technological underdevelopment has been used to explain the inability of totalitarianism to take hold in Africa, the innovations accompanying the rapid spread of information technology have enabled much of the continent to leapfrog the anachronistic infrastructure that has been in place. Angola, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, and Zambia have all moved to restrict social media and impose greater control over NGOs. Cameroon, Gabon, DRC, and Congo-Brazzaville have shut down social media during contentious elections. Eritrea has cut off nearly all outside communications. Ethiopia was the first African government to assert control over the internet and filter email traffic. By contrast, Rwanda has promoted itself as a new hub of information technology in Africa, cultivating international investment, but

at the same time it has tightly controlled the press and communications. As has proved to be the case around the world, communications technology has the power to control African populations, just as much as social media has played a democratizing role. Revelations about the efforts of firms such as Cambridge Analytica in elections in Kenya, Ghana, and South Africa show that Africa is not just vulnerable to the same technological dangers that the rest of the world is, but it has been a testing ground, analogous to the European experiments in genocide in Namibia and Congo at the turn of the 20th century noted by Arendt. Advanced information technology is now abundant in Africa. Zimbabwe, for example, has imported facial recognition technology from China. The bureaucratic apparatus considered essential to totalitarianism has certainly been erected in the totalitarian countries identified here, but its power has been compounded by communications technology.

Although Eritrea, Ethiopia (prior to 2018), and Rwanda appear to be the only African regimes that fully qualify as totalitarian, both their economic and their political success have inspired imitation by some other African governments and have drawn praise from some African and Western intellectuals. The success of the totalitarian regimes, however conditional or fragile it may be, is one of the strongest reasons for their appeal, at least to fellow Africans and to Western sympathizers. Andrew Mwenda, a prominent Ugandan analyst, contends that "as Africa has democratized, the ability of its states to deliver public goods and services to citizens has not improved significantly. In fact, in some cases it has remained stagnant or even declined. This is partly because the poor participate in politics occasionally during elections. Elites who participate continually in the political process using the mass media, civil society and political parties effectively use such platforms to promote their own interests." His critique concludes, "Post genocide Rwanda has significantly restricted political contestation yet equally promoted genuine political participation. Consequently, the delivery of public goods and services is more than in any postcolonial African country I know."[4] Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair has praised both Ethiopia and Rwanda. Although aware of criticisms against Kagame, he has said, "My judgment overall is that if you look at what Paul Kagame has done for Rwanda and for Rwandans, it is a pretty impressive achievement."[5] An article in *Foreign Policy* magazine entitled "The Cleanest Place in Africa" recently echoed this sentiment, with its subtitle announcing, "Once synonymous with genocide, Rwanda is now a budding police state. It's also a stunning African success story."[6]

The Rwanda model is ubiquitous, some of it government-sponsored. A study in *The Lancet* declared that Rwanda "serves as a model for other nations committed to health equity," because "investment in health has stimulated shared economic growth as citizens live longer and with greater

capacity to pursue lives they value." The lesson for Rwanda and countries around the world, that study concluded, is that "a nation's most precious resource is its people."[7] An op-ed in the *Christian Science Monitor* argues that "Kagame has led the country through what may be the most significant example of human development of the past 20 years. That is a triumph no critic can ignore or take away from the people of Rwanda, and it should stand as a model for other nations seeking progress and reconciliation."[8] The *Nyasa Times* of Malawi recently complained, "It will take a miracle to transform Malawi to the level of Rwanda."[9] Another Malawian article gives "ten lessons from Rwanda," contrasting the poor performance of Malawi versus the success of Rwanda regarding donor dependency, promotion of tourism, extractive industries, traditional leadership, infrastructure development, safety, open debate, growth, and shelter.[10] The *New Times of Rwanda* quotes Colonel Timothy Rainey, director of the US Army's Africa Contingency Operations and Training Assistance program, praising the Rwanda Defence Force as one of the most professional defense forces in Africa for its role in peacekeeping missions and "a very good partner with USA in the interest of regional security." A Kenyan observer proposed that Rwanda's most important lessons "are in the realm of servant leadership, discipline and transparency in public governance, taming corruption, promoting citizen participation and putting people first, and a relentless focus on results." He acknowledged the accusations of authoritarian rule but dismissed these due to the advances the country has made in health, governance, and security, which he attributed to "a pervasive police presence, both covert and visible, and to a tightly controlled social fabric which, right down to the village or district level, encourages the observance of the law."[11] And even if one ends up in prison, not to worry; a report by the *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies* has rated Rwanda the sixth country globally and the third best in Africa for rehabilitation programs, following Uganda and Zambia.

One can readily see and feel the dilemma presented by the totalitarian temptation. The drive from Kigali up to Gisenyi and the border with the DRC is one of the most pleasant in Africa. When one leaves the gleaming new glass skyscrapers of Kigali, drives along the well-paved road with shiny new traffic signs and with all the motorbikers wearing helmets, passes through the clean and tidy villages, views the farmers toiling serenely in the neat and verdant fields that blanket the mountains, Rwanda exudes peace, stability, prosperity, and order. Crossing the border into Goma, DRC, one is struck by the appalling disrepair of the road, the urban squalor and chaos, the crowds of internally displaced Congolese seeking refuge in the city, the fear of marauding militias in the countryside, the crumbling infrastructure, the political disarray. The abrupt contrast jolts the mind and body. The Rwandan government boasts of the progress it has made in fighting corruption,

while its neighbors, the DRC, Burundi, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, are all still rife with corruption. Addis Ababa and many other parts of Ethiopia also show clear signs of development and prosperity, as the country has rebuilt from the final dark years of the Derg. The Chinese have been most helpful in constructing wonderful new roads around the capital and elsewhere and are developing industrial zones providing jobs. A light rail system bustles with passengers, and industries such as flowers and tourism seem to be taking off, with annual growth rates of more than 10 percent. World Bank statistics may not fully convey the extent of problems such as growing inequality. Ethiopia still depends on huge amounts of foreign aid simply to feed a large percentage of its population, and the debt burden may be difficult to sustain; but compared to other countries in the region and compared to the ruinous state of both Rwanda and Ethiopia just 15 or 20 years ago, the progress is undeniable.

As the entry to Goma shows, African borders tend to be arbitrary and porous, and traders and refugees have flowed back and forth across the border over the years to make money or escape war. National identity is thus contingent, and citizens can sometimes make choices. The DRC can scarcely be described as democratic; Freedom House's ratings put it at about the same level as Rwanda, 6-6. The corruption and poor governance in the DRC are as bad as it gets in Africa. Violence and insecurity consume the eastern DRC, and the poverty and human development indicators for the country are the worst in the world. But Congolese have long preferred Congo to their neighbor. Of course, nationalist pride and ethnic prejudice might contribute to this sentiment, the citizenship rights of Congolese of Rwandan origin have long been contested, and the Rwandan role in bringing Laurent Kabila to power has brewed distrust. Yet many Congolese will say they consider themselves freer than their Rwandan neighbors. Indeed, in the DRC there are none of the whispered conversations or clandestine rendezvous that characterize Rwanda. As in Sudan, Congolese freely denounce their president with impunity. Civil society flourishes, independent and vibrant. Political parties compete aggressively despite the fraud of the 2011 and 2018 national elections. The Congolese media can be fearless.

And yet, the totalitarian temptation lurks in the DRC as much as anywhere else. As in Sudan and Zimbabwe, amid the chaos, there is an ability to control and to profit. Patrick Chabal and William Reno have shown how African despots and warlords such as Charles Taylor in Liberia and Foday Sankoh in Sierra Leone were able to instrumentalize violence and chaos to assert political power and reap resources in West Africa.[12] This is no less true in the DRC. Following in Mobutu Sese Seko's footsteps, Joseph Kabila has established a kleptocracy at least as rapacious, but more violent and chaotic, than what he inherited. In eastern Congo, the constant instability and bloodshed perpetrated by scores of competing militias have left

the population terrorized, prevented any single competitor from becoming ascendant, and enabled the well connected to drain the abundant natural resources from the land. Taking his cue from Kagame and Denis Sassou-Nguesso, President Kabila has attempted to alter the constitution to end term limits. Although he was unsuccessful in doing so, through the policy of "glissement," sliding or delaying, he has proved successful in extending his stay in power. As public discontent grows, Kabila has imprisoned his political opposition and sought to rein in civil society, most notably the nonviolent youth movements such as Lucha and Filimbi. His government has restricted and periodically closed down the internet to stifle the flow of information at decisive moments. There is no utopian ideology, no mass movement, no all-encompassing single-party hegemony in the DRC; there is too much civil society, too much political opposition, too much debate. The DRC is thus far from being totalitarian. But just as Rwanda emerged from the chaos of genocide and civil war, one speculates whether the DRC, which suffered the worst genocide since World War II with an esti-mated five million dead, might also benefit from a ruthless dictator able to take advantage of all the trauma and chaos to impose a completely new, totalitarian order. Kabila could not do it; his main concern has been siphoning the resources of the state, he owes his survival to too many com-peting interests, his government is too weak. But as his father, Laurent, proved, a small army of equipped and motivated fighters can bring the entire edifice crashing down. Amid the uncertainty that currently hangs over the country, any scenario is possible.

