

# CONGOLESE STUDIES ASSOCIATION DES ÉTUDES CONGOLAISES

BIENVENUE! WELCOME! MBOTÉ! KARIBUNI! SANGAYI!

September 2021 Issue

## FROM THE CSA VICE-PRESIDENT, MUADI MUKENGE

**Dear Readers.** We thank you for reading this current issue of the *Congolese Studies Association* newsletter. It is our hope that you will find the articles stimulating and informative, as we aim to provide a venue for exchange of scholarship and ideas related to the advancement of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

CSA began 2021 by hosting a conference on perspectives on leadership, with a focus on Patrice Lumumba. As we marked the 60<sup>th</sup> year since Lumumba's death, it seemed pertinent to explore the leadership qualities that support nation-building and upliftment of the masses. The theme remains relevant as the DRC faces formidable challenges in its slow walk toward people-centered democracy. The Congolese people still yearn to see tangible

improvements in the socio-economic fabric of the nation. I was able to visit Kinshasa and Mbuji-Mayi in July 2021, and the desperation of the population was starker than ever.

In this issue of the newsletter, we feature a reflection on Lumumba, while also presenting

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the lived realities of Congolese women seeking maternal healthcare. We also feature initiatives in Mbuji Mayi and Mpoyi village that

offer practical solutions in health and community development. Across the Congo, progress on key indicators such as maternal health, primary education, and income generation remain elusive in the midst of a public debate about accountability of elected officials and the

continuing insecurity in northeastern DRC.

CSA is interested in partnering with Congolese institutions to contribute to forming the next generation of leaders and practitioners who can adequately formulate sustainable solutions to the nation's challenges. Relatedly, we want to encourage young Congolese, whether in the Congo or the United States. We have to be intentional to provide the support needed for the next generation of thinkers and practitioners to emerge as strong, effective leaders. The Lumumba Scholars, an initiative of Friends of the Congo, and Congo Love, are laudable efforts with this purpose.

As we walk into the 61<sup>st</sup> year of the Congolese Republic, we look forward to partnering with diverse, and committed individuals working towards a just, stable, and productive Congo.

CSA at the African Studies Conference [VIRTUAL], November 16-20, 2021  
Please join the CSA panel online. Visit [www.africanstudies.org](http://www.africanstudies.org) for details.

## CONGOLESE STUDIES ASSOCIATION NEWS

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Contact us to become a member of CSA. Students and professionals outside of academia are welcome. We also welcome volunteers.

**Congolese Studies Association** welcomes articles for future issues of the newsletter. Please send articles to Muadi Mukenge, Editor, at [mmukenge@juno.com](mailto:mmukenge@juno.com). The next deadline is **January 15, 2022**.

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### PATRICE LUMUMBA TRIBUTE

The Congolese Studies Association hosted a virtual conference January 30, 2021, titled **"Profiles in Leadership: A Commemoration of Patrice Lumumba and Congolese Changemakers."** The speakers included: Dr. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja (UNC-Chapel Hill); M. Tshamala Jean-Jacques; Nyota Babunga (Gender Activist); Dr. Tshilemalema Mukenge (Professor Emeritus, Morris Brown College); Prof. Lomomba Emongo.

Please contact the newsletter editor for a link to the webinar recording. The paper below stems from that conference.

### STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF LUMUMBA'S LEADERSHIP

**By Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja**  
Professor of African and Global Studies  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC

At the invitation of the Congolese Studies Association (CSA), this short paper is a response to the three questions that the organizers of the January 30, 2021 Webinar on "Profiles in Leadership: A Commemoration of Patrice Lumumba and Congolese Changemakers" had asked me to address, namely: (1) the significance of Patrice Lumumba's political leadership of Congolese nationalism and African liberation; (2) the limitations of Lumumba's political leadership; and (3) the lessons learned from Lumumba's short political career for transformative leadership in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

today. As a tribute to the visionary and people-centered leadership of Lumumba, this paper is a call to Congolese and African progressives to develop those leadership qualities needed to accomplish the unfinished business of liberation and development that Lumumba's assassination prevented him to undertake for the Congo and Africa.

### **The Significance of Lumumba's Leadership of Congolese Nationalism and African Liberation**

As a nationalist and a pan-Africanist, Lumumba's major objective was the fulfillment of the pan-African project of democracy and development through self-determination politically, self-reliance economically, and Pan-African solidarity throughout the continent and including the African diaspora worldwide. The nationalist dimension of this project consisted of national unity and sovereignty, a strong unitarist state with decentralization at the provincial and local levels, and state control over the natural resources of the country to use them to improve the standard of living of the people. From the creation of the Mouvement National Congolais (MNC), the major national and multiethnic political party in the Belgian Congo in October 1958, this project of democracy and development remained at the center of Lumumba's political vision, organization, and mobilization.

While latent in his political thought, the pan-African dimension of Lumumba's vision for postcolonial Africa was strengthened by his participation at the First All-African People's Conference (AAPC) that he attended in Accra in December 1958. Elected to the permanent

committee of the AAPC, he became a champion of pan-Africanism. He was so committed to African unity that in the midst of his trials and tribulations in confronting Belgian violation of Congolese sovereignty in its illegal occupation of the Katanga Province, assassination attempts by the CIA and Belgian intelligence, and undermining of his authority by the United Nations, Lumumba hosted a ministerial-level pan-African conference in August 1960 in Kinshasa. In his opening address to the conference, the first democratically elected Prime Minister of the Congo outlined a comprehensive program of African solidarity and development.

