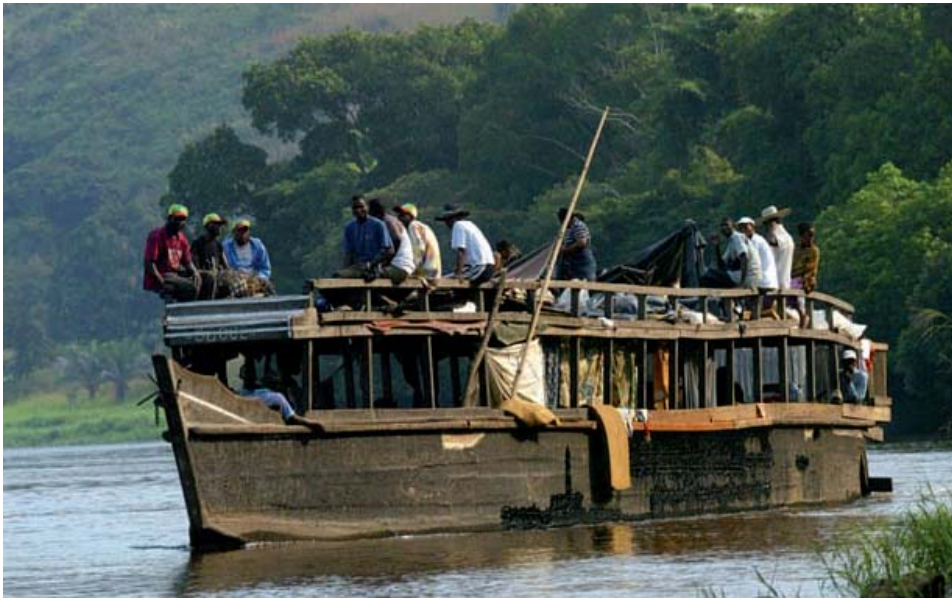


**Military History Research Institute  
(MGFA)**



**A Concise Guide to the History  
of  
the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Demokratische Republik Kongo  
**Wegweiser zur Geschichte**

Herausgegeben vom Militärgeschichtlichen Forschungsamt

**Bernhard Chiari & Dieter H. Kollmer (Editors)**

**A Concise Guide to the History  
of  
the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

[English Translation]

**Issued by the German *Military History Research Institute (MGFA)***

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(by Michel Hasson, Paris)

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## Preface

This volume dealing with the history and presence of the Democratic Republic of Congo was compiled by the Military History Research Institute (Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt MGFA) in Potsdam against the background of a possible engagement of the European Union in this country of Equatorial Africa. Other volumes in the series "Wegweiser zur Geschichte" ("A Guide to History") offer information on Bosnia-Herzegovina and Afghanistan. Books on the Kosovo and the Horn of Africa are in preparation.

Military personnel and civilian aid workers have a need to find their way around in the former Belgian colony that presents a difficult and unfamiliar environment, of which little is known in Germany. The country's current structures, above all the nature of its ongoing conflicts, can be grasped only where analysis thereof embraces not only hard facts like political and military factors, but also historical and cultural aspects. It is for this purpose that this MGFA contribution is intended. For this, the institute can rely on a network that includes the Bundeswehr agencies responsible for planning operations abroad as well as civilian universities and research institutes.

Just two months lie between the initial idea for the "Guide to the History of the Democratic Republic of the Congo" to the moment it is available in printed form. A dedicated and professional team at the Military History Research Institute (MGFA) worked with remarkable intensity and effectiveness, enlisting the cooperation and support of outstanding academics and subject matter experts for the project. Representing all of those involved in this project, I would like to say thanks to Dr. Bernhard Chiari, Head of the Operational Support Unit (MEU) and the person responsible for the "Guide" series. He conceived, organized and led the project under conditions of extreme time pressure. In Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Dieter H. Kollmer he had the assistance of a second editor, whose researches on the Horn of Africa made the prompt establishment of a Congo network possible. Additional indispensable textual and editorial effort was contributed by Dr. Martin Rink, Potsdam, and Navy Lieutenant Andreas Mückusch. The extensive Appendix was produced by Richard Göbelt, Berlin. Finally, the volume was prepared for printing by the editorial staff of the MGFA, special mention going to Michael Thomae, Mag. phil., who no regard for normal working hours coordinated work on the texts and in whose charge they were looked after as professionally as creatively, also Maurice Woynoski, who was responsible for typesetting and layout.

Dr. Denis Tull of the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Berlin) provided advice on conceptual matters and proofed the manuscript from an academic perspective. Above all, my thanks go to the authors, who despite their busy schedules succeeded in meeting our extremely tough timelines. This is by no means a matter of course.

It is my hope that the book on the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be successful as a tool for the use of any German contingent abroad, as a training aid for the Bundeswehr, and as interesting reading for civilian readers. We will be grateful for every feedback. Feedback from our readers is an important aspect of our "Guide" series so that the wishes of our audience can be respected in new editions and future projects. Please use the contact address at the end of the book to contact us.

*Dr. Hans Ehlert*  
Colonel  
Director, Military History Research Institute

## Introduction

Media coverage of the upcoming elections have brought the Democratic Republic of the Congo into the focus of public attention. It is not easy to assess the country's current situation and future developments, since there is little awareness of the social and political framework, within which the difficult stabilization process is taking place. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, six times the size of the Federal Republic of Germany and with 53 million inhabitants (2003), numbers among the most populous countries of Africa. It is often equated with corruption, mismanagement, violence, ethnic conflict and disputes over the distribution of resources, which for many years now have escalated repeatedly, especially in the Eastern provinces along the borders with Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. These conflicts involve militias, local strongmen in the provinces and other Congolese actors, but also foreign businesses and common criminals. The burden of exploitation and terror in a country which has had to suffer through two terrible wars since 1996 is borne by a population made up of around 250 ethnic groups with almost as many different languages. The United Nations have been engaged in the Congo for many years. Nearly 17 thousand UN peacekeepers are currently deployed with the MONUC mission.

A comprehensive overview is necessary if one is to understand the entire complex surrounding international stabilization efforts for the Congo. This involves consideration of historical developments and the lines along which conflicts arise, but also the ethnic and cultural environment, and especially the economic parameters. For this book we have made a selection of important topics, organizing them into three sections. The first chronological subject area deals with the history of the country. Initially there is the question of how societies in the Congo Basin were organised before the arrival of Portuguese sailors, and of the characteristics of African history in general, which had far too long been considered from a colonial perspective and seen from the viewpoint of "backwardness" (Bernhard Chiari). Of central importance for the shaping of the later colony has been the development of the Congo Basin by the world power Portugal since the early modern era. This triggered an economic and political revolution, e.g. a flourishing slave trade, with implications that are still obvious today (Martin Rink). Two contributions, one by Wolfgang Petter and the other by Dieter H Kollmer, deal with the German engagement in the Congo river area up until First World War, and the period of Belgian colonial rule between 1885 and the independence of the African country in 1960. The emergence of an independent state led to war and civil war. The analysis of the authoritarian regime of General Joseph Désiré Mobutu by Helmut Strizek is at the same time an investigation into the Congolese power struggles that took place from the 1960s into the 1990s. The neighbouring states to the east were drawn into the struggle, and a countless number of people fell victim to the conflicts which resulted in the economic decline of the country (under its former name of Zaire). A separate essay is devoted to the genocide committed against 800,000 Tutsi and opposition Hutu in Rwanda in 1994, whose background still remains somewhat unclear; the implications for its western neighbour Zaire are also highlighted. (Peter Hazdra) Denis M Tull addresses the conflicts that evolved in Congo after the end of the Mobutu era, while two other contributions provide an analysis of the European interests in Africa and the attempts by African states to build the equivalent of the European political and security structures (Wolf Kinzel and Sven Grimm).

The first section intentionally ends with an analysis of the current security situation (April 2006) in Kinshasa and the provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Volker Ressler). It revisits a series of problems whose origins stretch back to the colonial period. The contribution is a critical description of the possibilities and limits of United Nations or European Union operations.

The title of the second section of the book is titled "Structures and Life Spheres". It gives insights into the political, economic, social and cultural problem areas that define the current situation in the country. In the introduction Volker Matthies discusses the phenomenon of "failing states" and how far it has spread on the African continent, while Denis M Tull concentrates on the implications the development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has on the international environment. The

actions the world community has carried out for over forty years in support of "nation building" and peace keeping" are outlined by Thomas Breitwieser.