Burundi offers an even more cautionary tale. A compelling contrast to Rwanda, it provides a kind of scientific control experiment with similar demographics, geography, resources, and, to some extent, history. Burundi has experienced genocidal violence between the Hutu majority and the Tutsi elite. Burundi has serious political and economic problems, rampant corruption, violence, and poverty. Like Ethiopia before 2005, Burundi once seemed to be on a democratic trajectory. But since the country's 2015 elections, President Nkurunziza has governed with an increasingly author-itarian style, successfully extending his mandate despite the constitution, opposition protests, and an attempted coup. He is emulating Kagame, for whom he has expressed admiration, despite political (and ethnic) differ-ences. In conversations I had with Burundian intellectuals a few years ago, like their neighbors in the DRC, they said they would not trade places with their Rwandan cousins. They knew how repressive the system to the north is and took pride in their relative freedom. Political parties, civil society, and the media were all free and autonomous in Burundi. As already noted, the ethnic divisions in Burundi are openly debated, and studies have indicated that, as a result, ethnicity has declined as a source of conflict. Political competition was occurring within the Hutu majority,

which controls the government, but Hutu factions sought to win over the Tutsi minority. As one Burundian analyst jokingly observed, unlike in Rwanda, Burundi's Hutu government does not have to worry about its legitimacy and can govern as poorly as it likes.[13]

Unfortunately, since Nkurunziza began his third term, thousands of Burundians, including many political opponents and civil society activists, have had to flee the country. Many, including those who had once disdained Rwanda, have found shelter there. Nkurunziza has resurrected the demons of ethnic division and labeled his opponents terrorists. Even though the economy continues to decline and insecurity persists with extrajudicial killings, disappearances, and torture day after day, the majority of the population can retreat to their small farms and survive, isolated from the troubles of the capital, Bujumbura. Nkurunziza's grip on power has become stronger, and the democratic promise Burundi once held has almost vanished. A country that Freedom house scored "partly free" in 2013 dropped to a 6-7 in 2015, worse than Rwanda. Indeed, despite loud international appeals, the ease with which Nkurunziza has decimated what was once a vibrant opposition, civil society, and independent media demonstrates how quickly freedom can evaporate. A key difference between Rwanda and Burundi is that the RPF defeated its predecessor, giving it a clean slate to form an entirely new government, remove the old bureaucracy, and impose a radically new ideology and political culture. The same can be said for Ethiopia and Eritrea. In Burundi, however, the government has not changed since its ascension to power in democratic elections in 2005, and it has preserved the baggage it inherited of severe corruption and political dysfunction. Burundi may copy many of the repressive characteristics of Rwanda, but the country will not be able to wipe out corruption and the bureaucratic apparatus that enables it or end the cycle of violence that has revived, let alone concoct an ideology or build a totalitarian regime, without a total break from the past.

Africa's totalitarian temptation is evolving, just as the global political context is. Tanzania is becoming the newest poster child for a kind of postmodern authoritarianism that is pursuing monistic control by squeezing opposition political parties, civil society, and the media, especially social media. President John Magufuli, elected in 2015, is a product of the long-ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi party, and his nostalgia for the days of the one-party state is understandable, but he has not reproduced the ideology or mass movement that Julius Nyerere once espoused in the Arusha Declaration.[14] Amendments to Tanzania's Political Parties Act will make it harder for opposition parties to campaign, raise money, and register, leading one opposition MP, Zitto Kabwe, to compare the act to Hitler's 1933 Enabling Act, which allowed him to rule by decree.[15] The government has passed repressive legislation, including a Media Services Act, a Cybercrimes Act, and a Statistics

Act, as well as more burdensome requirements for NGOs. Mysterious killings of journalists and political figures, including an assassination attempt against Tundu Lissu, an opposition MP and president of the Tanganyika Law Society, intensified a culture of silence in the country.[16] As one activist described it to me, Tanzanians are psychologically passive-aggressive. They do not like conflict. Rather than speaking up and getting hurt, they withdraw, much as Goran Hyden described.[17] They will sit down on a small stone, a *kijiweni* which also translates as "a hangout," and talk until they understand what is going on, a practice Nyerere popularized. Social media has become Tanzania's modern *kijiweni*. Magufuli's temperament is not like that of most Tanzanians, however. He holds grudges and does not keep his conversation civil.[18] Magufuli's popular support has surged and declined since he came into office, and even his fellow party leaders fear him, but his reputation has spread across Africa as "The Bulldozer," fighting corruption and ready to push aside all who oppose him. He epitomizes the new template of repression copied in Zambia, Malawi, and other formerly democratic countries. As distressing as this trend is, it cannot be labeled as totalitarian, however. The ideological and mobilizational content is negligible. Nevertheless, the struggle for control over both communications and the political terrain does function in a similar way, imposing a common narrative, mind-set, and behavior, and eliminating alternatives.

Both Meles and Kagame have cited Singapore as their model, a model more benign than Stalinist Russia or even modern China. Singapore's stable, authoritarian, and notoriously tidy system might provide some superficial inspiration for the efforts of the two dictators, but the agrarian economies in the African states and the many social differences with the Asian city-state raise skepticism. Singapore's political and economic experience suggests that the governments of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Rwanda have little in common with it. In contrast to the erosion of political space in Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Rwanda, Singapore has gradually liberalized political space in recent years, going "from being simply an authoritarian regime to being a competitive authoritarian regime." Opposition political parties are gaining significant support in Singapore, and an alternation in control of the government is a real possibility.[19] South Korea and Taiwan have managed to evolve from authoritarian developmental states into still-prosperous democratic states. Ethiopia had not seemed likely to follow such a course, but Abiy Ahmed has changed all the calculations. Rwanda has yet to hint at such democratic reform, but as it advances toward middle income status, pressures will grow. Erstwhile democratic regimes such as Zambia and Tanzania are thus evolving in undemocratic directions while the bastions of totalitarianism espouse a democratic evolution. Sudan and Zimbabwe are consumed by the pathologies of military rule and economic collapse, not evolving in a particular direction so much as desperately groping for a way out.

The most significant respect in which the three African governments do not compare to the earlier iterations of totalitarianism is their attitude toward the West. They may align themselves with the Chinese sometimes, but this is no deterrent to the support the regimes receive from the West. Whereas Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Stalinist Russia were all usually hostile to the democratic West, and North Korea and Cuba continue to be, Ethiopia and Rwanda, at least, have forged intimate relationships with the West, especially Britain and the United States. Rwanda and Ethiopia pose no threat to the interests of Europe or the United States; in fact, they have assumed a strategic role in the effort against terrorists such as al-Qaeda and in promoting stability in their respective subregions. Sudan and Zimbabwe have had less amicable relations with the West, but this is not for lack of trying, at least occasionally. Although China is investing heavily in Africa, including Ethiopia and Rwanda, scholars have found that the ideological influence is difficult to trace, if it exists at all.[20] This is changing, however. The same goes for Russia's influence. Political support for the African totalitarian systems, such as China's provision of electronic equipment to jam independent television transmissions in Ethiopia and Russia's military sales to Angola, is no more egregious than the security and commercial assistance provided by the West. America's growing military presence in Africa has required cooperation with an expanding array of "not free" states, including Chad, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Rwanda. America's interest in oil from Equatorial Guinea and Angola has attenuated its criticisms of those regimes, even if companies invoke ethical standards more than the Chinese. Hemedti received advice from the Russians on how to repress Sudan's protesters, $3 billion from the Saudis and the Emiratis to support the TMC, and signed a $5 million contract with a Canadian firm for a public relations consultancy on which he later reneged.

Human Rights Watch documented this dilemma in its report *Development Without Freedom*. Acknowledging Western strategic interests and the importance of humanitarian aid, the report concluded that "by accepting the EPRDF's misuse of development assistance for partisan political purposes, donor countries are contributing to the oppression of Ethiopia's vulnerable populations."[21] Although mounting Western criticism of Rwanda has stymied the government's inclusion among the Millennium Challenge Corporation's recipients of American largesse, Rwanda still receives approximately half of its budget from foreign donors. By contrast, Eritrea has rejected most foreign donor assistance, although this stance is changing. Sudan and Zimbabwe are on the verge of economic collapse and eager to get financial help from wherever they can, even with strings attached. Equatorial Guinea is too rich for foreign assistance but does depend on access to the international banking system. As for the many other African governments that have been slouching toward dictatorship, their support for doing

so comes at least as much from the West as it does from the Chinese, especially when the transnational private sector is factored in, such as the extractive resources industries, the corruption enablers, and the arms merchants.

