

himself.⁸ Since Britain had already been identified, by implication, as an enemy of Islam in Bosnia, Mahathir's attack on Britain also had tactically useful Islamic overtones, yet without turning religious sentiment against a local ethnic target. In addition, there is the fear that the opposition – whether urban Chinese, rural Malay-Moslem, or Christian Kadazan in Sabah – would seize on foreign hints of corruption in ruling party politics as proof of what many Malaysians already believe about their country.⁹

This, however, presupposes a vital role for the fax machine, since few copies of *The Sunday Times* are sold in Malaysia. In the realm of electronic communication, Mahathir certainly sees a greater, subversive danger to his regime in satellite television: most of all, the programmes of Rupert Murdoch's Hong Kong-based Star-TV. And Malaysian comment has revealed a conviction in high places that the critical interest of *The Sunday Times* in Malaysian political economy was Murdoch's retort to Dr Mahathir's presumption in questioning his motives for purchasing Star-TV last year. Whether Murdoch is so 'political' in that sense may be doubted, however, in the light of two significant, recent decisions: to drop the BBC World Service from Star (to placate the government in Beijing), and to transfer Andrew Neil (the Editor of *The Sunday Times*) to an American TV network

(though whether this means leaving *The Sunday Times* is not yet clear). At all events, by early June it had emerged that the Malaysian leader was prepared to regard Neil's transfer as retributive, and partly on that basis gave the British government to understand that the ban would be reviewed.¹⁰

Assuming that the crisis is indeed blowing over, one can only wonder at the rapidity of the change. Admittedly, since Malaysian propaganda targeted Andrew Neil quite early on, in preference to the British press as a whole, his departure can be portrayed as both victory and vindication for Dr Mahathir. While Malaysian 'face' has been saved, 'the British' (with no differentiation) will be said to have been taught a lesson in the Asian values of refinement and respect. Nevertheless, sceptics may be asking whether the Malaysian leader's outburst has not discredited him in the eyes of regional counterparts, and embarrassed the successor generation of UMNO leaders (the 'New Malays') who pride themselves on their ability to stand tall and self-confident on the international stage in an age of pervasive, global communication. If this were the case, the obscure endgame in which Britain got involved might be judged to have backfired for the chief player.

ROGER KERSHAW

NOTES

1. Private-sector discrimination would in principle expose Malaysia to penalties under GATT rules, but how could the operation of an informal ban be proved? And it is unlikely that Britain's competitors would refrain from filling the gap.
2. On the earlier crisis, see Roger Kershaw, 'Anglo-Malaysian relations: old roles versus new rules', *International Affairs*, Autumn 1983, pp. 629-648. In fact, critical British press comment on Malaysian economic strategy was not missing as a related factor in that confrontation.
3. It was the government of Singapore which, nearly a decade ago, first responded to 'negative' foreign reporting with economic pressure. However, the sanctions in Singapore's case are applied to the publication itself (e.g., by restricting its advertising), not to a third party.
4. See also Malaysia's Foreign Minister's statement at the World Conference

- on Human Rights, Vienna, June 1993; and Dr Mahathir's at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Cyprus in October 1993.
5. Late last year Paul Keating called Mahathir a 'recalcitrant' for staying away from the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit at Seattle. But he was 'let off' before the resulting furore in Malaysia reached the level of trade boycott. He only needed to express 'regrets' for the distress his comment had caused.
6. One point of superficially justified grievance was that the British press kept harping on the Pergau aid as a 'grant' rather than a soft loan. But scrutiny of most of the quality press does not support this allegation.
7. For a valuable development of this perspective, see Michael Leifer, 'Mahathir has other concerns', *International Herald Tribune*, 10 March 1994.
8. What Dr Mahathir himself has admitted to, however, is the fear that he would lose credibility as a spokesman for the third world if reputed to be corrupt.