In short, Lumumba proved his leadership qualities both nationally and continentally in three important undertakings: (a) the promotion of national unity, respect for democratic ideals and the rule of law, and a stubborn defense of national sovereignty; (b) commitment to total ownership of the natural resources of the country, so as to utilize them to improve the material conditions of life of the population; and (c) presenting to the African continent one of the earliest frameworks for African integration and cooperation. During political turmoil nationally and external aggression, Lumumba showed his skills and capacities of leadership of Congolese nationalism and African liberation.<sup>i</sup>

### **The Limitations of Lumumba's Political Leadership**

Patrice Lumumba was two days shy of his 35<sup>th</sup> birthday when he became the first head of government of independent Congo. A self-educated person, his whole professional profile

consisted of a 13-year career in the African branch of the colonial civil service, 16 months as an employee of the Brasserie du Bas-Congo (Bracongo), the second largest brewery in Kinshasa, including five months as the commercial or publicity director of the enterprise, and two years of political organization. While his brilliant mind and political skills allowed him to face major challenges with intelligence, courage, and stoicism, he had very little experience in both domestic and foreign affairs.

A second weakness that Lumumba had, and a character trait that he shared with other great leaders like Kwame Nkrumah and Amilcar Cabral, was putting too much trust in people that did not deserve to be taken seriously. For example, he trusted Joseph Kasavubu and Joseph Mobutu as patriots who shared his passion for the country and its sovereignty, only to be betrayed by them. Following Nkrumah's advice, Lumumba had picked Kasavubu to be the ceremonial head of state, only to have the latter conspire with Belgium and the United States to use an obscure clause of the Fundamental Law, or Congo's provisional Constitution, to dismiss Lumumba from office. This was illegal since Lumumba had a majority in both houses of Parliament and the Fundamental Law had not even been approved and made legitimate by the Congolese Parliament.

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## **ELAKA NGO PROMOTES MATERNAL HEALTH IN CONGO**

**By Nicole Freire, Content Creator, Elaka**

"Mothers are the backbones of their communities," stated Bibi Ndala, MPH, the founder of Elaka DRC, during the Commission on the Status of Women's 65<sup>th</sup> NGO Forum in March 2021. Her words summarize the *raison d'être* for the non-profit organization founded in 2019. Originating from the Lingala word that means "to promise," Elaka exists as a promise to contribute to the improved condition of women and children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, one province at a time. They aim to do this through influencing policy and communicating effectively with governing bodies, health education and the support of already existing community assets.

The status of maternal health in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains critical. In 2015, the DRC had the third highest number of maternal deaths in the world. In 2018, the maternal mortality rate, 846 deaths per 100,000 live births, was 12 times higher than the threshold established by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This mortality rate was also a net increase from the reported mortality rate in 2007, 549 per 100,000 live births. More alarmingly, estimates show that 35% of deaths in women of reproductive age in the DRC are related to pregnancy and childbirth, putting approximately 1 in every 18 Congolese women at risk of death. The impact of a mother's death on her family and her community is devastating and ample cause for the investment in programs and interventions

### **Elaka, from page 4**

that improve the conditions of expectant mothers in DRC.

Elaka operates with a global staff of five public health and medical professionals whose areas of expertise range from global health, public health program operations, epidemiology, and clinical care. To ensure that they are able to have the greatest possible use of their funds, most of Elaka's staff operates on a voluntary basis. This, in addition to three successful fundraising campaigns, enabled Elaka to start and continue the implementation of a voucher program in partnership with *Centre de Santé Tout est Grâce* in Kinshasa. In the first six months of its implementation, the program exceeded its expected enrollment of mothers in the voucher program and the expected number of follow up antenatal care visits to the clinic. A total of 31 expectant mothers have been enrolled in the program since its inception and 15 of them have successfully given birth and received the necessary post-natal care. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Elaka also donated personal protective equipment for the clinical staff as well as reusable masks made by local seamstresses for the expectant mothers.

Donations and awarded grants have made Elaka's current and some of their future operations possible. In order to fulfill their goals of educating the population, Elaka is in the planning stages of developing a community education app. The success of the voucher program in Kinshasa and the fundraising campaigns has allowed for potential expansion of the Elaka's operations in DRC to Boma – a

port town in Kongo-Centrale, one of the provinces with the highest maternal mortality rates in DRC. Once the implementation of the voucher program is underway in Boma, it is hoped that expectant mothers in the mostly rural province will be able to receive the necessary care in a timely manner without the added financial burden. After all, mothers should not have to pay to deliver.

For more information on Elaka, visit its website at [ElakaDrc | The Promise](#).

### **ISP Is Burning**

#### **Dr. Kasongo Kapanga**

University of Richmond, Virginia

After my successful completion of my *Graduat* at the Institut Supérieure Pédagogique (ISP) Lubumbashi in the year the *Shaba Deux* rebellion was raging, and after passing the national exam for the *Licence*, the *Bureau du Rectorat* in Kinshasa announced that five of us in our *English and African Culture* track were admitted to pursue our graduate studies at ISP Bukavu for the following two years. As academic placements were centralized by Monseigneur Tshibangu's office, we were not the only ones from ISP/Lubumbashi to be submitted to this *diktat*, because those in Geography, Math and French, were sent alongside us to Bukavu, located on the shores of Lake Kivu.