The China model has surfaced throughout this study. Citizens of Western nations are far more free than those of China and Russia, yet in the estimation of many Africans, there is less and less to differentiate the Western nations from China and Russia. An Afrobarometer survey in 2016 found that, across Africa, 30 percent of respondents considered the United States to be the best model for national development, but 24 percent considered China to be the best. China is more popular in Central Africa and less so in West Africa. China's influence was perceived to be greatest in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Sudan; and 63 percent of the survey respondents said China's influence was either somewhat or very positive, while 56 percent felt China's development assistance was doing a good job. Political considerations were not a significant factor.[22] In other words, caricatures of China's menace have failed to sully its reputation on the continent.

Instead, the China model has only grown in its allure, as was argued in a *New York Times* op-ed by Zhang Weiwei, director of the Center for China Development Model Research at Fudan University, more than a decade ago. Crediting Deng Xiaoping as the architect of China's reform model, Zhang cited China's emphasis on nondogmatic, gradual reform and tangible benefits; experimentation; selective learning, even from the American neoliberal model; and sequencing and prioritization with the easy and rural first and the difficult and urban second, as essential to the Chinese model. The developmental state is key. According to Zhang, "China's change has been led by a strong and pro-development state that is capable of shaping national consensus on modernization and ensuring overall political and macroeconomic stability in which to pursue wide-ranging domestic reforms." Zhang contended that the Chinese model had performed better in helping the poor than the American structural adjustment model, which he said is "ideologically driven, with a focus on mass democratization," imposing liberalization without safety nets, privatization without regulation, and democratization before establishment of a culture of political tolerance and rule of law. Poverty causes conflict and extremism, which not liberal democracy but only good governance can address. China, he claimed, is viewed by others as modest, while America is viewed as arrogant. "China leads by example; America, by lectures and sanctions, if not missiles."[23]

The reelection by the Communist Party of Xi Jinping as Chinese premier may herald a more authoritarian politics in China, as a crackdown on dissidents and a tightening of controls over social media accelerate there. This could make the Chinese model less benevolent in the near future. But the Chinese model as articulated by Zhang bears no hint of totalitarian

ideology, mass movement, or even necessarily monism. Meanwhile, Chinese investment continues to soar in Africa, with China surpassing the United States in 2009 as Africa's number-one trading partner. From 2000 to 2015, China loaned $94 billion to African governments and state-owned enterprises. In Addis Ababa, China built the new $475 million light railway system and the $200 million AU headquarters. It has completed a railway across Sudan, South Sudan, and Kenya for $3.8 billion.[24] More concerning, Chinese companies are investing in African telecommunications, especially digital television, which strengthens state control of the media, as well as providing equipment to monitor mobile technology, as the Chinese telecom company, ZTE, has done in Ethiopia.[25] In Tanzania, for example, at a media roundtable with the Cyberspace Administration of China, Tanzania's deputy minister for works, transport, and communications, Edwin Ngonyani, reportedly credited the Chinese for their ability to block social media. The government, he said, must "find ways to make sure that while a person is free to say anything there are mechanisms to hold them accountable for what they say."[26]

Jeane Kirkpatrick, the former US ambassador to the UN during the Reagan administration, once proposed that a key difference between totalitarianism and authoritarianism is that the former is incapable of evolution or change, while the latter might be nudged toward democratic reform.[27] The fall of the Berlin Wall contradicts this assumption, but the greater irony is that her argument that authoritarian governments make better partners for the West has not held true in modern Africa. It is not altogether clear what the trajectories of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Rwanda might be. Sudan and Zimbabwe are now in turmoil, presenting both danger and opportunity. Although at this stage the prospects for a budding friendship with Eritrea would still appear to be remote, Ethiopia and Rwanda's relationships with the West remain good. This could present an opportunity to change course. A report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, commissioned by the US Africa Command, has warned of Rwanda's fragility: "The country's apparent stability masks deep-rooted tensions, unresolved resentments, and an authoritarian government that is unwilling to countenance criticism or open political debate."[28] At the end of his seven-year term in 2017, Kagame easily returned to power; he could use that political space to chart a new course and lay the foundations for democratic reform, or he could further consolidate the structures of totalitarian power. This study has shown that the totalitarian agenda is largely dependent on the charisma and accumulation of power by one man. Paul Kagame, Meles Zenawi, Isaias Afwerki, Omar al-Bashir, Robert Mugabe, and Teodoro Obiang, like all human beings, are mortal. Meles died young at 57; Mugabe was still going at 93. The ruthlessness of one man has not always been passed on to his successor, and the totalitarian apparatus has often proved difficult to sustain in the absence of its founder. Their regimes will leave troubling legacies, no doubt; but they will not go unchallenged.

The West's inclination to maintain the status quo is strong, however. At a Congressional hearing in 2013 on "Ethiopia After Meles: The Future of Democracy and Human Rights," J. Peter Pham of the Atlantic Council made the case for minimizing concern about democracy and human rights and for prioritizing stability and security interests. He noted Ethiopia's strategic significance in the Horn of Africa, its prominent role in international peacekeeping, its support in the global war against terrorism, and its economic progress. Compared to other countries in the region, he asserted, Ethiopia is stable; and compared to its predecessor, the Derg, it is more democratic and respectful of human rights. Recent efforts to fight corruption and tolerance of a demonstration by the new Semayawi Party on June 2, 2013, were signs that the new government might begin opening political space, he contended.

The ethnic and religious profile of Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, a minority Wolayta belonging to a small Pentecostal denomination, and his technocratic, nonmilitary background, were also cause for hope in this regard. Pham discounted the accusations of "land grabs" and concerns about Ethiopia's dam building and suggested that the government's policy toward the Muslim community complemented the views of the US Embassy. Pham's policy recommendations were reminiscent of the authoritarian apologia: The culture is different, they need more time. "First," he said, "understand that Ethiopia is an ancient country populated by proud peoples imbued with a deep sense of history and nationhood, all of which has a profound impact on current political reality." Meles's passing is a historic turning point, he acknowledged, but policy should "recognize both the opportunities within the historic moment and the delicate balance that needs to be maintained." He cautioned that the United States should focus on its national interests and be mindful of the limited leverage it has "with respect to the direction of social, economic, and political developments in Ethiopia." Pham posited that Ethiopia's application to join the World Trade Organization might provide an opportunity "to constructively engage with the country's government not only about economic liberalization, but other rule of law and governance concerns" and that the United States could support Ethiopia's higher education program by twinning US universities with Ethiopian counterparts.[29]

Pham could have been bolder, but his advice has become moot. The death of Meles and the political crisis emanating from the Oromo uprising have introduced a critical opportunity for opening in Ethiopia. The successor government of Hailemariam Desalegn had declared its dedication to the vision and policies of Meles and had signaled few departures from the system he so carefully established. As Pham observed, Hailemariam was considered a technocrat, he never fought in the civil war, and he came from a minority ethnic group in the south of Ethiopia. He presided

over a smooth transition, and the regime appeared firmly in control for a while. The Oromo rebellion was put down by the government with a state of emergency. Yet the thousands of marchers who took to the streets, just as they did after the 2005 elections, demonstrated the widespread discontent at the base and the fragility of the totalitarian edifice. The Ethiopian government had a choice—either to open up or to harden its control. It could provide some release to the pent-up frustrations of the people or seal the lid more firmly in the hopes the country would not explode again. It all came to a head in a stunning series of events in the early months of 2018. Hailemariam announced his resignation, soon followed by the release of thousands of political prisoners. Another state of emergency was imposed as the country waited in suspense while the ethnically based parties of the EPRDF deliberated in secret over who would be Hailemariam's replacement. Responding to the protests, OPDO had become more independent, and, allied with the ANDM, it outmaneuvered the long-dominant TPLF. When Abiy, a young Oromo reformist, thus emerged as the new prime minister, promising sweeping democratic reforms and asking forgiveness for past mistakes, a new era for Ethiopia dawned. As one account put it, "The EPRDF Ethiopians knew barely a year ago is no more."[30] The United States was unprepared, and now that it had a chance to help, it proved slow to respond.