Albania, Greece and the Vorio Epirus question

Of all the conflicts emerging in the Balkans over minority issues, the so-called Vorio Epirus problem has always seemed one of the most remote and difficult for outsiders to understand. By comparison with the main theatres of conflict in the northern part of the peninsula, the number of people involved is not large, the issues seem particularly obscure, and the terrain in question in southern Albania is largely unknown to (and unvisited by) most Western journalists and academics. The existence of a Greek minority in Albania was something that was known, of course, during the Communist period, and the widespread human-rights violations it suffered, particularly in the sphere of religion,¹ were followed by those with particular interests in the field, but the regional problem has not attracted much attention until recently.

It had been noted that the Greeks living in southern Albania played an important part in the overthrow of Communism, but it had been assumed that with the restoration of freedom of religion and human rights after the advent of pluralism, the minority would become peacefully integrated into life in southern Albania. To a significant extent this has not occurred. Inter-communal tension and violence have grown, particularly last year, to such an

extent that Greek-Albanian relations have been seriously affected.

As in many other places in the Balkans, it is difficult to understand the nature of the conflict clearly without reference to history. In ancient times, southern Albania was inhabited by Illyrian tribes, some of which became Hellenised after the Greek conquest began in the seventh century BC. In the period of the final disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, widespread violence took place between Greek irredentists and Albanian nationalists over wide areas of what is now southern Albania.² It should be borne in mind that at that time there was also a Moslem Albanian-speaking minority in northern Greece, the Cams, concentrated in the Suli region. The modern border, dating from the decisions of the Boundary Commissioners before the First World War, certainly did not represent an ethnically or religiously exclusive boundary. As it follows the very remote terrain of the Grammos mountains, it has never been possible, then or since, to police it easily and prevent illegal population movements. In historic terms, dating back to antiquity, these have largely been in one direction only –

surplus population from the poor mountainous regions of Albania seeking to find work and a better future in Greece.³ In the Second World War, and during the Greek civil war (1944–49), violence from conflicts on the Greek side had an adverse effect on Albanian communities.

But despite this general trend there has always been a Greek presence in Albania, although the actual number of ethnic Greeks living in what is now Albania has always been a highly controversial question (as is that of ethnic Albanians in northern Greece). Estimates vary from the 40,000 people admitted by the Albanian government, to the 100,000-plus claimed by the Greek government, and the figure of 250,000 or more claimed by some Vlorë Epirot organisations.

The minority in Albania can nowadays be roughly divided into two fairly clearly defined groups: the rural inhabitants of the Vjose (Aos) valley and the nearby towns of Sarandë (Agia Saranda) and Gjirokastra (Agyrocastro) as well as the coastal strip as far north as Vlora, who are highly conservative in their Orthodox culture and outlook; and a significant Greek professional and managerial group, based mainly in the capital, Tirana, many of whom have family links with those who fled Greece in the aftermath of the Greek civil war 50 years ago. The former group can trace descent from ancient times, whereas the latter is essentially a recent phenomenon and is predominantly secular in outlook.⁴ Many of them were well integrated into the Communist system in Albania – one member of the minority, Spiro Koleka, a native of Himara, was a close associate of Enver Hoxha and a member of the Party of Labour Central Committee for many years.⁵ Other members of the minority rose to high state positions, such as the last Communist Defence Minister, Simon Stefani, and the academic lawyer responsible for the Communist Constitution, Professor Pascal Haxhi.

So in this period, the minority community was significantly divided, with its more educated members living in the main urban centres, often strongly supporting the one-party state, while the southern rural majority were left leaderless and as a result saw their security and potential for freedom being dependent on the efforts on their behalf of the Orthodox church in northern Greece. The extreme political conservatism of many northern Greek bishops is well known, and as a result the minority was torn between extreme political positions for many years.

These tensions increased considerably in the period of the most intense persecution of religion in Albania, in the 1960s and 1970s, with minority members who were practising Orthodox Christians in the rural south suffering serious human-rights violations at the hands of the Albanian secret police.⁶ The memory of these years is very much alive among the minority in the south, even among young people who had no direct experience of it. It is a significant factor in the increasing radicalism in the community today. A key figure was, and is, Sevastianos, the Metropolitan of Konitsa, who campaigned ceaselessly for the restoration of freedom of religion in Albania with the support of Greek irredentist organisations in Greece.