The news for me were mixed, because I really was invested in getting that second degree, but at the same time, I wanted to go to the Institut Pédagogique Nationale (IPN) Kinshasa because that was the tradition. After all, should not this

have been the normal course of action? After living in Lubumbashi, *the Copper Capital*, only 120 km from my birthplace Likasa, what other Congolese city should I have aspired to live in but Kinshasa? In addition, like any Congolese young man, I had family and support in Kinshasa and traveling to that city was by far easier because of the Air Zaire flight availability, the prestige of the capital, or just mere routine expectation that *tout mène à Kin*. Those in the History track were lucky, because IPN/Kinshasa was still all open to them; such was the case of the now Lualaba Governor Richard Muyej Mwangez (currently replaced temporarily). Few had attempted to switch, but the *Rectorat* would hardly budge and doing so was a risky enterprise as it required not only good financial means to travel but have impactful internal support to trigger a change. Therefore, almost all of us who passed the *concours* accepted the decision and undertook the trip to Bukavu. According to those who went the previous years, the stories we heard were not reassuring: Bukavu was too small a city, too much rain, roaming bandits who would strip you naked if you ventured in *Kadutu* at night by yourself. In addition, their Swahili had too many "z" sounds.

Yes, indeed, the trip was rather a trying enterprise: by train from Lubumbashi to Kalemie (4 days); on the Tanganyika Lake shore, we waited for the boat to Uvira for three days, and then on the fourth night, we embarked for Uvira with stops in Kigoma, in Tanzania, where the Congolese were not authorized to come on shore. Then the next night, we sailed to Uvira after a short docking at the Bujumbura port where Burundian armed guards were stationed

to prevent anyone from jumping ship. Then it was the port of Kalundu, and then Uvira. Going from Uvira to Bukavu via Rwanda was the quickest phase at the end of which we were unloaded in *Essence* where the driver told us: "Vous voilà dans la ville de Bukavu!" Misunderstanding for the Lushois that we were, thinking that *Essence* was the city center, we rushed in comparing it with the large and well-lit *Avenue Mobutu* in the Lubumbashi City Center and commiserated over our fate. If our trip seemed disappointing for the almost two weeks it took us to get there, it was also the beginning of an intellectual journey in spite of the shortcomings inherent to the region and to the times. In short, this is where we had an excellent two-year educational experience.

Many students who came for the *Licence* degree came from many of the regions of Congo, as provinces were then called. Not only from Shaba (Katanga) as we were and the locals from Kivu, but also from Haut-Zaire, Bandundu and Bas-Zaire. We all were there in a common pursuit of education with the obvious purpose to return to our regions where our families were, after completing our education. Back then, we found it irrational that so much energy was spent shipping students from one side of the country to the other instead of leaving them to study in their own backyard.

Why should a Bas-Zairois come all the way to Bukavu, instead of going to Kinshasa where certainly he would have family support? In the long run, that foolishness of Mobutu's and his cronies had a silver lining, maybe a couple of

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**Community Empowerment Professional Partners**  
**Mpoyi Trip Highlights, July 2021**  
**By Muadi Mukenge and T.L. Mukenge, CEPP**

In Congo's rural villages, water for domestic consumption is drawn from germ-infested rivers or streams. Waterborne intestinal diseases, including cholera, and respiratory diseases, are pervasive. To help fight these endemic health hazards, a team of five US-based Congolese volunteers procured water purification and safe cooking technologies, and traveled from the US to Mpoyi in July 2021 to partner with the community in creating solutions. Members of the Community Empowerment Professional Partners (CEPP) conducted training and introduced innovative sustainable technologies, building upon a community development initiative called Coins of Hope, located in Eastern Kasai/Lomami Province rural villages.

Coins of Hope (COH) is a project of Ben Hill United Methodist Church, located in Atlanta, Georgia. It is led by a Congolese retired professor, Dr. Tshilemalema Mukenge, who is from the region where the project is situated. Since its creation in 2010, the Ben Hill Coins of Hope Ministry has assisted Mpoyi families with many activities, including: 1) Building an elementary school (no costs receive government support); 2) Provision of tuition, uniforms and school materials paid for 150 children grades 1-6, on an annual basis; 3) Organization of Mpoyi women into an empowerment group; 4) Establishing a 12-acre farm; 5) Training in sewing as a livelihood; and 6) Promotion of animal raising, and introduction of oxen for farming.

Even though public education is technically free, parents, especially in rural areas, often cannot send their children to school as they cannot pay other required fees. COH helps parents cover these costs. The COH school follows the national curriculum. The COH management team consists of Americans, and Congolese in the United States as well as in Congo.



FIGURE 1: COINS OF HOPE STUDENTS



FIGURE 2. MEMBERS OF THE CEPP TEAM, INCLUDING CONGO-BASED MEMBERS.

In this new phase implemented in July 2021, CEPP added another layer of empowerment activities, aimed to introduce new technologies and support Mpoyi to enjoy better health outcomes and become more independent. The curriculum also included: a health science training to reduce waterborne diseases and form a WASH strategy; Introducing smoke-free cooking to reduce respiratory illnesses in women (solar cooking, Wonderbags); a nutrition class to

improve diet and promote diverse locally grown crops, such as pumpkins, plantains, sweet potatoes, bananas, and papayas; and strengthening the sewing program to promote business goals.