To understand the society of Congo, it is necessary to comprehend its ethnic structures. These are described by Eric Muller. He draws attention to the variety of languages and ethnic groups that is large even if compared with mixed regions of Europe such as the Balkans. Dominic Johnson raises the question about the identity and self-image of the people in the Congo. It produces an overlap of manifold criteria such as ethnic background, the affiliation with a province or social group, all of which to some extent run counter to a "Congolese national consciousness". Christiane Kayser deals with the absence of functioning governmental structures. She describes how local initiatives and groups organise everyday life, in particular in the rural areas. These groups cannot replace a functioning governmental system, but they do form a sustainable basis on which to build a "civil society". Church organisations within the country have taken on the important role of providers of basic medical services and social services, particularly for the schools. Marco Moerschbacher treats this issue in the following article. Sarah Tietze analyses the spreading of HIV/Aids and how this African pandemic is handled. In Congo, where UN soldiers frequently carry the virus, the disease has become a high priority social problem.

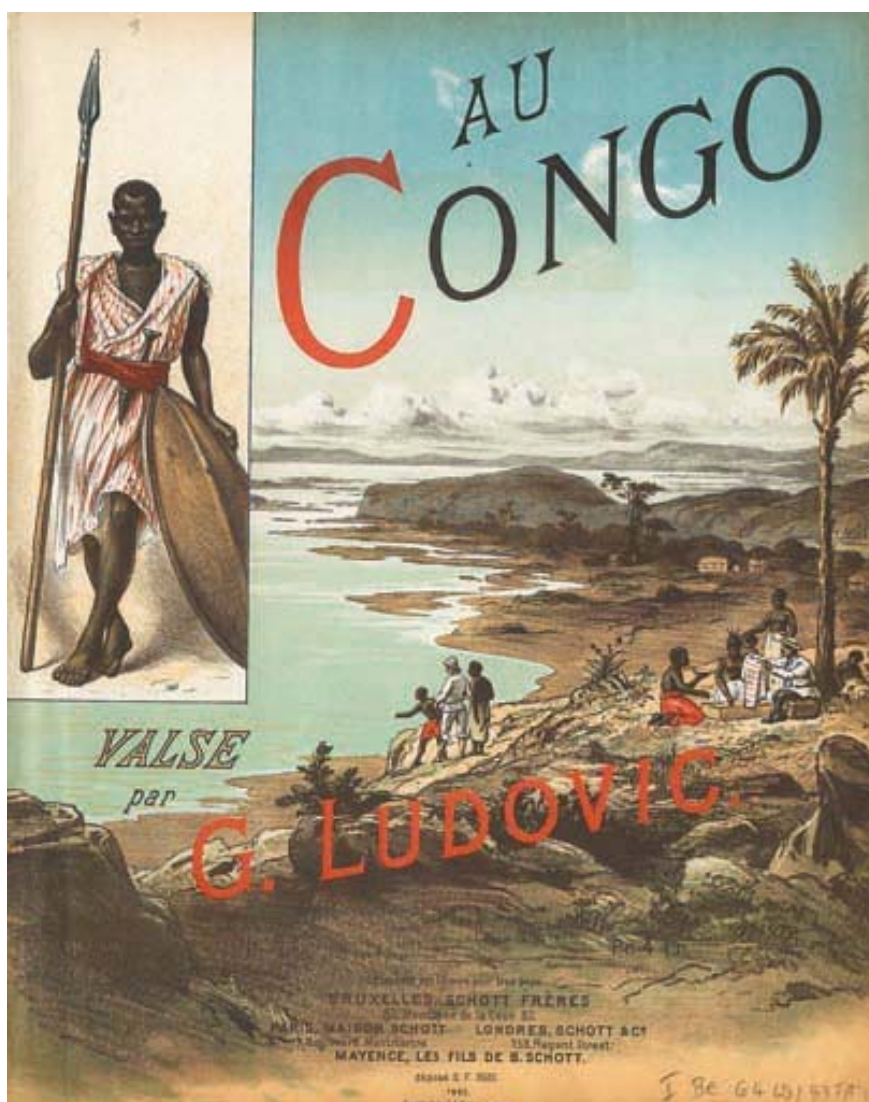
Rainer Tetzlaff describes the "Curse of Natural Riches": For decades the immense natural resources in Zaire / the Democratic Republic of the Congo have neither benefited the population nor the economy of the country. In fact, the proceeds find their way through dubious channels into the pockets of individuals or foreign companies which are often linked with organised crime. It is no coincidence that the crisis provinces in the east and south of the country are also the regions where natural resources are abundant. It is there that ethnic tension and brutal redistribution struggles including foreign actors have for many years been escalating into violent conflict, with the repeated involvement of the ongoing UN MONUC mission.

The final two essays draw attention to another side of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a French-language literature has evolved which is increasingly gaining recognition abroad. It combines European influences with the African story-telling traditions of a society that for a long time has had only an unwritten tradition (Bernhard Chiari). Finally Dominic Johnson portrays Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The current population of the city is between six and eight million. Visitors will experience a metropolis full of contradictions, where newcomers from the provinces arrive day by day hoping to make their fortune in the city, while the economy and infrastructure have for the most part collapsed. Joy of life and colourfulness co-occur with grinding poverty, crime and unhappiness. A popular phrase says that the city has long ago degenerated from "Kin la belle" (Kinshasa the beauty) into "Kin la poubelle" (Kinshasa the bin).

In order to facilitate access to complex facts, the book has besides six maps a third section containing a time bar, bibliographical and internet references, a list of important commemoration days and public holidays and places to remember, plus a name and a keyword index. Coloured info boxes provide background information on keywords in the text.

We wish the soldiers of EUFOR and MONUC good fortune for their ongoing operations and for those to come. Come back home safely.

*Dr. Bernhard Chiari*  
*Oberstleutnant Dr. Dieter H. Kollmer*



For a long time, the history of the Congo has been influenced by the perceptions of the colonial era. Missionaries and colonial officers regarded the country from the viewpoint of economic exploitation, and also applied European standards in their assessments. Apart from a written culture, the Congo was also lacking forms of economy and state similar to those that had developed in Europe. Therefore, the Congo, as all Africa, was often described as "backward". However, as early as 1482 when the Portuguese arrived at the Congo river they encountered a highly developed kingdom which had already existed for more than 100 years. Its rulers met the first Europeans with self-confidence; they were able to rely on forms of rule and execution of power which were considerably "modern" in comparison to European political systems of that time. The romanticising picture from 1885 shows Congo warriors and the Coast of Belgian Congo. It is the cover page of the sheet music piece "Au Congo", a waltz by G. Ludovic, op. 93, Brussels 1885.



## **Africa: A Continent without History?**

### **The Kingdom of Congo before the Discovery by the Portuguese in 1482**

In contrast to Egypt or Ethiopia, today's Congo did not have an advanced written civilization until the Portuguese arrived in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the Middle Ages the region developed independent of former African provinces of the Roman Empire near the Mediterranean coast. In medieval Germany, Central Africa was almost a blank on the world map. Even in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, European monks imagined African dreamlands as the home of one-eyed persons or people with three faces, one leg and a lion's head, and a legendary giant bird named Rock carrying grown elephants through the air. On the other hand, the people on the Congo probably regarded the first white Portuguese sailors as ghosts of their ancestors since they believed that upon entering the realm of the dead the skin of the deceased would turn white as limestone.

Our knowledge of the early past of Equatorial Africa has been gained mainly from travelogues and mission reports of the colonial period. Evidence of Portuguese settlers and missionaries (cf. article by Martin Rink) are mere snapshots of certain moments and, as such, often reflect superficial impressions and meetings. Early reports on the Congo provide rather detailed impressions of craftsmanship and agriculture, settlements and houses, clothing and food or of public festivities. The functioning of political and social systems, formal and informal rules of living together in families and tribes often remain in the dark, as do cultural value systems or religious ideas. Moreover, reports from the early colonial period mostly reflect the objectives, perspectives and expectations of the respective authors, sometimes telling rather more about the colonial activities than the discovered areas.

Remains of buildings are rarely found as it had hardly been necessary to erect stone buildings, given the climatic conditions in Africa. It was only since the 19<sup>th</sup> century that archaeological findings have gradually added to our image of the Congo. Since the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, historians like the Belgian Jean Cuvelier, and native explorers like Petelo Boka, have systematically collected and analyzed oral narratives or so-called lists of rulers (indexes of the kings). In general, however, the history of Equatorial Africa as written by the Europeans so far invites to further express inconsiderate ideas of the "chaotic" "dark" continent which allegedly developed social and governmental structures only under the influence of Europe. The absence of written documents, however, does not mean early Africa did not have a history.