Even though Western donors exert scant pressure on certain totalitarian governments—whether out of respect for the stability and economic progress they have achieved, to continue humanitarian assistance, or to maintain strategic relationships—the totalitarian regimes are vulnerable. The change will have to come from within; the international community cannot be counted on to take much action, if it is not in actual collusion. As this study has insisted, efforts by determined civil society activists, intrepid bloggers, and righteous dissidents can make a difference. Defying tyranny, sparking awareness, and eventually being joined in the streets by massive "citizen movements," they can become irresistible. In the third volume of *The Gulag Archipelago*, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn described the individual acts of heroism that challenged, and gradually led to the demise of, the Stalinist state. The Marxist political scientist Leszek Kolakowski once asserted that "the gradual dismantling of totalitarian institutions by building and enlarging the enclaves of civil society is not impossible. It is a dangerous path, no doubt, but the most promising one."[31]

Democratic activists have long understood that freedom does not come on a silver platter. It requires vision and sacrifice. If the totalitarian challenge appears less monstrous than it did 70 or 80 years ago, it is all the more sinister in its scope and power today. The prospect that ascendant political forces, not just in Africa but in Russia, China, the Middle East, Europe, and the United States, are converging to assert a 21st century

nationalist authoritarianism that bears distressing similarities to the totalitarianism of yore demands a response from the democratic liberal tradition, which it has not always been able to summon. The dissenters, those with vision and those willing to sacrifice, start out relatively few, just as the novelists and political scientists who opened this book described. They are often alone, conflicted, without resources or friends. The vast majority of the population will be content to conduct their lives as dutiful subjects, reading, hearing, and watching the propaganda; joining in the patriotic rallies; voting as the party instructs; keeping an eye out for suspicious behavior. Their economic station might improve, and they might not miss their freedom. This postmodern totalitarianism is barely noticeable. It is even comfortable, and many willingly surrender their freedom. Meanwhile, the dictators and their minions will enjoy their privilege, maintain control, amass ever greater power, and punish the dissenters.

In its absence, for some, however, freedom becomes better understood. No doubt, far from suppressing it, the decades of single-party rule in Africa have stimulated a taste for freedom, as polling suggests.[32] Perhaps the long experience of freedom and democracy has caused it to be taken for granted in the West, to no longer be well understood or appreciated. But in Africa, there is a passion for it that resists suppression. The freedom struggle is indeed often led by gadflies, noisy dissenters defying formidable odds. They have often found themselves imprisoned, beaten, assassinated, and silenced. But here and there they have made headway, changing minds and behaviors. They know what they are fighting for, and they have inspired others to demand their rights. For them, the freedom is tangible. It is speaking one's mind; thinking, reading, hearing, watching, or joining what one likes. It is demanding and getting accountability from their government; getting treated fairly in court; not having to pay bribes; not being molested by the police; being able to work and own property without it being seized by a powerful official. It is freedom from being spied upon, from intimidation and being forced to conform, from unquestioning obedience to the state. Freedom is being able to choose; to run for office or campaign for one's favorite candidate; to vote with the expectation that one's vote will count; to have a chance to get rid of incompetent or criminal leaders; to enjoy the dignity of participation and respect for one's point of view. There are many such freedoms, great and small, and, as this study has shown, the intrepid and innovative pursuit of these freedoms in Africa inevitably manifests itself, whether it means volunteering for an NGO, marching in a demonstration, or standing in a long line in the hot sun to vote. The Chinese model stresses outcomes rather than process, rule of law rather than elections, harmony rather than free speech. Although Africa's evolving totalitarian systems have managed to subdue much of their populations at least temporarily, as Ethiopia is proving and as the cases of Sudan and Zimbabwe

have also shown, the freedom that accompanies democratic processes, disparaged and imperfect as they may be, remains appreciated by a large segment of African citizens.

Still, by the same token, democrats might learn from their neo-totalitarian antagonists. Might it be possible to have the best of both worlds? Freedom without conflict, corruption, inequality, and underdevelopment? Might it be possible to promote the rule of law while incorporating human rights, to conduct elections without inflaming divisions, to speak freely without inciting violence or obfuscating the truth, to advance economic growth without corruption? Of course. Whether African leaders and their Western supporters can rally the political will to make the necessary reforms is another matter. But the popular uprisings that are spreading across the continent, from Burkina Faso to Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Sudan, South Africa, Congo, Nigeria, Cameroon, Togo, and the list goes on, make it clear that citizens in democracies and dictatorships alike demand change.

A new political paradigm is emerging in Africa. The old totalitarianism exemplified by Cuba and North Korea poses no threat of world domination. Neither Cuba nor North Korea would be considered a model even by the likes of Eritrea. By contrast, the new totalitarians in Africa are more subtle. They are a kinder, gentler version, dressed up in lipstick, as Rafael Marques de Morais has put it, finding allies and influence, seducing a world fatigued by disorder and decay. Yet they stand ready to fasten heavy chains, postmodern chains, even as they promise a new order. Africa's dilemma is not unique, nor is it just importing the new authoritarianism of China and Russia. It is a global contagion, and Africa has been infected and is breeding new strains. Orwell's *1984* nightmare fantasy seems to have been resurrected just a few decades later than he envisioned. The Sahel, the Greater Horn, and Central Africa have become the nexus for the fight against terrorism as well as the anarchy emanating from the poverty, disease, and conflict of West Africa that Robert Kaplan prophesied would eventually strike the West.[33] Today, it is exemplified by the likes of Somalia, the Central African Republic, the DRC, and South Sudan.

The flow of refugees into Europe is but one consequence. Elsewhere in Africa, a different problem has emerged. The power of communications and intelligence both to control information and to penetrate the private lives of individuals, as well as the diplomatic cables of governments, only grows more difficult to escape. Totalitarian systems of government have thereby returned, gained acceptance, and proclaimed their legitimacy, despite the destruction of freedom for the peoples they govern. They find common cause with like-minded autocrats now proliferating around the world. How virulent Africa's experiments will prove to be and the implications for the rest of the world are unpredictable. This study has merely sought to cast some perspective on Africa's totalitarian temptation. It has described the

threat, but it has also found some hope. For those who are living under these totalitarian regimes, the reality of silence and fear is palpable. But as the dissidents and the repressed masses can avow, each in their own way, freedom is better than tyranny. And they will continue the struggle.

Notes

1. Ann Garrison, "Israel and Rwanda, Partners in Persecution," *Pambazuka News,* July 13, 2017, https://pambazuka.org/human-security/israel-and-rwanda-partners -persecution.

2. Andrea Levy, *The Road Ahead: Citizen Attitudes About Burundi in the Post-2010 Election Period* (Washington, DC: National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, February 2011).

3. Dave Peterson, "Burundi's Transition: A Beacon for Central Africa," Journal of Democracy, 17, no. 1 (January 2006), https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles /burundis-transition-a-beacon-for-central-africa/

4. Andrew Mwenda, "Democracy and Public Goods and Services," *The Independent*, September 24, 2011, https://www.independent.co.ug/democracy-public -goods-services/.

5. BBC News, "Tony Blair Defends Rwanda's Paul Kagame," October 20, 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15393715.

6. David Dagan, "The Cleanest Place in Africa," *Foreign Policy,* October 19, 2011, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/19/rwanda_the_cleanest_place_in_africa.

7. Agnes Binagwaha, et al., "Rwanda 20 Years On: Investing in Life," *The Lancet,* 384, no. 9940 (July 26, 2014): 374.

8. Margee M. Ensign and Mathilde Mukantabana, "Rwanda 20 Years Later: A Model for Progress and Reconciliation," *Christian Science Monitor,* April 7, 2014, https://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2014/0407/Rwanda-20-years -later-A-model-for-progress-and-reconciliation.

9. Emily Mkamanga, "Malawi: It Will Take a Miracle to Transform Malawi to the Level of Rwanda," *Nyasa Times,* April 18, 2017, http://allafrica.com/stories /201704190152.html.

10. Levi Zeleza Manda, "Ten Lessons from Rwanda," *Malawi Today,* February 8, 2014, http://www.malawitoday.com/news/130826-ten-lessons-rwanda.

11. Mohamed Adan, "Key Lessons Kenya Can Learn from Rwanda," *UReport,* April 28, 2015, https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/ureport/story/2000160165/key -lessons-kenya-can-learn-from-rwanda.

12. Patrick Chabal and Jean Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder As Political Instrument* (London: James Currey, 1999).

13. Dave Peterson, "Burundi's Transition: A Beacon for Central Africa," Journal of Democracy, 17, no. 1 (January 2006). Unfortunately, the author's cautious optimism has been dashed. Also, author's discussions with activists, October 2010.

14. Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

15. Kenneth Karuri, "Observers Fear the 'Defeat of Democracy' in Tanzania," Bloomberg, February 6, 2019, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-02 -07/-defeat-of-democracy-feared-in-tanzania-as-political-curbs-loom.

16. Legal and Human Rights Center, *Annual Report 2017* (Dar es Salaam: LHRC, 2017).

17. Goran Hyden, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

18. Discussion with the author, Dar es Salaam, August 2018.

19. Stephen Ortmann, "Singapore: Authoritarian But Newly Competitive," *Journal of Democracy* 22, no. 4 (October 2011), 153.