CEPP conducted a week-long training of trainers program with the parents of the students in the initiative, and other adults in the community. The team installed solar lighting in the school and the training center. The team also introduced solar cooking technologies and provided tools and supplies for training Mpoyi residents in using and replicating these technologies. The training activities included practical sessions to enable trainees to adopt the new skills and train others. The COH team was able to: 1) Deliver portable solar cookers and water testers and purifiers; 2) Conduct demonstrations of use of water testing kits to test levels of microbiological contamination and disinfection; 3) Form a WASH committee to sensitize the community on behavior change that can lead to fewer diseases and improved health; and 4) Train 12 teachers and community leaders in leadership skills, to address community-wide challenges, set goals, and improve organizational principles.

Mpoyi women and girls are victims of respiratory diseases caused by smoke inhalation during cooking. The visiting team introduced three innovative sustainable cooking systems: 1)



a slow cooker made of fabric; 2) a solar

cooking box made of wood; and 3) a solar cooking apparatus made of cardboard. Participants learned how to make these systems, and cook with them.



A member of the team taught Mpoyi participants how to generate light using plastic water bottles, solar bulbs, or small solar panels, both for indoor and outdoor uses.



The accomplishments of the summer program are designed to

become regular practices which will gradually improve

the quality of life and the general well-being of



participating parents and students. The program produced a cadre of local trainers that will



implement and sustain on-going training across the community, contributing to greater skill-building and empowerment in Mpoyi.

**For more information, contact:** Tshilemalema Mukenge, Ph.D., Coordinator, Coins of Hope Ministries, Email: [drtlmukenge@aol.com](mailto:drtlmukenge@aol.com)

### **4-H Club in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

**By Dr. Musau WaKabongo**

How can the Congo tackle the problems of food insecurity, youth unemployment, leadership, and entrepreneurship? The solution is to establish 4-H in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). On June 18, 2021, 4-H DR Congo was recognized as a member of the Global 4-H Network. The new chapter in Tshibombo, Mbujimayi is the first 4-H Club in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Our vision is to have 4-H Clubs throughout the DRC.

4-H stands for "head, heart, hands, and health." The 4-H mission is simple: "help young people and their families gain the skills needed to be proactive forces in their communities and develop ideas for a more innovative economy." 4-H started more than 100 years ago in the United States of America. Today, 4-H has expanded to become a global youth education program. 4-H programs empower young people to become productive, self-directing and contributing members of the society through the principles of "Learning by Doing." Youth in grades K-12 can become members and participate in activities outside of school hours. 4-H programs started in Africa in

the 1980s and today, these programs reach more than 320,000 youth (ages 6-24). Through 4-H Enterprise Gardens, an Africa-based model, 4-H is helping young Africans to fuel transformational change in their communities. 4-H is well established in many African countries such as Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania.

4-H DR Congo is sponsored by the Dr. Musau WaKabongo Science Education, Inc. (DMWSE), which is a Virginia, USA based non-profit corporation. The purpose of this corporation is to be a source of scientific knowledge, inventiveness, and innovations to solve community problems and prevent acquisition and/or spread of diseases.

DMWSE traveled to Tshibombo in July 2021 to conduct its first 4-H activity with youth. Currently, the focus of 4-H Tshibombo will be the following:

- Civic Engagement
- Health: Nutrition and prevention from microbial diseases
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

Each focus area has a presentation, hands-on exercise, and fun activity. Below are photos of 4-H activities that took place in DRC in July.



4-H DRC- gardening at Tshibombo



STEM - How to build a solar bottle bulb

The establishment of 4-H in DRC is an exciting moment to bring the nation into a global movement to strengthen the capacity of youth.

On September 7-9, 2021, 4-H DRC participated in the Global 4-H Network Digital Summit -- "The Call to Action: Let's Stay Connected!" For more information on 4-H in DRC, contact Dr. Musau WaKabongo at [mwakabongo@gmail.com](mailto:mwakabongo@gmail.com).

### ***ISP Is Burning, continued from page 6***

them. Given the size of our country, meeting other young people from other corners of the country, and especially working towards a common goal irrespective of origin, were the benefits we reaped. We were given the opportunity to meet, to interact and even to mingle. The main purpose, I believe, was to get people to know each other. In fact, the faculty and staff reflected that as well because hiring was centralized by the *Rectorat*. Although the system had obvious disadvantages especially that it was cumbersome, it was nevertheless beneficial on the human level. There were many "bakuyakuya" -- a local term meaning "new

people or newcomers" -- amongst faculty and some kind of *diversity* was in action. Make no mistake, it was not a picnic because ethnic undercurrents were a counterweight to these official policies.

In addition, Belgian and French *coopérants* operated there in addition to American volunteers from the Peace Corps. From this latter group, I was taught by three of them: Bob Whitehead, Blanche Clegg and Anne Kempers. I also remember that the Hessers taught in the Department of History.



Did we stay in Bukavu after our degrees? No! While many of us left right after the completion of our degrees, many others including me did stay or entered into life-lasting relationships such as marriage, solid friendships and other lasting ties. I should not forget to mention that ISP/Bukavu was a partner in the management of the United States Peace Corps Language training in the Congo. It was quite familiar to see young American Peace Corps volunteers roaming around Athénée de Ibanda, in Guba, Kadutu, or in the only nightclub there -- la Botte.