With the end of Communism in Albania, which occurred in the 1989–92 period, a priority for the minority was the restoration of the position of the Orthodox church. In physical terms, this was achieved quickly, and on the whole without obstruction from the Albanian state.⁷ Greek consular missions in the southern towns were opened in due course, and for a period, between 1990 and 1991, Greek–Albanian relations were as harmonious as at any time since 1945.

At the same time, there was an immediate exodus of minority

people to Greece to reunite families and to find work. This exodus has continued, leaving a reviving and, in some respects, triumphalist church presiding over a diminishing minority population. The church has taken effective leadership, and although OMONIA, the Greek political movement, has a legal existence, with two deputies in the Tirana Parliament, it was in origin a human-rights movement rather than a political party. It is seriously divided over policy, with an emerging radical wing wanting *enosis* (unity) with Greece and border revision. OMONIA has so far failed to produce a secular leader of remotely equivalent standing or influence to Sevastianos.

Although most independent observers in Albania consider that the Greek minority has been fairly treated over the issue of land privatisation, ownership has not stopped emigration to Greece in search of work. The dangers of this situation were recognised in Athens at an early stage. The then Greek Prime Minister, Constantine Mitsotakis, called as early as February 1991 for the minority to stay in Albania to preserve Hellenism in the region. The land-hungry Albanian majority sees uncultivated Greek-owned land as a provocation, while some Greek minority villages have been reduced to economically unviable refuges for a few elderly people as all the young have left for Greece.

Political tension in the minority areas rose steadily after the election of the Democratic Party (DP) government led by Dr Sali Berisha in the 1992 general election. This government has been dominated by northern Ghegs, with little contact or sympathy with the Greek minority, very few of whom have ever lived in northern Albania. In turn, the DP distrusted many ethnic Greeks, who were suspected – sometimes justifiably – of having links with Communism and the Communist Party, at least among the Tirana professional elite, and in the Communist stronghold of Gjirokastra, Enver Hoxha's birthplace.⁸

Another negative factor in community relations has been the widespread belief in the DP and some other quarters that since the end of Communism the minority has been receiving financial support and external investment – from Greece itself and from the Greek diaspora – that were not available to ethnic Albanians. An early source of controversy in the vital religious sphere was the appointment by the Patriarchate in Istanbul (Constantinople) of an ethnic Greek, Metropolitan Anastasios, as Head of the Orthodox Church in Tirana, and the appointment of Greeks to some other important church positions. These controversies are generally believed in Albania to be linked to the decision to expel for alleged irredentist activity a Greek minority priest from Gjirokastra in the summer of 1993, and the subsequent diplomatic tensions between the two countries. There has been an expansion of surveillance of the Greek minority by SHIK, the Albanian security police, and a number of arrests and prison sentences for what is claimed by the minority to be political reasons.

It is necessary to see these developments against the background of the general problem of Albanian illegal immigration in Greece. At any one time, there are 100,000 or more Albanians working in Greece, most of them illegally, and from time to time the Greek government makes attempts to expel significant numbers of them, such as in 'Operation Broom' in December 1992. Considerable ill will has been created in Albania by these expulsions, despite the fact that the Greek authorities have been acting within the letter of the law. There have been well substantiated cases of human-rights violations by members of the Greek security forces. In turn, Greeks living close to the Albanian border in northern Greece have been subjected to a widespread and pervasive revival of traditional patterns of Balkan banditry,

carried out by armed gangs of ethnic Albanians, and a general breakdown of law and order and widespread thefts of property by ethnic Albanian itinerants. In these conditions, with many residents of northern Greece believing that the government in Athens does not take their problems sufficiently seriously, there has been an increase in the possession of small arms and in the formation of informal vigilante groups to protect property, a reversion to the pattern of life in the region in pre-industrial times. The government in Athens has recently announced its intention to form organised citizens' militias to try to improve public order in these border regions.