### **The Kingdom of Congo**

When the Portuguese discovered the Congo estuary in 1482, they encountered a kingdom that had already been existing for several hundred years. And it was to last until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first documented ruler had been Nimi a Nzima who expanded his sphere of influence from the southern bank of the Congo river around 1350. At the time when the Portuguese arrived, the Empire he had founded covered 300,000 square kilometres and comprised large parts of today's Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as of the Republic of the Congo and parts of Northern Angola. This area was inhabited mainly by Africans of the Bantu language family who had come into this region before the year 1000. (Bantu means "man", Bantu languages are a subgroup of the Niger-Congo languages: they are approximately as close as the Romanic languages within Europe.) The Congo (or Bacongo) people grew various types of millet, beans, sorghum (bread crop) and traditional African vegetables. Goats, chicken and dogs were the main domestic animals. Hunting was of rather minor importance for subsistence. The population of the Kingdom of Congo knew neither wheel nor script, however, they forged top-quality jewellery of copper and weapons of iron – actually a privilege of the nobility since according to tradition the kingdom had been founded by a blacksmith. Before Christianization the people lived by a lunar calendar, a week consisted of four days, the first of them was a holiday. A month included seven weeks.

The capital of the Kingdom of Congo was Mbanza Kongo (literally: royal court, later it was renamed into São Salvador). It was situated some 150 kilometres or a ten day's march east of the Congo estuary on top of a dominating mountain. Today this place is Angolan territory. The Manikongo (literally: Master of the Bakongo which in turn is derived from the word "Kongo" which stands for "hunter") was elected by an assembly of clan chiefs. According to descriptions of Portuguese visitors in 1489, the insignia of power of Manikongo Nzinga a Nkuwu, who after his conversion to Christianity in 1491 also used his baptismal name João I., were a magnificent throne of wood and ivory, a whip made of a zebra tail, a small cap and a waist belt draped with heads and furs of pups.

Nzinga's empire was not an organized territorial state in terms of the European monarchies but more of an entity of power (hegemony) with a changing manifestation and extension of power. In comparison to other African entities, the Kingdom of Congo was an extreme authoritarian political system: its leaders had clear ideas on how to achieve their own objectives. King João I. concluded agreements with the Portuguese, and with their support fought against his brother who wanted to dispute his inherited supremacy. A prerequisite for the foundation of the kingdom had been the military subjugation of several chieftains' smaller realms on the Congo plateau around 1370.

Like European kings, Manikongo, too came from a noble family. They were probably related to other empires of Equatorial Africa. The ruler had magical and sacral powers, which he was expected to use for the benefit of his people, and was very close to the ancestors. Prior to the introduction of Christianity, people knew highly developed and manifold religious ideas and rites. There was a creator god approachable by all people to whom the creation of the World was attributed. It was the task of the elders or priests to establish the contact with nature spirits or fetishes (often self-made objects to which supernatural characteristics were ascribed). Witchcraft and wizardry played an important role in everyday life. It was a special feature of the Congo that ancestor worship was quite common. Deceased and living relatives were understood as an entity and were connected to each other.

In contrast to the divine right of European rulers, the Manikongo did not owe his power to ancestors or gods, he had to achieve it by himself. Due to his position he stood out of society, nevertheless he was not an absolutist ruler. He continued to be subject to the control of earthly institutions. A council of twelve people (Ne Mdanda) supported the Manikongo when important decisions had to be made. Applicants for the office of the king prepared the grounds for their election by years of lobbying. As rulers they supported their party followers by appointing them to certain positions and showing them substantial marks of favour.

In Mbanza Kongo, the king sat in judgement. This was where he took the salute of his troops and let people render homage to him. According to a severe court ceremonial, people had to approach the Manikongo on all fours.

To watch the king eat or drink was forbidden, under pain of death. Both activities were announced by a master of ceremonies by striking two iron bars together whereupon all people in his surroundings threw themselves on the ground, face down.

The Manikongo appointed governors for the six provinces Mpemba (point of origin for the formation of the kingdom), Nsundi, Mpangu, Mbamba, Soyo and Mbata. The latter probably joined the kingdom voluntarily and, therefore, was could claim an exceptional position. The other provinces, too, were formerly independent territories which were gradually integrated into the kingdom. The Manikongo exercised his rule through a clearly structured civilian administration. The villages - as the smallest entities - were united into districts, each of them governed by an official appointed by the province governors of the king himself. That official also administered the law. The officials of the provinces and districts bore the title Mani, like the king himself, to which the designation of the respective area of responsibility was added, e.g. the name of a province. Their households sometimes comprised several hundred people. Other than officials in the European understanding, they took sides in the distribution of power and resources and exerted influence on decisions at the highest level. Together with the members of the royal court, they formed some kind of nobility which was first and foremost based upon to the affiliation to the royal administration and could hardly be compared

to the situation in late mediaeval Europe.

The king taxed his subjects. He claimed natural produce and labour service, and had all income of the state monitored by a special body. The distribution of goods from different ecological zones was one of the foundations for the concentration of power in Mbanza Kongo. The currency was a type of mollusks which was harvested on an off-coast island controlled by the royal court. Slavery had been known already prior to the arrival of the Portuguese. Slaves belonged to the household of their owners and generally could regain their freedom. Mainly due to the enslavement of prisoners of war and their employment in agriculture, slavery was among the most important elements of power of the rulers in Mbanza Kongo. Not only did they confiscate all belongings in newly occupied territories or in areas which had been "pacified" after uprisings; but they also deprived the local elite of all prerogatives and privileges.

The Manikongo had a bodyguard, but no standing army. If necessary, he called up a militia force which, however, was very poorly organized. Wars were decided by single battles. A military logistic support system did not exist at all, neither did tactical or strategic thinking. What was decisive were the virtues of the individual (male) hunter and warrior. It was only in the 16<sup>th</sup> century that the military system was systematically developed with the help of the Portuguese.

### **African Developments and European Standards**

The short overview of the Kingdom of Congo points to a basic problem which always occurs when Europeans discuss African history. First, Africa and its history are mistakenly regarded as a unity, neglecting the considerable differences in the development of individual regions. This would be like attempting to give an account of 18<sup>th</sup> century European history assuming identical political, economic and cultural prerequisites for the entire territory from Portugal to the Russian Empire of Peter the Great. Second, for a long time the lack of certain governance structures, production techniques or farming methods, which were common in Europe, had been regarded under the viewpoint of "backwardness".

If we take a closer look, however, it is obvious that technical procedures developed in Africa were excellently suited to the conditions on site. A striking example are agriculture and economy: In the Congo, a plough would have subjected the thin fertile soil to much more stress and thus facilitated erosion than hoe-farming with agricultural implements made of wood and iron. Even with the simple implements used, the climatic conditions made it necessary to leave the farmed field every second or third year and gain new, fertile soil through clearing bushes (migratory farming). This forced mobility had considerable influence on the settlement and social structures.

The existing domestic and handicraft enterprises were able to meet the current albeit limited demand for textiles and clothing, bridles, bags and shoes. The handicraft of those items was of a high quality in the Congo as early as in the middle ages. Standard bulk goods would have been contradictory to the situation in the country, where handicraft goods were regarded as creations and the making of them was considered a spiritual process. Under the existing conditions, there was no reason for manufactories or other forms of production. Transporting goods with the help of pack animals and by using waterways was sufficient and appropriate in Equatorial Africa. Large bridges were not built as it was always possible to cross waters by boat. African states often did not develop compulsory systems to jointly tackle large building projects.

Even basic terms like state, nation or empire in Equatorial Africa cannot be sufficiently explained from the perspective of western standards, terms and ideas. To start with, as sufficient lands had always been available throughout African history the rule over people was much more important than control over geographically defined territories. Prior to the beginning of the colonial period, many African societies had been much more mobile than European observers could imagine. Even a term like "tribe" conveys a wrong idea. The inhabitants of the Kingdom of Congo could hardly be permanently assigned to a certain group. People rather defined themselves based on several parallel or interchanging collective criteria. Among other things this would include features like language or

relations, common political centres (rule), religious convictions or geographic vicinity of settlements. The collective boundaries could change easily. However, this was also the particular attraction: to break with the ancient perspective of European settlers and gain new insights into the history of Africa.

*Bernhard Chiari*

**"Lord of the Kongo"**

The novel by Peter Forbath was published in 1996 in New York (German edition: *Der König des Kongo*, München, 1996). It follows the fortunes of the young Portuguese cabin boy Gil Eanes who sails on the four-master Leonor up the Congo river in 1482. Gil was to observe the native people. He soon realized that what he saw were inhabitants of a kingdom having little in common with the European ideas of the "wild" Africans. The young Portuguese befriends the king's son Mbemba, the future king Afonso I. Princess Nimi a Nzinga becomes the mistress and later the wife of the sailor from Europe. Gil experiences the revolution which the landing of the Portuguese caused for the Kingdom of Kongo. (bc)



Primarily, the countries of Europe regarded Africa as a source of unbelievable riches. The discovery and development of Western Africa at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century laid the foundation for the Portuguese world empire which soon maintained trade routes to all known parts of the World. Initially, the contact with the Portuguese brought advantages to the “Manikongo”, i.e. King of the Congo empire, in his fight for domestic power. The rulers in the capital of Mbanza Kongo even benefited from the slave trade organized by the Europeans in some coast stations. Very soon, the Congo empire became more and more dependent on Portugal. Proselytisation soon was accompanied by economic exploitation of the region. The slave trade quickly reached unexpected dimensions due to the increasing demand for labourers in an increasing number of new colonies. The Kingdom of Congo became the arena for the developments that were typical of the colonial period in Africa.