20. Stephen Brown and Chandra Lekha Sriram, "China's Role in Human Rights Abuses in Africa: Clarifying Issues of Culpability," in *China into Africa: Trade, Aid, and Influence*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2008), 250–271.

21. Human Rights Watch, "Development Without Freedom: How Aid Underwrites Repression in Ethiopia," October 2010, 25, http://www.hrw.org/sites/default /files/reports/ethiopia1010webwcover.pdf.

22. Mogopodi Lekorwe, Anyway Chingwete, Mina Okuru, and Romaric Samson, "China's Growing Presence in Africa Wins Largely Positive Popular Reviews," *Afrobarometer Round 6,* Dispatch No. 122, October 24, 2016.

23. Weiwei Zhang, "The Allure of the Chinese Model," *New York Times,* November 1, 2006.

24. Jonathan Kaiman, "China Says It Built a Railway in Africa Out of Altruism, But It's More Strategic Than That," *Los Angeles Times,* August 5, 2017.

25. Andrea Vega Yudico, "China's Multi-Billion Dollar Telecommunications Investment in Africa Poses Threat to Independent Media," CIMA, October 24, 2017, https://www.cima.ned.org/blog/chinas-multi-billion-dollar-telecommunications -investment-africa-poses-threat-independent-media/.

26. Nick Bailey, "East African States Adopt China's Playbook on Internet Censorship," Freedom House, October 24, 2017, https://freedomhouse.org/blog/east -african-states-adopt-china-s-playbook-internet-censorship.

27. Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, "Dictatorships & Double Standards," AEI, *Commentary Magazine,* November 1, 1979, http://www.aei.org/publication/dictatorships -and-double-standards-2/.

28. Jennifer G. Cooke, *Rwanda: Assessing Risks to Stability* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies Africa Program, 2011), 1.

29. Peter J. Pham, "Ethiopia After Meles: The Future of Democracy and Human Rights," US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, June 20, 2013.

30. Liyat Fekade and Tsedale Lemma, "Ethiopia: Dr. Abiy Ahmed Becomes a Prime Minister," *Addis Standard,* April 2, 2018, https://allafrica.com/stories /201804020144.html.

31. Leszek Kolakowski, in *The Challenge of Democracy,* 22, quoted in National Endowment for Democracy conference.

32. "The Afrobarometer: Expanding the Voice of Ordinary Africans in the Policy Process," October 6, 2016, www.Afrobarometer.org.

33. Robert D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy," *The Atlantic*, February 1994. https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1994/02/the-coming-anarchy/304670.

Bibliography

Abebe, Yordanos. "Ethiopia's Alleged Terrorists: Vocal Bloggers and Independent Journalists," October 21, 2014, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/ethiopias-alleged-terrorists-vocal-bloggers-and-independent-journalists.

Achebe, Chinua. *Anthills of the Savannah*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1987.

Aden, Mohamed. "Key Lessons Kenya Can Learn from Rwanda." *UReport,* April 28, 2015. https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/ureport/story/2000160165/key-lessons-kenya-can-learn-from-rwanda.

African-American Institute. *Eritrea: A Report on the Referendum on Independence: April 23–25, 1993*. New York: African-American Institute, 1993.

Aglionby, John. "Ethiopia Hails Success in Quashing Wave of Anti-government Unrest." *Financial Times,* February 1, 2017. https://www.ft.com/content/2f50133a-e85d-11e6-893c-082c54a7f539.

Amdwork, Ezana, and Ayalew Gebre. *Mass Based Societies in Ethiopia: Prospects and Challenges, Final Report*. Addis Ababa: Development Assistance Group Ethiopia, March 2012.

Amnesty International. "'Because I Am Oromo,' Sweeping Repression in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia." London: Amnesty International, 2014.

Amnesty International. "Eritrea: 20 Years of Independence, But Still No Freedom." London: Amnesty International, 2013.

Arendt, Hannah. *Eichman in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York: Penguin Books, 2006.

Arendt, Hannah. "Hannah Arendt: From an Interview." *New York Review of Books,* October 26, 1978.

Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1958.

Bach, Jean-Nicholas. "Abyotawi Democracy: Neither Revolutionary Nor Democratic, a Critical Review of EPRDF's Conception of Revolutionary Democracy in Post-1991 Ethiopia." *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, February 22, 2012. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2011.642522.

Bailey, Chloé. "Measuring Civil Society Space." *Mo Ibrahim Foundation Latest News,* October 25, 2016. http://mo.ibrahim.foundation/news/2016/measuring-civil-society-space/.

Bailey, Nick. "East African States Adopt China's Playbook on Internet Censorship." Freedom House, October 24, 2017. https://freedomhouse.org/blog/east-african-states-adopt-china-s-playbook-internet-censorship.

Ballestrem, Karl Graf. "Totalitarianism in Eastern Europe and Its Consequences." In *Totalitarianism and Political Religions*, edited by Hans Maier, 219. London: Routledge, 2004.

Balsvik, Randi Ronning. "A Quest for Free Expression: The Student Movement in Ethiopia and the Red Terror." In *Documenting the Red Terror: Bearing Witness to Ethiopia's Lost Generation,* 29–32. Ottawa: Ethiopian Red Terror Documentation and Research Center, 2012.

BBC News. "Tony Blair Defends Rwanda's Paul Kagame," October 20, 2011. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15393715.

Binagwaha, Agnes, et al. "Rwanda 20 years On: Investing in Life." *The Lancet*, 384, no. 9940 (July 26, 2014): 374.

Booth, David, and Frederick Golooba-Mutebi. "Developmental Patrimonialism? The Case of Rwanda." *African Affairs*, 111/444 (May 2012): 396.

Bratton, Michael. *Power Politics in Zimbabwe*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014.

Brown, Ryan Lenora. "A woman's revolution: Why women are leading calls for change in Sudan," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 2, 2019. https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/2019/0312/A-women-s-revolution-Why-women-are-leading-calls-for-change-in-Sudan.

Brown, Stephen, and Chandra Lekha Sriram. "China's Role in Human Rights Abuses in Africa: Clarifying Issues of Culpability." In *China into Africa: Trade, Aid, and Influence*, edited by Robert I. Rotberg, 250–271. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2008.

Bruton, Bronwyn. *Eritrea: Coming in from the Cold*. Washington, DC: Atlantic Council Africa Center, December 2016.

Bula, Merga Yonas. "Eritrea Is Building Its Own 'Type of Political System.'" allAfrica, Deutsche Welle (Bonn), September 13, 2016. http://allafrica.com/stories/201609130773.html.

Burgis, Tom. *The Looting Machine*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2015.

Burke, Jason. "Ethiopia: Many Dead in Anti-government Protest at Religious Festival." *The Guardian,* October 2, 2016. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/02/ethiopia-many-dead-anti-government-protest-religious-festival.

Cardozo, Nate. "EFF to Ethiopia: Illegal Wiretapping Is Illegal, Even for Governments," October 20, 2014. https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2014/08/eff-ethiopia-illegal-wiretapping-illegal-even-gove....

Carter Center. *Observing Sudan's 2010 National Elections, April 11–18, 2010: Final Report*. Atlanta: Carter Center, 2010.

Cater, Charlie. *Choosing the Path to Peace and Development: Coming to Terms with Human Rights Violations of the 1982–1987 Conflict in Matabeleland and Midlands Provinces*. Harare: Zimbabwe Human Rights Association, 1999.

Center for International Media Assistance. *The State of Media in Sudan: Special Report.* Washington, DC: CIMA, September 12, 2007.

Chabal, Patrick, and Jean Pascal Daloz. *Africa Works: Disorder As Political Instrument*. London: James Currey, 1999.

Changicherere, Glanis. *Towards Young Women's Political Participation: Approach and Strategies.* Washington, DC: National Endowment for Democracy, International Forum for Democratic Studies, 2016.

Coetzee, J. M. *Waiting for the Barbarians*. New York: Penguin, 1982.

Committee to Protect Journalists. "10 Most Censored Countries: CPJ's New Analysis Identifies Eritrea, North Korea, Syria, Iran as Worst," May 10, 2012. http://cpj.org/reports/2012/05/10-most-censored-countries.php.

Committee to Protect Journalists. "2013 Prison Census: 211 Journalists Jailed Worldwide," December 2013. https://www.cpj.org/imprisoned/2013.php.

Connell, Dan. "From Resistance to Governance: Eritrea's Trouble with Transition." *Review of African Political Economy* 38, no. 129 (September 2011).

Conquest, Robert. *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Convergence for Social Democracy of Equatorial Guinea, National Executive Committee, Press Release, Malabo, April 28, 2016. www.cpds-ge.org.