After so many years, I can say that ISP Bukavu did respond to several expectations, because the teaching was excellent, the conditions were

bearable, and the trust was solid. Father Milani managed his tight ship with a lot of dexterity, but also in his own Xaverian (A Catholic congregation) way, sometimes with a heavy hand. I remember Mr. Vaccini, the Italian architect, giving orders to his workers colorfully using obscene phrases in a school headed by a Catholic priest. There were also rumors that Father Milani had his own snitching brigade—*les rampeurs*—who informed him about the mischievous elements such as my fellow Lushois Lambert Mutombo who sadly had to leave the school only a few months before his graduation. There were also rumors that Milani met NAME Kashamura in Bukavu at the behest of President Mobutu. What was true, was that he had support from high up and not even the *Rectorat* could touch him. Myth or reality? There were surely mistakes done in the process, but the bottom line is that this institution has educated scores of people—Congolese or otherwise—who went on to shine in their own professions and countries.

ISP Bukavu enjoys an impressive list of alumni: university professors on at least three continents, high quality educators, diplomats (Kapanga, Mutaboba, Tulinabo, Faïda Mitifu), politicians (Mweze Kongolo), Humanitarian Aid workers, Catholic priests, and even foreigners who remained in the region to pursue their profession.

No one can nevertheless discount the sensitive reaction that the burning of the residence hall triggered in those whose lives were directly or indirectly fashioned by ISP/Bukavu. The news in May 2021 provoked

awe and disbelief as it spread like wildfire in the informal ISP/Bukavu community. Many put the blame for the tragedy on the lack of fire fighting equipment, others pointed the finger at the irresponsibility of our leaders, but all genuinely remembered the quality education the institution provided, for the country, even for neighboring countries where many of its graduates still live and work. All remember how much the school gave them.

Some of us have fond memories of simple things we did around the *Sibérie* building that burned down: buying sweet bananas sold by women along the edge of the street, long conversations while seated on the balcony, watching ISP basketball under Coach Sebagenzi, or quiet study sessions pendant *le blocus*. It was while at ISP as I was coming of age intellectually that I attended some of the best conferences by learned speakers: V.Y. Mudimbe, Ngandu Nkashama, a Carter Center's representative who spoke about *containment*.

### **Nous sommes tous ISP/Bukavu**

First, our thoughts go to the 114 students who were injured and especially the 38 who were burned at the first degree.<sup>1</sup> The DRC First Lady through *la Fondation Denise Nyakeru Tshiseke* promised to rebuild the residence hall, largely because she has connection with the institution, as some of her relatives studied there. Many of us applaud her for that. I would wish that many

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<sup>1</sup> La Nouvelle PrunelleRDC, consulted June 3, 2021. <https://laprunellerdc.info/isp-bukavu-avant-de-rehabiliter-le-batiment-incendie-la-fondation-denise-nyakeru-tshiseke-offre-des-logements-temporaires/>.

of us who were shaped by ISP/Bukavu remember where we studied, where we grew up, where we found the loves of our lives, or started life-standing friendships, in an attempt to make it more beautiful than she was. We can also contribute financially to the rebuilding of the burned campus buildings.

I lived in that building au 3eme étage with my roommate Nsenga and I do not quite remember



that the conditions were scanty and minimal. But I was surrounded by friends, classmates and other young people, some I still remember, others barely. Who said that the future cannot be imagined in its best shape, dreamt of with new assortments and in a grander size, and made more fitting to provide first-quality higher education than it once did? Why not rebuild better than it once was, for example better toilets now that the new occupants are probably more technology savvy than we were? The burning of ISP/Bukavu left a hole, but she can heal quickly and more fittingly. As any good educational institution, it is eager to deploy its nurturing virtues and breed better citizens not only for Bukavu, but for the whole country, the region, and you bet, the whole world. *Let us all be ISP/Bukavu.*

**End**

#### **Lumumba, continued from page 4**

With respect to Mobutu, Lumumba was warned by several people that his protégé Joseph-Désiré was an informant for the Belgian intelligence service and the CIA. Lumumba dismissed this well-founded fact as a minor thing that Mobutu may have done in Brussels to earn some badly needed money when he lived there from 1958 to 1960. But during part of this period, Mobutu was the representative of Lumumba's wing of the MNC, the MNC/L, in Belgium. After independence, Lumumba made him one of two junior ministers in the Prime Minister's office and named him a Colonel and chief of staff of the Congolese army following its mutiny and sacking of all Belgian officers in early July 1960. Mobutu and Kasavubu, along with Victor Nendaka, Justin Bomboko and other prominent leaders, became CIA collaborators and were paid in this regard, mostly through Project Wizard, the scheme that took the place of the CIA original cobra-venom plot to kill Lumumba by poisoning. Wizard, as its name suggests, was a more sophisticated scheme to make Lumumba's Congolese rivals responsible for removing him from power and thus make it easier for the Americans and the Belgians to assassinate him.

Another weakness Lumumba displayed was his initial thinking that the United States as a former colony that had waged a war of independence would be sympathetic to a former colony being aggressed by the former colonial power. Propaganda aside, all that mattered to the U.S. in 1960 were the U.S. stake in Congo's strategic minerals like uranium, the

economic interests of U.S transnationals in the Congo, some of whose shareholders were high-ranking officials of the U.S. military-industrial complex, and its obligations to Belgium as a NATO partner. This illusion made Lumumba fall into the trap laid against him by U.S.