The picture shows a map of Western Africa (Abissinorum sive pretiosi ioannis imperiu[m] – Empire of the Abyssinians or the Priest King John) from the atlas of Jodocus Hondius (actually: Josse de Hondt, a Flemish cartographer and editor, 1563-1612) of 1595, still mixing cartographic knowledge with legends. The detailed map depicts the Congo regions, also shown is the mystic “Empire of the Priest King John” (cf. Info Box).

## Age of Discoveries: The Portuguese at the West-African Coast

The development of Africa in early modern times by the Europeans is just an element in the history of first “globalization”.

The crucial phase were the decades around 1500. The Kingdom of Portugal was first: not by discovering America in 1492, but the West coast of Africa. Only in the 1880s, the continent was formally divided among the European powers and only on the threshold to the 20<sup>th</sup> century various expeditions were able to remove the last blank areas in the map of Africa (cf. Article by Petter). However, it is only from a European point of view that the areas appeared blank since also in the period which historians call “early modern times” power structures existed in Africa. In the region of the Congo estuary and south of it, in today’s Northern Angola, the Bakongo there lived in an empire which was conscious of its own strength when communicating with the first European discoverers (cf. Article by Chiari on the Kingdom of Congo).

The zone of contacts between Africans and European was initially restricted to the coastal area, often manifested in the form of trade stations. This lasted until far into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A development of the inland, i.e. also the Congo Basin, was not of great interest in the early modern times; the tropical climate of the inland was a hindrance for a permanent white settlement anyway. Nevertheless, the European presence on the coasts of Africa had considerable impact on the hinterland. The slave trade alone is proof of it: it involved millions, was arranged by the Europeans and run by African go-betweens. Initially, the rulers in the Kingdom of Congo regarded the slave trade – slavery had long been known and was an important base of power of the ruling family – as a profitable venture for both sides.

The history of the Congo area is connected with the Portuguese development of “Angola”, i.e. not today’s state but rather the coastal area between the towns, then trade stations, of Benguela, Luanda and Cabinda. This region maintained close contact to the isles situated north in the gulf of Guinea and included the hinterland of today’s both Congo republics as well as today’s Angola.

### Portugal as a Colonial Power

Why had it to be Portugal to shape the region from the discovery of the Congo estuary in the 1480s until into the 1970s? This most western country in mainland Europe is situated at the crossroads of Northern Europe and the Mediterranean. In the late middle ages, this was the place where Northern and Mediterranean techniques and traditions of navigation, shipbuilding, trade and finance met. Around 1500, there was still a technological and cultural balance between Europe, the orient (i.e. the Ottoman Empire) and China. Only a technological leap granted the European navies their supremacy: the combination of modern sails and guns into an effective weapon system. From 1500 on, this enabled the Portuguese to acquire the trade area in the Indian Ocean from the East coast of Africa to the Strait of Malacca in South East Asia within just a decade. And any trade activities always involved use of force.

Important prerequisites for the Portuguese expansion originated from the age of Reconquista against the Moors during 15<sup>th</sup> century. The ostensible purpose was to convert the African “pagans” to Christianity. In terms of power politics, the reestablishment of Christian supremacy on the Iberian peninsula was followed by its expansion through the Mediterranean. At first, bases on the opposite Moroccan coast were conquered, beginning with the Portuguese occupation of Ceuta in Morocco in 1415. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century Portugal opened up the West Coast of Africa for her purposes. The Canary Islands were probably already known in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In 1418, Madeira was discovered and in 1434 Gil Eanes sailed beyond the Cape of Bojador, also known as Cape of Fear, thus overcoming a psychological barrier. The expansion proceeded forcefully to the South: In 1444, Cape Verde and in 1456 the Cape Verde Islands were discovered. In the 1450s, upon request of the Portuguese King, the Pope assured the Portuguese of the monopoly on the expansion along the African coast. This was mainly directed against the Castilian competitors and was confirmed in 1479 and 1494: The

development zone allocated to the Portuguese ranged from south of the Canary Islands and east of the line drawn West off the Cape Verde Islands (46° 30' Western Longitude). Areas north and west of that region were assigned to the Spanish Crown. In return for the Pope's "present" the Portuguese King committed to proselytizing the pagans and successfully met this obligation with regard to the ruler of the Bakongo in today's northern Angola.

In fact, the Portuguese expansion was motivated also by less noble intentions. On the one hand, there was the aim to avoid the trade routes controlled by the Muslim "hereditary enemy" and to reach the Central African origin of the Trans-Saharan trade. This was associated with the hope to find new Christian partners in the trade and power game, e. g. the legendary "Priest King John". Another important agenda was the desire for fame nurtured by the spirit of Reconquista. Royal chronicler Gomes Eannes de Azurara describes the motives of the Infant of Portugal, Prince Henry the Navigator (1394-1460), who committed himself to the exploration of the oceans by Portuguese ships, as the zeal to carry out great deeds for the service of God and of the King to make discoveries no other would have ventured to undertake. Henry himself, of course, stayed at home, however, he systematically supported the maritime enterprises of his fellow countrymen.

In 1461, a Portuguese slave trade station was set up near Cape Blanco in today's Mauretania; eleven years later began the discovery of the islands around Fernando Póo and São Tomé in the Gulf of Guinea. The trade station of São Jorge da Mina was founded at the north coast in the Gulf of Guinea in 1482. Der Name »St. Its name "St. George of the Mine" combines the crusader motif, i.e. St. George as the patron saint of the crusaders, with economic motives. The meaningful names of the discovered areas refer to the tapped resources: the "Gold River" in present Sahara, the "Gold Coast" in present Ghana, the "Pepper Coast" in present Liberia and the "Ivory Coast", hence the name for today's state. Until 1450, the economic profits were hardly worth mentioning. From this time on, Madeira became the leading sugar producer. In 1483, the development of São Tomé as sugar island started. By 1512 the number of plantations had reportedly reached 60. This plantation economy was dependent on the "supply" of slaves.

The name "slave coast" in present Togo, Benin and Nigeria reflects the role of Africa in early modern global economy.

### **The Discovery of the Congo**

In the years after 1482, Diego Cão finally discovered the mouth of the Congo river. Martin Behaim of Nuremberg probably was a crew member on this journey. The area around the mouth of the Congo and of present North Angola was the arena of cultural encounters which were quite a positive start for both sides: An expedition into the country was launched in 1490: its objective was proselytization. In addition, the Portuguese looked for "Prester John". Actually, the ruler of the Congo empire, "Manikongo" Mbemba Nzinga they encountered was not the one they were looking for, still he was ready to be christianed. Presumably due to the support by the Portuguese, he gained supremacy of the Bakongo in 1506, now under the Portuguese name of Afonso I., and ruled until 1543. He and the Portuguese King maintained a correspondence on an equal basis. Afonso's son Dom Henrique was sent to Portugal in 1508 and was mitred ten years later – for a long time he was the last African to bear this high Catholic title. Despite a remarkable beginning, the Portuguese-Congolese relations were stagnating in the subsequent decades. In particular, the ever increasing slave trade had a lasting adverse affect on the relationship. The African state broke apart in 1665.

The development of a global economic order removed the basis for a sustained equal relationship with African partners. The first Portuguese journeys to India between 1499 and 1502 and the concurrent discovery of Brazil created the basis of an economy connecting the whole known world, including not only Asia but Africa as well. The slave economy on São Tomé and later in Brazil aggravated the demand for labor . Until 1550, African slaves mainly came from the areas north of the Congo estuary.

Later they were deported from the Congo kingdom and Ngola (hence the name “Angola”) which is south of Congo. In the African inland the slaves were brought to the markets of the coast towns by black middlemen, the so-called “pombeiros”. Around 1570 the Brazilian sugar boom started. Sugar became the main produce of that country. Over in Africa, Luanda, founded in 1575, developed into the most important slave market on the coast.

### The Booming Slave Trade

The delivery of slaves to Brazil, the shipment of the sugar produced there to Europe and the supply of Africa with cheap finished goods, weapons, brandy and the famous glass beads developed into a triangular trade which, in its basic structures, survived into the 19<sup>th</sup> century and financed the mercantile economies in Europe. The Brazilian sugar industry was closely connected to the delivery of African slaves, so that a Transatlantic partnership of convenience was formed between Angola and Brazil. Subsequently, more and more slaves were brought to the South-American country which caused a general change in the quality of slavery.