Cooke, Jennifer G. *Rwanda: Assessing Risks to Stability*. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies Africa Program, 2011.

Crisafulli, Patricia, and Andrea Redmond. *Rwanda, Inc.: How a Devastated Nation Became an Economic Model for the Developing World*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Dagan, David. "The Cleanest Place in Africa." *Foreign Policy,* October 19, 2011. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/10/19/rwanda_the_cleanest_place_in_africa.

Decalo, Samuel. "African Personal Dictatorships." *Journal of Modern African Studies* 23, no. 2 (June 1985): 221, 227.

Deng, Francis Mading, and Prosser Gifford. *The Search for Peace and Unity in the Sudan*. Washington, DC: Wilson Center Press, 1987.

Des Forges, Alison. *"Leave None to Tell the Story": Genocide in Rwanda*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999.

De Waal, Alex. "General Mohamed Hamdan Dagolo 'Hemedti,'" World Peace Foundation, Reinventing Peace: Occasional Paper. www.sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/2019/07/01/general-mohamed-hamdan-dogolo-hemedti/.

De Waal, Alex. *The Real Politics of the Horn of Africa: Money, War and the Business of Power*. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2015.

De Waal, Alex. "The Theory and Practice of Meles Zenawi." *African Affairs,* December 5, 2012, 8. http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org/.

Diamond, Larry. "The Road to Digital Unfreedom: The Threat of Postmodern Totalitarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 30, no. 1 (January 2019): 20.

Dicklitch, Susan. *The Elusive Promise of NGOs in Africa: Lessons from Uganda*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998.

Di Nunzio, Marco. "Do Not Cross the Red Line: The 2010 General Elections, Dissent, and Political Mobilization in Urban Ethiopia." *African Affairs,* July 8, 2014, 1–22.

Dobson, William J. *The Dictator's Learning Curve: Inside the Global Battle for Democracy*. New York: Doubleday, 2012.

Dos Santos, Gustavo Placido. "Russia's 'Charm Offensive' in Africa: The Case of Angola—Analysis." *Eurasia Review,* October 19, 2015. https://www.eurasiareview.com/19102015-russias-charm-offensive-in-africa-the-case-of-angola-analysis/.

Dos Santos, Quaresma D. "Luanda Book Club Dissidents Convicted." MakaAngola, March 2016. https://www.makaangola.org/2016/03.

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project. "Rwanda: Independence of Civil Society Undermined." *Press Release.* Kampala: East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, August 19, 2013.

Edwards, Adrian. "Sharp Increase in Number of Eritrean Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in Europe, Ethiopia, and Sudan." *Briefing Notes,* November 14, 2014. http://www.unhcr.org/5465feal1381.html.

EGJustice. "Human Rights Annual Report of Equatorial Guinea 2015." EGJustice. http://egjustice.org/sites/default/files/Human%20Rights%20Report%20Equatorial %20Guinea%20%202015.pdf.

EGJustice. "Violence and Retaliation Against Political Opposition," *Press Release.* tutu@egjustice.org.

El-Battahani, Atta. "The Post-secession State in Sudan." In *Sudan Divided: Continuing Conflict in a Contested State,* edited by Gunnar M. Sorbo and Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed, 32. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

The Enough Project. "Sudan's Deep State: How Insiders Violently Privatized Sudan's Wealth, and How to Respond," 19–33, April 2017. https://enoughproject .org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/SudansDeepState_Final_Enough.pdf.

Ensign, Margee M., and Mukantabana, Mathilde. "Rwanda 20 Years Later: A Model for Progress and Reconciliation." *Christian Science Monitor*, April 7, 2014.

Ethiopian Human Rights Council. *Democracy, Rule of Law and Human Rights in Ethiopia: Rhetoric and Practice*. Addis Ababa: The Ethiopian Human Rights Council, 1995.

Ethiopian Red Terror Documentation and Research Center. *Documenting the Red Terror: Bearing Witness to Ethiopia's Lost Generation*. Ottawa: ERTDRC, 2012.

Fekade, Liyat, and Lemma Tsedale. "Ethiopia: Dr. Abiy Ahmed Becomes a Prime Minister." *Addis Standard,* April 2, 2018. https://allafrica.com/stories/201804020144.html.

Fierberg, Jennifer. "It Is Not Safe in the New Rwanda to Share What You Really Think." *The Rwandan,* June 25, 2014. http://www.therwandan.com/blog/it-is-not-safe.

Flint, Julie, and Alex de Waal. *Darfur: A New History of a Long War*. New York: Zed Books, 2008.

Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn. *Shari'a and Islamism in Sudan: Conflict, Law and Social Transformation*. London: I. B. Tauris & Co., Ltd., 2012.

Frank, Anne. *The Diary of a Young Girl*. New York: Doubleday, 1995.

Freedom House. *Freedom in the World 2011: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties*. Washington, DC: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2011.

Freedom House. "Freedom in the World 2013: Equatorial Guinea." https://freedomhouse .org/report/freedom-world/2013/equatorial-guinea.

Freedom House. "Freedom in the World 2013: Rwanda." https://freedomhouse.org /report/freedom-world/2013/rwanda.

Freedom House. "Freedom in the World 2016: Angola Country Report." https:// freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/angola.

Freedom House. "Freedom in the World 2016: Chad." https//freedomhouse.org /report/freedom-world/2016/chad.

Freedom House. "Freedom of the Press 2016: Sudan." https://freedomhouse.org /report/freedom-press/2016/sudan.

Freedom House. "Freedom on the Net 2013: Ethiopia." http://www.freedomhouse .org/report/freedom-net/2013/ethiopia.

Freedom House. "Freedom on the Net 2013 and 2016: Rwanda." http://www.freedomhouse .org/report/freedom-net/2013/rwanda, and www.freedomonthenet.org.

Freedom House. "Freedom on the Net 2016: Sudan Country Profile." https://freedomhouse .org/report/freedom-net/2016/sudan.

Freeman, Colin. "Gambia's Ousted Dictator Is Living the Good Life in a Palace in Equatorial Guinea." *Foreign Policy.* https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/04/03/gambias -ousted-dictator-is-living-the-good-life-in-a-palace-in-equatorial-guinea/.

Friedrich, Carl J., ed. *Totalitarianism: Proceedings of a Conference Held at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, March 1953.

Friedrich, Carl J., and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski. *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965.

Gahiji, Innocent. "Kagame says Ethiopia is Africa's beacon for self-reliance," *News of Rwanda*, February 19, 2015. http://www.newsofrwanda.com/featured1/26434/kagame-says-ethiopia-is-africas-beacon-f... 2/19/2015.

Garrison, Ann. "Israel and Rwanda, Partners in Persecution." *Pambazuka News,* July 13, 2017. https://pambazuka.org/human-security/israel-and-rwanda-partners-persecution.

Gedion, Wolde Amanuel. *The Day of the Martyrs*. Addis Ababa: Banawe Printing Press, 2010.

Gettleman, Jeffrey. "The Global Elite's Favorite Strongman." *New York Times Magazine*, September 4, 2013.

Global Ministries. "The National People's Convention Declaration." Harare, November 24, 2017. https://www.globalministries.org/the_national_peoples_convention_declaration.

Gourevitch, Philip. "Remembering in Rwanda." *The New Yorker*, April 21, 2014.

Gourevitch, Philip. *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*. New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1998.

Grundy, Kenneth W. "Is Totalitarianism Taking Over in Africa?" *Africa Today* 14, no. 3 (June 1967): 16.

Heilbrunn, John R. "Equatorial Guinea and Togo: What Price Repression?" In *Worst of the Worst: Dealing with Repressive and Rogue Nations*, edited by Robert I. Rotberg, 223–246. Cambridge, MA: World Peace Foundation, 2007.

Henze, Paul B. *Layers of Time: A History of Ethiopia*. London: Hurst and Company, 2000.

Hepner, Tricia Redeker. "Seeking Asylum in a Transnational Social Field: New Refugees and Struggles for Autonomy and Human Rights." In *Biopolitics, Militarism and Development: Eritrea in the Twenty-First Century,* edited by David O'Kane and Tricia Redeker Hepner, 7, 123. New York: Berghahn Books, 2009.

Hitler, Adolf. *Mein Kampf*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1971.

Hodges, Tony. *Angola from Afro-Stalinism to Petro-Diamond Capitalism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Holland, Heidi. *Dinner with Mugabe: The Untold Story of a Freedom Fighter Who Became a Tyrant*. Johannesburg: Penguin Books, 2008.

Human Rights Council. *The Impact of the CSO Proclamation on the Human Rights Council*. Addis Ababa: Human Rights Council, July 2011.

Human Rights Council. *Report of the Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea.* New York: Human Rights Council, June 5, 2015.