Ambassador Clare Timberlake, who convinced him to call for UN intervention, which was already designed by UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld to undermine Lumumba's authority and weaken him politically.

### **The Lessons Learned from Lumumba's Short Political Career for Transformative Leadership in the DRC Today**

What are the lessons that we can draw from this period of two months and a half of Lumumba's very short political career as Prime Minister of the Congo, from his taking office on June 30, 1960, to being illegally removed from the exercise of power by Mobutu's coup d'état of September 14, 1960? Whatever weakness Lumumba might have displayed in the limitations mentioned above, he was the kind of leader who could jump from error to decisive action in a minute. He learned so quickly from his mistaken hopes of support from Mobutu and Kasavubu, the United States and the United Nations that he drew strength from ordinary people and Congolese and African progressives.

There are four lessons we can learn from the life and work of Patrice Lumumba, which correspond to the four agendas he was committed to pursue in advancing the revolution despite the multiple crises he had to deal with during July and August 1960. These key

objectives can be summarized as the transformation agenda, the people's agenda, the self-reliance agenda, and the pan-African agenda. The discussion that follows looks at each of these agendas with a view to what we can learn from them for transformational leadership in the DRC and Africa as a whole today.

#### *The Transformation Agenda*

Until 1959, there were two separate branches of the civil service in the Belgian Congo, one for Europeans and the other for Africans. Even when the two were merged in 1959, the number of Africans in the ranks of senior civil servants was ridiculously low. The Force Publique, a colonial army that had defeated the Germans in 1916 at Tabora, the capital of German East Africa in what is Tanzania today, and the Italian Fascists in Ethiopia in 1941, had no Congolese officers during the whole colonial period. The highest rank a Congolese could attain until 1959 was first sergeant major. A dozen or so sergeants were sent to Belgium for training to become warrant officers. On the eve of independence, when noncommissioned officers were asking for promotion to officer ranks, Lumumba told them that they needed further training to become officers.

Five days after independence, the whole army staged a mutiny, following a provocative speech by their Belgian commander in chief, who wrote on the blackboard in a general meeting at the major military camp in Kinshasa that "Before Independence = After Independence," meaning that independence was for civilians, and nothing would change for

the military, who would continue to be led by Belgian officers. Using their up-to-date communication equipment, the military in Kinshasa informed their comrades all over the vast Congo, took over armories, disarmed all the Belgian officers and appointed their own officers in each garrison. Lumumba accepted the *fait accompli*, renamed the force the Armée Nationale Congolaise (ANC) and named Victor Lundula, a former sergeant major who served the FP as a medical assistant during World War II as the commander in chief, and Joseph Mobutu, who had served seven years in the FP and left with the rank of quartermaster sergeant, as colonel and chief of staff of the ANC.

Lumumba learned the hard way but quickly that one of his primary tasks was to transform the colonially inherited structures of the state and the economy into institutions not only controlled by nationals, but which were also designed to serve the needs and interests of the Congolese people. This is the transformation agenda that Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral were to emphasize in their writings.<sup>ii</sup> They pointed out that decolonization will never be successful as long as colonial-era institutions continued to function as before. These structures were established to further the interests of the metropole and white settlers, and not those of African workers and peasants. Lumumba's nationalism had already taught him that lesson, and he began implementing it by Africanizing the state, fighting the mineral transnationals eager to continue looting the Congo's wealth, and paying with his life the price of defending our national sovereignty so our country's abundant national resources could be used to

improve the living conditions of our people. While an unfinished business in his time, the transformation agenda is one of the legacies that Patrice Lumumba left for the Congo and the African continent.

### *The People's Agenda*

Closely related to the transformation agenda is the people's agenda. For Lumumba, political leadership is a calling for service to the people, and not an opportunity for glory and self-enrichment. The state must put the people's security and welfare above everything else. Universally, peace and security constitute the first regalian function of a state. For a state that is incapable of performing this function is either a bloody dictatorship, like Myanmar today, or a state characterized by political experts as a *weak, fragile, or failed state*.

Once peace and stability are established, the second most important regalian function of a state is to develop the economy with a view to increasing the standard of living of the population. This include eradicating poverty, providing people with clean water, electricity, and other amenities of modern life, and ensuring equal access to education, health care, employment opportunities and equal access to justice. In addition to defending national unity and sovereignty against external aggression by Western powers and their transnationals, Lumumba fought the secessions of Katanga and South Kasai to restore peace and the rule of law, as the puppet rulers of these regions were waging genocide with white mercenaries in North Katanga, on the one hand, and resorting to summary executions of

political prisoners in Mbuji-Mayi (then Bakwanga), which became known as the “slaughterhouse” (*la boucherie*), on the other.

### *The Self-Reliance Agenda*

Like Nkrumah, his close friend and mentor, Lumumba was strongly committed to nonviolent resistance, but he did not exclude the use of force when there was no other alternative. This is the situation he faced in July and August 1960. Belgian metropolitan troops had invaded the Congo on July 10 and helped Moïse Tshombe set up the so-called State of Katanga on July 11. They also brought him white mercenaries from South Africa, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Western Europe to defend the secessionist entity against the expected military attack from the central government. When UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld gave protection to the Katanga secession by refusing to implement UN Security Council resolutions on expelling Belgian troops and white mercenaries from the province and Belgium assisted Albert Kalonji in setting up the secessionist “Autonomous State of South Kasai,” Lumumba had no alternative than to rely on the ANC to end the two secessions.