The streamlined work at the plantations in the context of global economic labor sharing (on unequal terms) caused a thirst for human “goods” which relegated the human being to a bulk commodity. While during the entire 16<sup>th</sup> century some 100,000 slaves were taken to Brazil (10,000 to 15,000 per decade), their number amounted to 600,000 in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century it reduplicated to 1.3 million people before reaching its sad culmination in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Until the official end of slavery in 1888, some 1.6 million slaves had been deported to Brazil.

Initially, the Portuguese “Crown capitalism” was based on a royal trade monopoly. Although it was in part undermined by smuggling, it brought a golden century for Portugal. In the long term, this monopoly had adverse affects since the Portuguese merchants did not feel compelled to increase their economic commitments. Thus, the Dutch and later the English corporations proved to be the more forward-looking solution to financing world trade. In the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the great times of the Portuguese were over. In the Indian Ocean and on the Spice Islands of present Indonesia they were replaced by the Dutch. With Great Britain and France powers arrived on the scene at the Guinea Coast in northern Africa which were to shape the European expansion in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In addition, there was a short-lived attempt of the Electorate of Brandenburg to establish a trade station “Großfriedrichsburg” at the Guinea Coast (1682-1721). The Portuguese maintained territories on both sides of the Southern Atlantic. After long-drawn fights against the Dutch in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, they were able to re-establish their dominance over Brazil and the southern part of the West-African Coast.

The first phase of the European expansion, the Portuguese, was of lasting influence. In the 1880s, the remaining Portuguese trade stations developed into the Portuguese colony of Angola. The Bakongo people living there was distributed among the French, Belgian and Portuguese colonial areas, which caused tensions in the cross-national relations lasting until today. In addition to the long-term effects of this ethnic distribution on the governmental and power-political interrelations, already the initial Portuguese relations with the Congo empire indicate the basic problems of colonialism.

*Martin Rink*



### Prester John

The legend of Prester (lat. rex et sacerdos, indorum rex) John was initially mentioned in medieval Germany. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century Otto von Freising described in his World Chronicle a mythic regent who was said to be the ruler of a powerful Christian empire in Asia. Until the late middle ages, this mention was included in many world maps. The myth was taken up again by the Portuguese in the 15<sup>th</sup> century; they were looking for the legendary empire in Africa and sent several expeditions to East Africa (present Ethiopia) which had been open to Christianity since the 4<sup>th</sup> century. *(bc)*

### Martin Behaim

On the famous oldest globe, which was made in Nuremberg around 1492, its creator Martin Behaim proudly refers to the first German-Congolese meeting. In 1484, Behaim visited the mouth of the Congo, which had been discovered two years ago, as the mercantile leader of a Portuguese expedition. Behaim (1459-1507) stemmed from a Nuremberg patrician family.; he came to Portugal as a merchant – and not as geographer or astronomer as is often assumed because of his globe. In 1484 he brought the African pepper to Lisbon which came into market to replace the overpriced South Asian pepper. Thus, he had achieved the first objective of his discovery journeys. The Portuguese King honored his achievements by conferring a knighthood on him. Some time afterward, Behaim was tasked by the city of Nuremberg to make a globe of the known world. The readiness of the council of Nuremberg to finance the globe is proof of how the German city wanted to use Behaim to enter into the spice business, however, Lisbon insisted on its monopoly. Fourteen years after Behaim's trip to Guinea and Congo, Portugal gained access to the treasured South Asian pepper, thanks to the sea route to India discovered by Vasco da Gama in 1498. In the subsequent period the Congo's economic role was reduced to supplying black slaves, and it remained "darkest Africa" for another four decades. *(wp)*



After its foundation in 1871, the German Empire increasingly asserted its "rights" regarding the distribution of colonies. German scientists and military people visited the so-called black continent to prepare the ground for these objectives and to gain the knowledge required for economic exploitation. The German Emperor and government in Berlin not only tried to gain influence on countries like the Congo through a German-African Society, but also used this indirect way to pursue European power politics, in particular against France. Although the colonial acquisitions prior to the First World War were not very significant compared to those of other powers, however, the proceedings in Africa were intensely discussed by the German public. The photograph shows the German geographer and ethnologist Major Hermann von Wissmann, until 1896 governor of German East Africa (no date indicated, cf. info box ).

## German Influence at the Congo

It was not before 1874 and 1877 that the Congo basin, which had generated great expectations for tropical products and resources, was discovered by Henry M. Stanley; it was developed between 1878 and 1884. At the same time, from 1874 on, the German geographer Dr. Paul Pogge explored the south-western part. In 1876, King Léopold II of Belgium founded an International African Society (Association Internationale Africaine) to use the Congo basin for "international interests" and "according to European standards of civilization". A German section was founded – the German African Society (DAG – Deutsche Afrikanische Gesellschaft); it was very active and Professor Eduard Pechuel-Lösche became the deputy of Stanley in this period of development. Thanks to the travellers of the DAG, the previous history since 1878 was actually a German exploration phase of the still undeveloped Central African area: Otto Schütt, Alexander von Mechow, Oskar Lenz, Dr. Max Buchner, Dr. Richard Böhm, Paul Reichard and many others are to be mentioned in this context. The German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck supported the DAG and its expeditions from his "Africa Funds" in order to provide the German Empire with appropriate influence in Central Africa. In cooperation with the head of the French government Jules Ferry, Bismarck promoted King Léopold's project which eventually resulted in 1884 in the "Congo Free State" (Etat Indépendant du Congo).

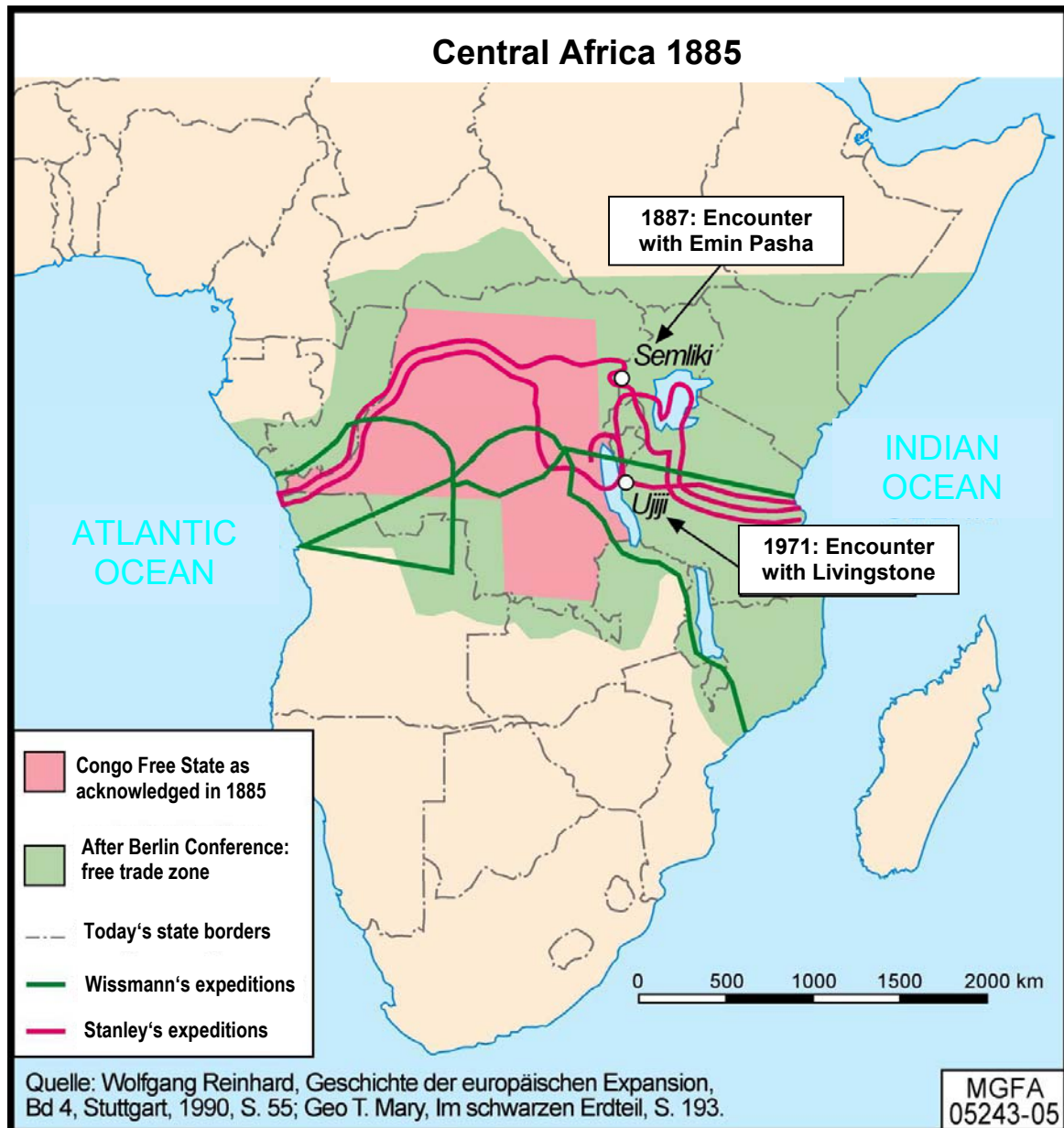
For the German Chancellor the exertion of influence in Africa served another purpose: The harmony of interests in the case of the Congo was in accordance with his policy of taming France which demanded a revenge for the lost Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71. When Portugal, supported by the British, reclaimed the possession of the mouth of the Congo under reference to right of discovery, Bismarck in consultation with Ferry convened a "Congo Conference" of the European powers, the Ottoman Empire and the United States in Berlin (15 November 1884 to 26 February 1885).