Human Rights Watch. "Development Without Freedom: How Aid Underwrites Repression in Ethiopia," October 2010. http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/ethiopia1010webwcover.pdf.

Human Rights Watch, "Justice Compromised: the Legacy of Rwanda's Community-Based Gacaca Courts, 'The Story of Francois-Xavier Byuma,'" June 2011, (http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2011/05/31/justice-compromised-o).

Human Rights Watch. "Such a Brutal Crackdown: Killings and Arrests in Response to Ethiopia's Oromo Protests," June 16, 2016, https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/06/15/such-brutal-crackdown/killings-and-arrests-response-ethiopias-oromo-protests.

Human Rights Watch. "World Report 2017." https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/eritrea.

Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. New York: Harper and Bros., 1932.

Hyden, Goran. *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania: Underdevelopment and an Uncaptured Peasantry*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.

International Crisis Group. "Eritrea: The Siege State," 14, September 21, 2010. http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/ethiopia-eritrea/163%20Eritrea%20The%20Siege%20State.pdf.

International Rescue Committee. "Mortality in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: An Ongoing Crisis." https://www.rescue.org/report/mortality-democratic-republic-congo-ongoing-crisis.

Iyob, Ruth, and Gilbert Khadiagala. *Sudan: The Elusive Quest for Peace*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006.

Jackson, Robert H., and Carl G. Rosberg. *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

Kagame, Paul. "Rwanda's Democracy Is Still the Model for Africa." *Financial Times*, August 19, 2010.

Kagame, Paul. "The Backbone of a New Rwanda: Entrepreneurship Is the Surest Way." In *In the River They Swim: Essays from Around the World on Enterprise Solutions to Poverty,* edited by Michael Fairbanks. West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2009.

Kagan, Robert. "The Strongmen Strike Back." *Washington Post*, March 17, 2019, A24–27.

Kaiman, Jonathan. "China Says It Built a Railway in Africa Out of Altruism, But It's More Strategic Than That." *Los Angeles Times*, August 5, 2017.

Kanyenze, Godfrey and Timothy Kondo. *Beyond the Enclave: Towards a Pro-Poor and Inclusive Development Strategy for Zimbabwe,* edited by Prosper Chitambara and Jos Martens. Harare: Weaver Press, 2011.

Kaplan, Seth. *Eritrea's Economy: Ideology and Opportunity*. Washington, DC: Atlantic Council Africa Center, December 2016.

Karuri, Kenneth. "Observers Fear the 'Defeat of Democracy' in Tanzania." Bloomberg, February 6, 2019. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-02-07/-defeat-of-democracy-feared-in-tanzania-as-political-curbs-loom.

Keetharuth, Sheila B. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea*. UN Human Rights Council, 23rd session, agenda item 4, UN General Assembly, May 28, 2013.

Kichuu Info. "Full English Transcript of Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's Inaugural Address." Kichuu Info, April 3, 2018. https://kichuu.com/abiy-ahmeds-inaugural-address/.

Kirkpatrick, Jeane J. "Dictatorships & Double Standards." AEI, *Commentary Magazine*, November 1979. http://www.aei.org/publication/dictatorships-and-double-standards-2/.

Koestler, Arthur. *Darkness at Noon*. New York: Bantam Books, 1941.

Kolakowski, Leszek. In *The Challenge of Democracy: Proceedings of a Conference on Efforts Underway to Advance the Cause of Democracy Throughout the World* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for Democracy, Rayburn House Office Building, May 18 and 19, 1987), 22.

Legal and Human Rights Center. *Annual Report 2017*. Dar es Salaam: LHRC, 2017.

Lekorwe, Mogopodi, Anyway Chingwete, Mina Okuru, and Romaric Samson. "China's Growing Presence in Africa Wins Largely Positive Popular Reviews." *Afrobarometer Round 6*, Dispatch No. 122, October 24, 2016.

Levy, Andrea. *The Road Ahead: Citizen Attitudes About Burundi in the Post-2010 Election Period*. Washington: National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, February 2011.

Ligue des Droits de la personne dans la region des Grands Lacs. "Rapport Final de la LDGL sur l'Observation des Elections Legislatives 2013 au Rwanda," September 2013. www.ldgl.org.

Linz, Juan J. *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000.

Linz, Juan J., and Alfred Stepan. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

Longman, Timothy. "State, Civil Society, and Genocide in Rwanda," In *State, Conflict, and Democracy in Africa*, edited by Richard Joseph, 343. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999.

Magaisa, Alex. "Zimbabwe: An Opportunity Lost." *Journal of Democracy*, 30, no. 1 (January 2019): 156.

Maier, Hans, ed. *Totalitarianism and Political Religions: Concepts for the Comparison of Dictatorships*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Malwal, Bona. *Sudan and South Sudan: From One to Two*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Manda, Levi Zeleza. "Ten Lessons from Rwanda." *Malawi Today,* February 8, 2014. http://www.malawitoday.com/news/130826-ten-lessons-rwanda.

Mandaza, Ibbo, and Dave Peterson, eds. *Zimbabwe: The Challenges of Democratisation and Economic Recovery*. Harare: SAPES Books, 2015.

Mandela, Nelson. *Long Walk to Freedom*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1995.

Marques de Morais, Rafael. "From Being Bullied to a Dictator's Nightmare." MakaAngola, March 9, 2016. https://www.makaangola.org/category/articles/democracy/.

Marx, Karl. *The Communist Manifesto*. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1948.

Masunungure, E. V., and J. M. Shumba, eds. *Zimbabwe: Mired in Transition*. Harare: Weaver Press, 2012.

Mattes, Robert, and Teka Mulu. "Ethiopians' Views of Democratic Government: Fear, Ignorance, or Unique Understanding of Democracy?" Afrobarometer Working Paper no. 164, May 2016.

Matyszak, Derek. *Succession and the ZANU-PF Body Politic*. Harare: Southern African Political Economy Series, 2016.

McClearn, Matthew. Canadian Business, May 9, 2014. (Accessed at Human Rights Concern-Eritrea, "The Slaves of Eritrea," http://hrc-eritrea.org/the-slaves-of-eritrea.)

Mkamanga, Emily. "Malawi: It Will Take a Miracle to Transform Malawi to the Level of Rwanda." *Nyasa Times,* April 18, 2017. http://allafrica.com/stories/201704190152.html.

Moyo, Jonathan N. *Voting for Democracy*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1992.

Munhende, Leopold. "Watch: Government to Track NGOs Accounts, Alleges Funds Might Be Used for Terrorism," March 14, 2019, https://www.newzimbabwe.com/category/top-story/.

Mwenda, Andrew. "Democracy and Public Goods and Services." *The Independent,* September 24, 2011. https://www.independent.co.ug/democracy-public-goods-services/.

National Endowment for Democracy, "Annual Report 1994*,*" 38. (Washington, DC: National Endowment for Democracy, 1994).

National Union of Eritrean Women. "The Role of Women Workers in National Reconstruction." http://www.nuew.org. (accessed 6/20/2014).

Ngugi wa Thiong'o. *The Wizard of the Crow*. New York: Pantheon, 2006.

Nuba Reports. "News and Films from Sudan's Frontline." https://www.nubareports.org/about-us/.

Nyerere, Julius. *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1968.

Obama, Barack. "Remarks by President Obama to the People of Africa," Addis Ababa, July 28, 2015. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/07/28/remarks-president-obama-people-africa.

Okri, Ben. *The Famished Road*. New York: Doubleday, 1992.

Ortmann, Stephan. "Singapore: Authoritarian But Newly Competitive." *Journal of Democracy*, 22, no. 4 (October 2011): 153.

Orwell, George. *1984*. New York: Penguin Books, 1949.

Ottaway, Marina. *Africa's New Leaders: Democracy or State Reconstruction*? Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999.

Ottaway, Marina, and David Ottaway. *Afrocommunism*. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986.

Pankhurst, Richard. *A Social History of Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa University: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1990.

"Paul Kagame Speaks at Chatham House," October 21, 2014. http://paulkagame.com/?p=3730.

Peterson, Dave. "Burundi's Transition: A Beacon for Central Africa." *Journal of Democracy*, 17, no. 1 (January 2006), 125–131.

Peterson, Dave. "Congo: A Possible Peace." *African Geopolitics*, 1, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 219–226.

Peterson, Dave. "Peaceful Change and the Rise of Sudan's Democracy Movement." *African Security Review* 11, no. 4 (2002): 60–63.

Peterson, Dave. "Why Zimbabwe Matters." Adapted from a paper delivered at SAPES Trust conference on "Zimbabwe in Transition: Reform and Reconstruction," June 30, 2017, Harare.

Pham, Peter J. "Ethiopia After Meles: The Future of Democracy and Human Rights." United States House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, June 20, 2013.

Plaut, Martin. *Understanding Eritrea: Inside Africa's Most Repressive State*. London: Hurst and Company, 2016.