Lumumba's principled determination to do so as a prime minister who had sworn to uphold the unity and territorial integrity of the country was used against him for two reasons. The first was his acquisition from the Soviet Union of military transport trucks and planes to carry ANC soldiers to South Kasai and Katanga, while the second was the massacre of innocent civilians by these soldiers at the Catholic Cathedral in Mbuji-Mayi and the nearby town of Kasengulu. His internal

and external enemies charged him of the sin of communism in the first instance and accused him of the crime of genocide in the second.<sup>iii</sup>

Pressured by Belgium and the United States, Kasavubu used the heinous crimes committed by an army of which he was the supreme commander and Mobutu the chief of staff, to falsely blame Lumumba for these atrocities and used them as a major reason for illegally dismissing him as Prime Minister. For the United States, Larry Devlin, the CIA station chief in Kinshasa and Allen Dulles, the CIA boss in Langley, VA, had already by August 18, 1960, convinced U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower that Lumumba was another Castro and that the communists were already taking over the Congo. Vicious lies, but on the basis of which Eisenhower instructed the CIA to assassinate Lumumba.

Frantz Fanon was correct in noting that this assassination was partly due to two mistakes, namely, Lumumba's request for UN intervention to expel Belgian troops from Katanga, and the willingness of African countries to send peacekeeping troops under UN cover instead of sending them to support the central government against the enemies of the state, both foreign and domestic.<sup>iv</sup> This mistake has also been repeated in the DRC with the second UN force in the Congo, which has been there since 1999, without succeeding in bringing peace and security to Eastern Congo. In 2013, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the regional economic community in which the DRC is a member, decided to send a Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) composed of a

battalion of 1000 soldiers each from South Africa, Tanzania, and Malawi to help the DRC fight foreign militia groups known as "negative forces." The UN Security Council insisted that the FIB be integrated in MONUSCO, the UN stabilization force. The uselessness of the latter in the face of terrorist acts targeting innocent civilians is so well documented that the people of Eastern Congo are currently staging demonstrations demanding its speedy withdrawal. The lesson to be learned here is that countries like the DRC are sufficiently large, highly populated and endowed with enormous natural wealth that they can rely on their own human and material resources for peace and security. Should such self-reliance fail or prove insufficient, they have the option to call on friendly African states to help them. This is what pan-African solidarity is all about.

#### *The Pan-African Agenda*

As already indicated above, the pan-African agenda that Lumumba embraced at the First All-African People's Conference in December 1958 was given a concrete program of action by Congo's first Prime Minister in August 1960 in Kinshasa. His pan-Africanism, which had been elaborated through his connections to the Ghana of Kwame Nkrumah, the Guinea of Ahmed Sékou Touré and the Egypt of Gamal Abdul Nasser, was meant to be manifest in deeds and not in words. On his return trip from New York and Washington in July 1960, Lumumba had a two-day stopover in Accra, Ghana.

During this time, in which the two men discussed how Lumumba was snubbed by

President Eisenhower and received nothing but negative answers to his wishes in Washington, he and Nkrumah signed a secret agreement establishing a Congo-Ghana Union, a federal state whose capital was going to be in Kinshasa. Since Ghana had already established a union with Guinea and was contemplating another one with Mali under Modibo Keita, the Congo-Ghana union was planned to start the process of pan-African integration in Africa, once the Congo crisis was over.

#### **Conclusion**

Had Lumumba not been assassinated, and Nkrumah and Keita overthrown in military coups d'état executed with Western support in 1966 and 1968, respectively, the face of Africa might have been quite different from what it is today. The main lesson from the life and work of Patrice Lumumba is to follow the revolutionary path by transforming the colonially-inherited structures of the state and the economy into institutions designed to expand freedom and improve the living conditions of ordinary Africans (the transformation agenda); subordinating all the activities of the state to the aspirations of the deepest aspirations of the people (the people's agenda); relying on our own forces and resources to defend our self-determination, independence, sovereignty and the right to use our natural resources for national and continental development (the self-reliance agenda); and promoting African unity, economic cooperation and integration, and solidarity with peoples of African descent all over the world.



This is what Patrice Lumumba would have done, had he not been assassinated by the imperial and colonial powers of the United States, Belgium, and the United Kingdom, with the complicity of Congolese traitors.

**April 23, 2021**

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<sup>i</sup> For a brief but comprehensive look at Patrice Lumumba, his struggle for the liberation of the Congo and his political heritage for Africa, see Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *Patrice Lumumba* (Athens, Ohio : Ohio University Press, 2014).

<sup>ii</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963); Amilcar Cabral, *Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979).

<sup>iii</sup> For details on this period, see Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila : A People's History* (London : Zed Books, 2002), Ch. 3, pp. 94-120.

<sup>iv</sup> Frantz Fanon, "Lumumba's Death: Could We Do Otherwise?" in Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays* (New York: Grove Press, 1988), pp. 191-197.