Great Britain as the only economic power that benefited from the foreclosure of the Congo basin by virtue of bilateral agreements with Portugal, yielded to the German-French coalition and conceded to an internationalization of the mouth and the river of the Congo as well as to granting the sovereignty and administration of the country to the "international" Congo Free State.

The Berlin conference approved of the foundation of European colonies all over Africa and provided the necessary rules. The general purpose of the European rule was defined as humanitarian. Therefore, European conflicts were not to be extended to Africa, if possible (Article 10 of the "Congo Act"). In addition, all Central Africa, regardless of the political division, was opened to economic activities by all participants in the congress as "Congo Free Trade Zone", should the interests of several states collide. Germany achieved guarantees for her own protected territories in German South West Africa, Cameroon, Togo and German East Africa. Nevertheless, it only moderately asserted its rights since Bismarck – justly, as was proved – considered the administrative and security efforts to be too high. However, having free access to an area where mainly other powers bore the costs for development and securing peace he considered that he "did something important and permanent".

Bismarck demonstrated the German codetermination at the Congo through expeditions of the DAG under his control; if those expeditions acted without authority, he withdrew his support (e.g. the expedition of Schulze in 1884). From 1884 to 1886, Lieutenants Richard Kund and Hans Tappenbeck as well as Dr. Richard Büttner explored the Congo upstream. However, the most significant ventures are related to the name of Hermann von Wissmann. After thorough preparations Wissmann had already accompanied an expedition of Pogge in 1881 and eventually led it through the Congo basin to the Indian Ocean. In 1884/85 he explored the area of Kasai on behalf of the Congo Free State where he founded the town of Luluabourg (present Kananga). This mission which had been approved by the German Crown Prince and Bismarck was particularly important since, albeit ventured at the direction of King Léopold, it was conducted under the German instead of the Congolese flag in order to demonstrate the internationality of the Congo enterprises. As the last important German Congo explorer Captain of the Medical Corps Dr. Ludwig Wolf completed the task after Wissmann had fallen ill. In 1886 and 1887, Wissmann traversed the Congo basin a second time; this time, however, he wanted to gather information about the Arab slave traders, the actual rulers of Inner Africa. Belgian Major Francis de Dhanis later removed their power while Wissmann flanked the operations of the

Belgian in the German Tanganyika/Nyassa lake area (1893).



Already two weeks after the end of the Congo Conference a popular revenge party regained power in France; they did not want to be distracted by a policy under the motto "from the Rhine to the Congo". The "Boulangier Crisis" - named after the newly appointed French war minister Georges Boulanger who supported the idea of a war of revenge against Germany - was used by the French nationalists to end the phase of Congo harmony. However, thanks to the abrupt re-armament of the German army to a (still not fully developed) repeater rifle, the Rifle 88, that crisis could be contained. Without his French cooperation partner Bismarck was not able to prevent King Léopold from systematically cutting the Congo Free State off from its international roots and transforming it into his own private object of exploitation. Germany's influence on Africa was soon limited to the own four protected territories. Bismarck described the small importance of those territories after the resurgence of military tensions in Europe to an enthusiastic colonial publicist as follows: "Your map of Africa is really quite nice. [...] Here is Russia, and here is France, and we're in the middle - that's my map of Africa!" As one of the results of the protest against the unrewarded moderation on the Congo, the chauvinist All German Union (*Alldeutscher Verband*) was founded. Subsequently, the agitation of that Union was to put a heavy strain on German politics and finally contribute to Germany being driven

into first World War.

Léopold II succeeded in shielding the Congo Free State from the World in a way that the atrocities committed against the local population entered public conscience only in 1904. Léopold forestalled the impending re-internationalisation, which was particularly demanded by Great Britain and America, by alienating the country as his private property to the Kingdom of Belgium. In 1908, the discredited Congo Free State was changed into the colony of Belgian Congo (cf. Article by Dieter H. Kollmer). During the phase when the final fate of the Congo was still undecided, which lasted until the dissolution of the London Congo Reform Association in 1913, Germany began to develop a strong interest in taking over. In the Morocco-Congo Treaty of 1911 Germany succeeded in establishing a territorial connection between Cameroon and the Congo . However, the attempted return of the Congo to internationality failed, in particular since German-British talks on the distribution of the Portuguese colonies in case of a state bankruptcy revealed the vision of the "German Central Africa" project propagated by the All Germans. The German industry was more restrained about it. In the German war aims debate during First World War, the takeover of the Congo was considered a matter of course.

The war aims debate proved counterproductive since Belgium, in return, attacked German East Africa to gain a pawn. The Belgian Congo Army (Force Publique) supported the British and South African troops in their battles for the German protectorates. The military commander of the protected area General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck (1870-1964) withdrew with his Askaris. (Askaris were native soldiers in the service of the colonial rulers. During the First World War in German East Africa 11,000 Askaris under the command of Lettow-Vorbeck, although vastly outnumbered by the colonial troops of the United Kingdom, remained unbeaten after four years of war. During the apartheid regime in South Africa the term Askari was given to guerrillas who joined the South African forces. During World War II, the same term was used for Russian deserters who joined the SS.) In 1917/18 the fight continued on Portuguese and British colonial territories.

In 1919, under the Treaty of Versailles Belgium was given the German East African administrative units of Rwanda-Urundi, the so called *Residenturen*, as mandate zones. In contrast, the national socialist colonial plans of 1940 to 1943 specifically provided for the accession of the Congo to "German Central Africa" as developed by the planning staffs "*Sisal*" and "*Bananen*" for East and West Africa respectively (*SS-Obergruppenführer* Philipp Bouhler and *SS-Brigadeführer* Bernhard Ruberg). However, the annexation could hardly have been carried out successfully against the United States which had been developing a military presence in Belgian Congo since 1942. The Congolese uranium was a prerequisite for building the atomic bomb. The US had already begun and wanted to prevent Hitler from that under any circumstances.

The Federal Republic of Germany largely kept out of post-colonial Congo and its confusions. German participation in non-governmental organisations, in particular clerical and missionary ones, like the Franciscan order, has taken place since the time of the Belgian rule, it was and will be a fact in health and education. It is only recently that the Federal government has been active in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 2003, it provided 13 million Euro for civilian projects, 25 millions for demobilization and reintegration of combatants, and another five millions for crisis prevention.

Wolfgang Petter

### Hermann von Wissmann

Hermann von Wissmann was born on September 4, 1853 in Frankfurt/Oder. His father was a Prussian senior civil servant. Wissmann attended the Berlin War College (Kriegsschule) and its cadet corps. In 1874 he entered Rostock University to study science, geography and ethnology. In 1881/82 he traversed Equatorial Africa from the West to the East, and between 1883 and 1885 he explored the future Belgian colony of Congo by order of King Léopold II. After another journey through Africa in 1886/87, Wissmann as major and Commissioner of the Empire for German East Africa set up a *Schutztruppe* (Protection Corps) between 1889 and 1891 and defeated the coast Arabs and slave traders in the war for the rule of the country. For his merits the German Emperor ennobled Wissmann and promoted him to the rank of major. 1895/96 Wissmann in his capacity as governor sent Colonel Lothar von Trotha, who later in 1904 would become famous for massacring the Herero in German South West Africa, on an expedition into the inland and pacified German East Africa during a new crisis by virtue of his authority and diplomacy. In 1896, Hermann von Wissmann returned to Germany for health reasons.

He died in a hunting accident in Weißenbach, Steiermark, in 1905 (bc)



## »Congo Müller«: A career of a German mercenary



Siegfried Müller (right) training a multinational white mercenary force in 1964 in Kamina Military Camp, Katanga.

In the fall of 1964, West German newspapers repeatedly reported about White mercenaries being employed in the Congolese civil war. On 23 September the *"Spiegel"* reported that the German "Siegfried Müller [...] Holder of the Iron Cross 1<sup>st</sup> Class [...] was one of the first who signed up for the white mercenary troop in the Congo". The press soon gave the German mercenary officer a war name "Congo Müller".