Prunier, Gérard. *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Prunier, Gérard. "The Ethiopian Revolution and the Derg Regime." In *Understanding Contemporary Ethiopia: Monarchy, Revolution, and the Legacy of Meles Zenawi,* edited by Gérard Prunier and Éloi Ficquet, 209–218. London: Hurst and Company, 2015.

Prunier, Gérard, and Éloi Ficquet, eds. *Understanding Contemporary Ethiopia: Monarchy, Revolution and the Legacy of Meles Zenawi*. London: Hurst and Company, 2015.

Raftopolous, Brian. "Nation, Race and History in Zimbabwean Politics." In *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*, edited by Brian Raftopolous and Tyrone Savage, 160–161. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004.

Raftopolous, Brian, and Tyrone Savage, eds. *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation*. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004.

Reporters Sans Frontiers. *Contribution on the Situation of Media Freedom in Eritrea by Reporters Without Borders.* UN Human Rights Council—Universal Periodic Review, 18th UPR Session, January–February 2014.

Reporters Without Borders. "Press Release," August 21, 2014. www.rsf.org.

Restrad Consultancy Ltd. *Baseline Study on the Human Rights Situation in Rwanda*. Kigali: Ministry of Justice, Republic of Rwanda, April 2015.

Revel, Jean-François. *Democracy Against Itself: The Future of the Democratic Impulse*. New York: Free Press, 1993.

Revel, Jean-François. *The Totalitarian Temptation,* translated by David Hapgood. New York: Penguin Books, 1977.

Reyntjens, Filip. "Constructing the Truth, Dealing with Dissent, Domesticating the World: Governance in Post-genocide Rwanda." *African Affairs* 110, no. 438 (January 2011): 33, 35.

Reyntjens, Filip. *Political Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Rotberg, Robert I., ed. *Worst of the Worst: Dealing with Repressive and Rogue Nations*. Cambridge, MA: World Peace Foundation, 2007.

Scheck, Justin and Nicholas Bariyo, "Signing of Power-Sharing Deal in Sudan Begins Anxious Wait for Democracy," *Wall Street Journal*, July 17, 2019. https://www.wsj.com/articles/signing-of-power-sharing-deal-in-sudan-begins-anxious-wait-for-democracy-11563380876.

Schwab, Peter. *Designing West Africa.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Sebsibe, Mikias. "Scrutinizing 'the Training' Behind Closed Doors," *The Reporter*, October 7, 2014, http://thereporterethiopia.com/index.php/in-depth-politics/item/2587-scrutini.

Shaxson, Nicholas. *Poisoned Wells: The Dirty Politics of African Oil*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr. *The Gulag Archipelago: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*. New York: Perennial Library. 1979.

Sorbo, Gunnar M., and Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed, eds. *Sudan Divided: Continuing Conflict in a Contested State*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Soyinka, Wole. *The Man Died*. New York: Noonday Press, 1988.

Specia, Megan. "How a Nation Reconciles After Genocide Killed Nearly a Million People," *New York Times*, April 25, 2017, https://nyti.ms/2pZCupf.

Sudaram, Anjan. *Bad News: Last Journalists in a Dictatorship*. New York: Doubleday, 2016.

Syndicat des Travailleurs aux Services des Droits Humains. *The Work of a Human Rights Defender in Rwanda: A Thorny Exercise.* Kigali: STRADH, July 2015.

Tareke, Gebru. "The History of Ethiopian Revolution and the Red Terror." In *Documenting the Red Terror*. Ottawa: Ethiopian Red Terror Documentation and Research Center, 2012.

Thomson, Susan. "Whispering Truth to Power: The Everyday Resistance of Rwandan Peasants to Post-genocide Reconciliation." *African Affairs* 110, no. 440 (July 2011).

Treiber, Magnus. "Trapped in Adolescence: The Postwar Urban Generation." In *Biopolitics, Militarism and Development: Eritrea in the Twenty-First Century,* edited by David O'Kane and Tricia Redeker Hepner, 108. New York: Berghahn Books, 2009.

Tronvall, Kjetil. "Briefing: The Ethiopian 2010 Federal and Regional Elections: Re-establishing the One-Party State." *African Affairs* 110, no. 438 (2011): 123–124.

Tronvall, Kjetil. *The Lasting Struggle for Freedom in Eritrea: Human Rights and Political Development, 1991–2009*. Oslo: Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights, 2009.

United Nations Development Programme in Eritrea, "People-Centered Development," February 2015, https://www.undp.org/content/dam/eritrea/docs/UNDP%20Eritrea%20Final.pdf.

UN Human Rights Council. "Report of the Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea." UN Human Rights Council, June 5, 2015. https://www.refworld.org/docid/55758bab4.html.

US Department of State. "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013." http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/.

US Department of State. "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014, Sudan." https://2009-2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dlid=252733.

US Department of State. *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, 2015.

US Department of State. "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2018." http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm.

US Department of State. *Ethiopia 2012 Human Rights Report.* Washington, DC: US Department of State, 2012.

US Department of State, Bureau of Democracy. "Human Rights and Labor, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013." http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls /hrrpt/humanrightsreport.

US Department of State, Bureau of Democracy. "Human Rights and Labor, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015, Equatorial Guinea." https://2009 -2017.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dlid=252677.

Vaughan, Sarah. "Revolutionary Democratic State-Building: Party, State and People in the EPRDF's Ethiopia." *Journal of Eastern African Studies,* February 22, 2012, 625–628. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2011.642520.

World Bank. "Imagining a 'Smart Country'—Such as Rwanda," July 18, 2013. www .worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/07/17/imagining-a-smart-country-Rwanda .print.

World Bank. "The World Bank in Ethiopia." http://www.worldbank.org/en/country /ethiopia/overview.

Wrong, Michela. *I Didn't Do It For You: How the World Betrayed a Small African Nation*. London: Fourth Estate, 2005.

Xinhua. "Bashir Vows to Liberate Africa from Neo-colonialism." *Daily Nation (Kenya),* July 31, 2016. https://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/Bashir-vows-to -liberate-Africa-from-modern-colonialism-/1066-3324832-bqhalr/index.html.

Yntiso, Gebre, Debebe Halie-Gebriel, and Ali Kelilachew. *Non-state Actors in Ethiopia—Update Mapping, Final Report*. Addis Ababa: European Union Civil Society Fund II and Civil Society Support Programme, February 2014.

Young, Crawford. "Africa: An Interim Balance Sheet." *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 3 (July 1996): 53–60.

Yudico, Andrea Vega. "China's Multi-billion Dollar Telecommunications Invest- ment in Africa Poses Threat to Independent Media." CIMA, October 24, 2017. https://www.cima.ned.org/blog/chinas-multi-billion-dollar-telecommunications- investment-africa-poses-threat-independent-media/.

Zamyatin, Yevgeny. *We*. New York: Bantam Books, 1972.

Zenawi, Meles. "African Development: Dead Ends and New Beginnings," October 23, 2012 . https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240615548_African_Development _Dead_Ends_and_New_Beginnings/.

Zenawi, Meles. "States and Markets: Neoliberal Limitations and the Case for a Develop- mental State." In *Good Growth and Governance in Africa: Rethinking Development Strategies*, edited by Akbar Noman, Kwesi Btochwey, Howard Stein, and Joseph Siglitz. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2011. https://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view /10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199698561.001.0001/acprof-9780199698561-chapter-5.

Zhang, Weiwei. "The Allure of the Chinese Model." *New York Times*, November 1, 2006.

Zimbabwe Election Support Network. *Report on the Zimbabwe 29 March 2008 Harmonised Elections and 27 June Presidential Run-off*. Harare: ZESN, 2008.

Zimbabwe Election Support Network. *Report on the 31 July 2013 Harmonised Elections*. Harare: ZESN, 2013.

Zimbabwe Election Support Network. Report on the 30 July 2018 Harmonised Elections. Harare: ZESN, 2018. www.zesn.org.zw.

ZimRights. *Choosing the Path to Peace and Development*. Harare: ZimRights, 1999.

Index

269

About the Book

Disappointment with the ability of democracy to deliver economic rewards in much of Africa—and with the persistence of instability, corruption, and poor governance in democratic regimes—has undermined democracy's appeal for many on the continent. At the same time, many external actors are expressing sympathy for regimes that have demonstrated an ability to impose stability and deliver economic growth, despite the limits placed on their citizens' freedom.

In this context, Dave Peterson asks: Is totalitarianism emerging as an acceptable alternative to democracy in Africa? And if so, with what consequences? Peterson draws on extensive research in countries across the continent to thoroughly explore the dilemma of the totalitarian temptation.

Dave Peterson is senior director of the Africa Program at the National Endowment for Democracy.