In these conditions of increasing tension and polarisation on both sides of the border it is difficult for the two governments to find a way forward to improve relations. This was demonstrated in April 1994, when two Albanian soldiers were killed in an attack on an Albanian military post near Gjirokastra by a paramilitary group claimed in Albania to be Greek terrorists from the 'Northern Epirus Liberation Front'. President Berisha reacted strongly

to this event, and currently relations with Greece are very poor, with diplomatic contact in Tirana almost non-existent. Although the exact nature of the attack still remains to be revealed, the mythology of Balkan border incidents has taken firm root in Albania, with very negative effects on the view of Greece held in government circles. Other border incidents involving military fatalities followed in June. To make matters worse, Greece has vetoed the payment to Albania of 30m ecu investment credits from the European Union.

In these circumstances, the outside world should expect a pattern of continual local tension and conflict over the Vorio Epirus region, in Greece as well as in Albania, and a period of considerable difficulty in Greek-Albanian relations is to be anticipated. Despite a few positive features on the economic front, with Greece being one of the two largest foreign investors in Albania, the political outlook remains bleak.

JAMES PETTIFER

NOTES

1. See Metropolitan Sevastianos, *Northern Epirus Crucified* (Athens, 1986).
2. The best account of the devastation caused by intercommunal violence in Epirus in this period is to be found in *The Sorrows of Epirus* by the French war correspondent Rene Puaux.
3. *Blue Guide to Albania*, section by Frank Walbank, 'Albania in Antiquity' (London, 1994), pp. 15-22.
4. Op. cit., pp. 44-46.
5. See Skendi, *Albania* (New York, 1956).
6. Sevastianos, op. cit., pp. 37-48.
7. See report by James Pettifer in *The Independent*, 6 February 1991. Also *The Greek Minority in Albania - A Documentary Record (1921-1993)*, Edited by B. Kondis and E. Manda (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1994), pp. 125-130.
8. See *Blue Guide*, op. cit., p. 88.
9. For a Communist view of Greek-Albanian relations since the war, see Enver Hoxha, *Two Friendly Peoples* (Tirana, 1985).

Rwanda – looking beyond the slaughter

Martin Plaut

'The killings in Rwanda are the most terrible and systematic genocide since the genocide of the Jews by Hitler.' Vatican Radio.¹

Until very recently, if most of the outside world thought of Rwanda at all, only two images sprang to mind. One was of a beautiful country that is the last refuge of the mountain gorilla, made famous by Dian Fossey. The other was of a land racked by the most appalling slaughter. Over recent months the second of these images has been powerfully and tragically reinforced. Piles of bodies by the sides of roads, bloated corpses being fished out of Lake Victoria, and refugee camps stretching to the horizon have appeared on television screens around the world. Yet despite the almost daily coverage of events and the acres of reportage in the press, there is little explanation for the terrible savagery that has gripped Rwanda. It is almost as if to witness the suffering is enough; understanding is not required.

Yet this is far from the first occasion on which these scenes have been played out in Rwanda. The protest from the Vatican quoted above was broadcast in February 1964. Sadly, the only feature that appears to differ is the scale of the tragedy: it has grown infinitely worse. The aim of this article is to sketch out the background to the recurrent bouts of conflict that have afflicted the 7m people of this small Central African state.

Historical background

Colonisation came late to Rwanda. When the German explorer, Count von Goetzen, penetrated the region in 1894, he found a nation dominated by a powerful monarchy.² The Tutsi, who made up around 15 per cent of the population, had established their rule over the Hutu majority. The Tutsi were pastoralists, while the Hutu were cultivators. There were also the pygmoid Twa, who made up around one per cent of the population, living as potters or hunter-gatherers. The Tutsi impressed the Germans with 'their gigantic stature, the sublimity of their speech, the tasteful and unobtrusive way of their dress, their noble traits and their quiet, penetrating, often even witty and irritating eyes'.

The King, or Mwami, was the source of all power. From him authority flowed, and he alone could confer legitimacy on subordinate ranks. The monarchy ruled through a triple hierarchy of chiefs, controlling land, cattle and the army. Authority radiated from the court to the province, and then to the districts. Beneath these chiefs were a vast number of sub-chiefs who extracted tribute from their subjects for their superiors. How much power each had and how long he exercised that power depended exclusively upon the whim of the Mwami. This centralised but dispersed system of power served to bolster royal authority and to ensure that the King's absolutism remained unchallenged. Temporal authority was further bolstered by folklore and myth, all of which served to