Among the modern lansquenets primarily from Belgium, Great Britain, Rhodesia and South Africa who called themselves "Congo volunteers" and had been recruited as "military technical assistance volunteers" were some three dozen Germans supporting the central government against the "Simbas" (lions). In 1964 the lion leaders proclaimed the "People's Republic of the Congo" in then Stanleyville (Kisangani) and gained control of large areas of the country within a few weeks. Supported by the former colonial power, Belgium, and the United States, Prime Minister Moïse Tshombé and General Joseph Désiré Mobutu coordinated

the operations of the white mercenaries and the Congolese national army. The task: 300 mercenaries, divided into six "commandos", were to recapture Stanleyville.

For most of the Germans, September 9 was the beginning of their deployment with "Commando 52" – led by captain Müller. It was Müller's biography which recommended him for this command: 1920 born in Crossen an der Oder (Lower Silesia), after his membership in the Hitlerjugend, A-levels (Abitur) and Reich Labour Service (Reicharbeitsdienst) he joined the Wehrmacht in 1939, he fought in Poland, France and finally as tank hunter at the east front. Seriously wounded in action, he was taken into American captivity as *Oberfähnrich* (senior ensign) at the end of the war. In 1948, a year after his release, Müller became a soldier again – this time under American command in a »Labour Service Unit« consisting of Germans; at the end he was employed as platoon leader of an object security unit in the rank of a first lieutenant. After he was denied acceptance into the Bundeswehr in 1956, Müller got a well-paid job to clear mines of the Africa Corps in the Sahara for a British petrol company. Married and father of a daughter he emigrated to South Africa in 1962. In 1964, Müller joint the first 38 mercenaries to fly into the Congo; after a first operation to free Albertville he was promoted to the rank of captain.

"Commando 52" was to advance from the province capital Coquilhatville (Mbandaka) via Ingende to Boende thus freeing the province of Équatorial. Müller later remarked: "It is almost as large as the Federal Republic". I took care of it with my 40 troops and probably another hundred and fifty blacks. I dealt with them. Ten weeks." "Taking care" meant to conduct rapid and deadly attacks with jeeps, light wheeled AFV, mortars, machine guns and assault rifles. Due to their often merciless conduct, the population soon referred to the mercenaries as "les affreux" (the frightful). In November 1964 Müller was promoted major and assumed command of the mercenary basis in Kamina, which he held until May 1965. Müller described his mission as fight against communism and "for the idea of the West". However, most of the mercenaries were attracted by the money: 1500 Deutschmarks plus danger pay. Having returned for a short stay in Germany, Müller became a political issue, not least because of numerous press reports and his "booze confession" when he, unaware and inebriated, gave an interview to an East German television team. Subsequently, films and books about "Congo Müller"

and the interview pressed on a record supported a large-scale propaganda action against the Federal Republic labelled "henchman of US imperialism".

Despite his dubious fame – "People know me from Beijing to Washington" – and a planned mission in Vietnam, "Congo Müller" never again fought in a war. Siegfried Müller died of stomach cancer in Boksburg, South Africa, in April 1983. *(cb)*



## Congo Free State and The Belgian Congo



After the Congo had been explored by the British journalist and adventurer Henry Morton Stanley for the Belgian King, the Berlin Africa Conference in 1885 assigned the territory to Léopold II personally. The King laid the economic exploitation of the Congo into the hands of Belgian export companies. In their attempts to maximize the profits, they became guilty of massive assaults on the Congolese population. Due to the public outrage in Europe, in 1908 the colonial powers forced the Belgian King to sell his colony to the Belgian state. For the Congolese the situation hardly changed since the companies exploiting the natural resources – mainly the "Société Générale de Belgique", remained the same.

Uprisings and rebellions occurred repeatedly in the Congo, however, they were brutally crushed by the colonial army named "Force Publique". After the end of World War II, there was a strong emancipation movement which resulted in the third largest African state gaining independence in 1960. The photograph shows King Albert of Belgium (1875-1934) and his wife Queen Elisabeth during a tour of Léopoldville, the capital of the colony of Belgian Congo (around 1920).

### **Congo Free State and The Belgian Congo: The Belgian Colonial Rule between 1885 and 1960**

In 1874, Henry Morton Stanley was the first European to explore the Congo river basin. Since promising resources had been found, he offered the British government to develop that area on their behalf. Surprisingly, London refused that offer. Thereupon, Stanley approached the Belgian King Léopold II (1865-1909) who was looking for an appropriate area for an African commitment of his kingdom. In 1878, the King and the explorer reached an agreement: Stanley was to explore the area along the Congo river on behalf of Belgium over a five-year period. Since after five years the results did not satisfy the ideas of the Belgian public, the government officially disassociated from Stanley.

However, the Belgian King was intrigued by the idea to add this exotic region to his kingdom so he continued financing Stanley – secretly from his private means. Between 1879 and 1885, Stanley, accompanied by German expeditions (cf. the article by Wolfgang Petter) – concluded "station agreements" with several Bantu chiefs for King Léopold. The agreements provided, inter alia, to place the ethnic groups along the Congo river under Belgian "protection" and to leave the exploration as well as the exploitation of the resources to Belgium. Due to the cultural differences and their lack of French language skills the chiefs were not able to foresee the full implications of their signing the agreements: In the time to follow their areas were ruthlessly exploited by proprietary societies, which had been granted special licenses by King Léopold particularly for that purpose, and their subjects were used as labor slaves on the basis of questionable contracts.

#### **The private colonial empire of Léopold II: The Congo Free State 1885 to 1908**

In Belgium – as in many other parts of Europe – public opinion was against the acquisition of colonies. After prolonged legal debates, the Berlin Africa Conference awarded Léopold II the areas along the Congo river as private possessions. Léopold subscribed to the obligation "to watch over the preservation of the native tribes, and to care for the improvement of the condition of their moral and material welfare, and to help in suppressing slavery, and especially the slave trade" ... and to "protect and favour all religious, scientific or charitable institutions and undertakings created and organized for the above ends."

On 23 April 1885, Léopold declared himself private owner of the Congo. The area was 75 times the size of Belgium, it was colonised district after district. Special forces, the "Force Publique", were set up to destroy the existing Bantu empires. As a result of the successful military actions, in the course of the years these special forces were expanded to form the Belgian colonial army Léopold enacted a constitution for the "Congo Free State". That status – a principal contradiction to international law – was unprecedented in European colonial history.

The appropriation of the territory by Belgium was accompanied by the advanced Christian proselytisation (cf. the article by Marco Moerschbacher). But missionary stations with schools and hospitals were only a by-product of the economic exploitation. A state monopoly was established for the very profitable copper mining in the province of Katanga and the utilization of other valuable raw materials like ivory and natural rubber. The invention of the inflatable rubber tire in 1888 resulted in a huge increase in the demand for natural rubber in Europe. Without consideration of the rural structures and the traditional villages in the Congo, enormous rubber plantations were created. Often the entire population of a village was forced to work at the plantation. The plantations destroyed the traditional self-sufficient economy, i.e. subsistence economy, and made the population dependent on food supplies by the Belgian export companies. Those, in turn, fully used their position and – backed by the Force Publique - squeezed the maximum profit out of the Congolese population. Rubber farmers who did not harvest the projected amounts were subjected to serious physical abuse. Those disreputable activities of the Belgian colonial rulers and of the Belgian colonial army went down as "Congo atrocities". Particularly the social structures which had evolved in the western and central

## Congo Free State and The Belgian Congo

regions of Congo were seriously damaged. In the East and South the mining of mineral resources had a similarly severe impact.

### **The State Colony: Belgian Congo 1908 - 1960**

Alarmed by various reports about the atrocities, the Western nations forced Léopold to sell the Congo Free State to the Belgian state – thereupon it was renamed into Belgian Congo.

On 22 March 1910 a new constitution proclaimed the abolition of forced labor. The effect of that measure was slow in coming. As previously, the Belgian export companies needed the cheap local labour force for a profitable exploitation of the expanding plantation economy and the intensive mining of natural resources. The high profit margins in the sale of agricultural products like natural rubber, palm-oil and coffee as well as of mining products like copper, lead, zinc and diamonds finally enabled Belgium to repair the heavy war damage suffered in First World War. In the course of the 1930s, Belgium joined the group of industrial states. From 1928, a leading role in this development was assumed by the Société Générale de Belgique.