## **UPDATES**

### **Africa Renaissance Conference**

The Central African Studies Association hosted a major conference in July 2021 featuring a range of papers on issues of development in Central Africa. Information is available at <http://centralafricanstudiesassociation.org/>

**Promotions** – Father Bienvenu Matanzonga, PhD, a member of CSA, has been promoted to the post of Vice-President of Academic Affairs of the Jesuit Congolese University (Secrétaire Général Académique).

### **Interviews**

Please visit [Downstream to Kinshasa - Live Q&A - YouTube](#) to watch an interview with filmmaker

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Dieudo Hamadi, held April 24, 2021, with Muadi Mukenge, to discuss his film "Downstream to Kinshasa."

**Articles** – Mvemba Dizolele published "The Dark Side of Rwanda's Rebirth," in *Foreign Policy*, May 29, 2021.

**Obituaries** – We have lost a number of Congolese scholars and leaders in the past year. We wish to honor the memories of the following:

Dibinga Wa Said, PhD; Quentin Kamanda Lumpungu, PhD; Nita Evele; Francois Katunda; Ernest Wamba dia Wamba.

### **Congo Love**

Congo Love is committed to providing a platform for Congolese cultural champions working to empower, inspire and educate their communities in the Congo and around the world. "Our aim is to showcase Congo's positive image around the world through educational initiatives highlighting Congolese culture, heritage and human potential." Congo Love runs programs in the US and in Congo, including the Lumumba Scholars Program. For more information, visit [Congo Love – Congo Love](#).

### **Breaking the Silence: Congo Week**

Breaking the Silence Congo Week is a week of activities that commemorates the millions of lives lost in the Congo conflict, while celebrating the enormous human and natural potential that exists in the country. It is hosted by Friends of the Congo. Congo Week takes place every third week of October. In 2021, it will take place from October 17 – 23.

The purpose of Congo Week is to raise global consciousness about the situation in the Congo and advocate for peace, justice and human dignity in partnership with the Congolese people. Communities throughout the globe join in partnership with Congolese each year to screen films, hold teach-ins and forums, organize rallies, host fundraisers, put on concerts and undertake many other activities to elevate the profile of the Congo throughout the globe.

Since 2008, Congo Week has galvanized the participation of people in over 70 countries and 500 university campuses and communities.

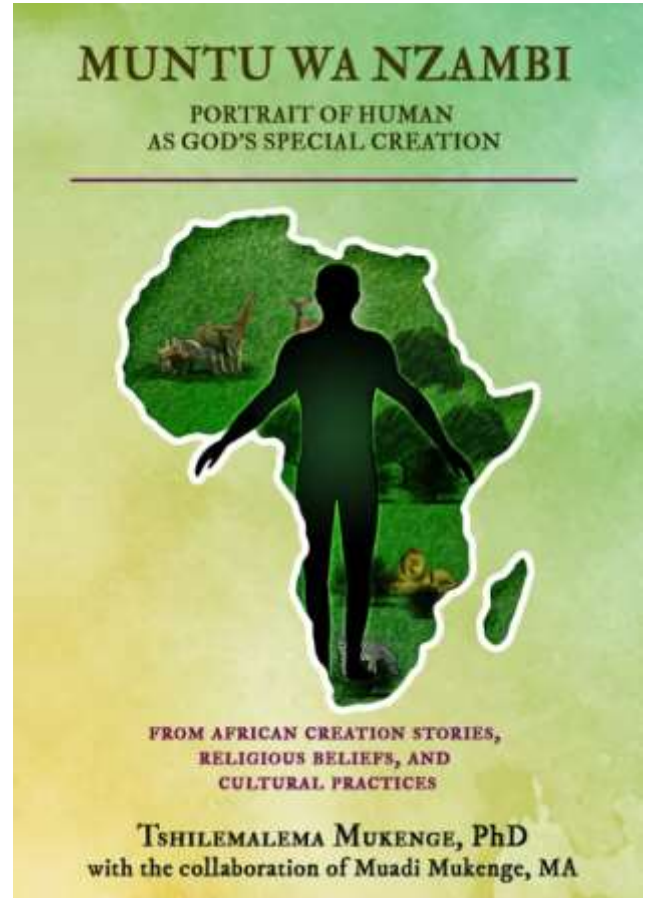
Visit <https://congoweek.org> to sign up for Congo Week or participate in events near you. You can learn more about Friends of the Congo at [www.friendsofthecongo.org](http://www.friendsofthecongo.org). In particular, read about the work with youth in Kinshasa at <https://friendsofthecongo.org/andree-blouin-cultural-center/>.

### Congo in Harlem

Launched in 2009, Congo in Harlem is an annual series of Congo-related films and events at the Maysles Cinema in New York's historic Harlem neighborhood. It takes place during Congo Week, every third week of October. The series showcases a wide range of films by Congolese and international directors, representing the most important issues facing the DRC today.

Congo in Harlem is a volunteer-run, non-profit series funded entirely by grants and individual contributions. For more information, email: [congoinharlem@gmail.com](mailto:congoinharlem@gmail.com) or visit <http://congoinharlem.org>.

### NEW PUBLICATION



*Muntu wa Nzambi* analyzes creation stories, beliefs systems, and cultural practices to present African worldviews on the human as God's special creation. It presents the cultures and historical contributions of diverse ethnic groups such as the Luba, the Kongo, the Yoruba, and the ancient Nubians and Egyptians. Order at: <https://www.amazon.com>.

For speaking engagements, interviews, or other matters, please contact:

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