In 1919, after the end of first World War, the German Empire lost its colonies in East Africa as a consequence of the Treaty of Versailles. Belgium was tasked with the temporary administration of Rwanda-Urundi. On 21 August 1925, the mandate area became an administrative part of the colony of Belgian Congo. For the purpose of rapidly increasing the intensive mining of resources in the South and East of the Congo, the Belgians promoted immigration, in particular from Rwanda. Until today, this decision has caused ethnic conflicts, in particular in the East of the present Democratic Republic. Until the mid-1920s, several traditionalist and Christian cults developed in the inland: later they spread mainly among the rural population (Kimbanguism). Since they resorted to African traditions and established nationalist ideas, the colonial administration and representatives of the church perceived them as a substantial threat to Belgian dominance. As a countermeasure all African and in particular the religious organizations were forbidden on 11 February 1926. At the same time, Léopoldville – the present Kinshasa – replaced Boma as the capital of the colony.

Nevertheless, there were repeated regional uprisings and rebellions against the Belgian colonial rule. In 1931, the province of Katanga which was rich in natural resources wanted to separate from the central government in Léopoldville. Such efforts were defeated as was a mutiny of soldiers in Luluabourg (present Kananga) in 1944. It rapidly spread along the railway line to Katanga and involved railway employees, miners and farmers. It took the administration a total of four month to regain control over the area.

During World War II, the Congolese army was fighting with the Allies in North Africa and Eritrea. However, the country was much more important for allied war economy as a supplier of raw materials. In particular, ore and uranium from the Congolese mines as well as natural rubber were of vital importance to the defence industries of the United States and Great Britain. In September 1942, the United States received 1,200 tons of uranium from Katanga for their atomic bomb program; they used it together with uranium from Colorado and Canada for the atomic bombs dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The export of raw materials caused an economic boom of the Congo during World War II. These first beginnings of an industrialization increased the urbanization tendencies. At the same time, a self-confident African middle class began to develop gradually.

## Congo Free State and The Belgian Congo

### The end of both World War II and the colonial period in Africa

After the victory of the allies in World War II, many Africans hoped for more liberties, especially since even the Belgian colonial administration was seeking reforms. Their objective was to create a loyal Black middle class. In the 1950s, the living standard of the Congolese in the cities was relatively high. After having passed a language and culture test, the Africans were allowed to rise to so-called évolués (assimilated) and their status was largely equal to the one of Europeans. However, higher positions remained unattainable for them. At the time the country gained independence, there were only a dozen Congolese university graduates. For many »Évolués« the reforms did not go far enough. They took the lead in an emancipation movement focusing on the independence of the country.

When in 1955 a Belgian professor proposed gradual reforms and the release of the country into independence in 1985, this met with protests and calls for armed struggle. However, the majority of the urban population rather went for demonstrations and strikes. Nevertheless, in January 1959, after a party event had been forbidden, unrests of several days occurred involving dead and injured, among them a number of Europeans. The Belgian government reacted with panic and consented to independence already on 30 June 1960. With the French experience in North Africa in mind Brussels wanted by no means risk a "second Algeria", which had been conducting its war of independence since 1954. At the same time it was intended that moderate Congolese politicians would guarantee Belgian interests also after the independence. The envisaged direction towards a neo-colonial path has thus been set.

*Dieter H. Kollmer*

#### Henry Morton Stanley, David Livingstone and the development of the Congo

The British-American yellow press journalist Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904) came to Africa for the



The encounter between Stanley and Livingstone in Ujiji, Afrika.  
(Wood engraving from *Illustrierte Zeitung*, Leipzig, 7 September 1872,  
coloured at a later date)

first time in 1871. He was to trace the missing British Africa explorer David Livingstone on behalf of the "New York Herald". The latter did not return home after his third African expedition which had received much attention. Stanley indeed succeeded in finding Livingstone. On 10 August 1872 both men met in Ujiji at Lake Tanganjika. Stanley is said to have addressed Livingstone with the legendary words: »Mister Livingstone, I presume«. Before both expeditions went their

separate ways again, they explored the coast of Lake Tanganjika together. While Stanley afterwards returned to Europe, Livingstone continued his search for the sources of the Nile. Having been in poor health he died in present Zambia on 1 August 1873 before he achieved this goal.

Stanley described his adventures on the search for Livingstone in his book "How I found Livingstone". From 1879 he travelled the Congo by order of the Belgian King Léopold II. In the course of the journey, Stanley founded the future capital of the country in the lower reaches of the river and named it Léopoldville (present Kinshasa) after his benefactor. Léopold owes the fact that the Berlin Conference assigned the territories of the present Congo finally to Belgium most and foremost to Stanley's expeditions. (am)

## Congo Free State and The Belgian Congo

### The "Force Publique"

The Force Publique was established in 1885 by order of King Léopold II to ensure the military security of the Congo Free State. Until 1960 it was the most influential military power in the Belgian colony of the Congo. It was commanded by former Belgian officers. Initially, the sergeant ranks were held by European mercenaries and adventurers exclusively. Until the 1930s Black Africans were only to be found among the lower ranks of NCOs and nonrated personnel; only after that time Congolese were permitted to become sergeants. (Joseph Desiré Mobutu, for instance, was a sergeant-major in the Force Publique.)

A part of the African soldiers joined the Belgian colonial army voluntarily, however, many were conscripted. In 1914, its personnel strength was 17,000 and in 1960 some 30,000 troops. Training and disciplination of the soldiers by the Belgian officers was severe. During state visits of European potentates the Force's soldiers always made a very good impression. In First World War, the Force Publique fought against the German colonial troops in German East Africa and in World War II alongside the allies in North Africa as well as in Eritrea. Nevertheless, within the 80 years of its existence it had earned a rather dubious reputation. It was ruthlessly used by the respective potentates as a domestic instrument of power. Among other things, the Force was responsible for the "Congo atrocities" in the early 20th century and was always brutally supporting the colonial rulers in putting down rebellions.

After the comparatively peaceful end of the colonial period, the Force Publique became the core of the national Congolese armed forces, called "Armée Nationale Congolaise" (ANC). When their still Belgian officer corps challenged them not to follow the instructions of the new political leaders, a mutiny broke out. Without much bloodshed, the officer corps was replaced with Congolese sergeants and politicians. The time of the "Force Publique" was finally over. (*dhk*)

### Léopold II of Belgium and the "Congo atrocities"

"Small country, small spirit". These were the words used by the Belgian King Léopold II to describe his country and his own subjects. But he did not want to settle for that. In 1885 he gained the Congo Free State as his private possession. Léopold used all his private means to develop the country. The prerequisite for the high profits he could draw from "his" Congo, however, was created by somebody else: in 1888 John Dunlop invented the rubber tire. The natural rubber required for this new technology existed in the Congo. By order of Léopold franchise companies began in 1888 to literally squeeze natural rubber from the Congo Free State. It is assumed that up to ten million people were killed or died as a consequence of abuse and maiming in the years until 1908. These crimes went down into history as "Congo atrocities". They could not be kept secret forever since missionaries, journalists and business people in Europe and America repeatedly referred to the brutal practices in the Congo Free State. Even societies like the "Congo Reform Association" were founded which demanded to stop the killing. When the governments of the United States, Great Britain and even Belgium interfered, Léopold had to yield to international pressure in 1908. He gave up his rights in the Congo and signed over his property to the Belgian state. (*am*)

## Congo Free State and The Belgian Congo

### The "Société Générale de Belgique"

In 1928, the Société Générale de Belgique (SGB), a Belgian financial syndicate, took over control of the largest mining corporations in Belgian Congo. It united the most important franchise companies in copper, gold, tin and diamond mining.

The roots of the economic giant can be traced back to the time when the colony of Belgian Congo came into being. For the purpose of supporting its development, King Léopold II founded the "Study Committee of the Upper Congo" in 1876; in the late 1880 it was replaced by the "Association internationale du Congo". The inclusion of his private means and the investments of important banker families (e.g. the Rothschild dynasty) made it possible to finance and conduct the necessary expeditions for the exploration and seizure of the Congo. From 1884 on it was almost exclusively Belgian economic enterprises which exploited the enormous resources.

After the Congo Free State had become the state colony of Belgian Congo the profitable export companies remained in the possession of the same Belgian parent companies. Due to the commitment of the SGB the most important franchise companies were finally united in 1928 which significantly increased the political influence of the industry in Belgian Congo. In the 1920s and 1930s the SGB controlled some 70 percent of the economic life of the colony. Its economic and political power was maintained until the Congo became independent in 1960. Only the expropriation during the "Africanization" policy under Mobutu brought an the end to the "Société Générale". (am)

## Congo Free State and The Belgian Congo

### Joseph Conrad, *The Heart of Darkness*

With his novel "The Heart of Darkness" the English writer Joseph Conrad became world famous in 1902; he created probably the most prominent literary text about the Congo. In the "Heart of Darkness" Conrad, born on 3 December 1857 as a son to Ukrainian parents in Berdyczów in Poland, describes a journey of the hero Charlie Marlow on a steamboat into the inland of the Congo. One of the main personages, the ivory trader Mr. Kurtz – a person which is often cited in literature about the Congo – is the prototype of a brutal colonial ruler around 1890. Conrad, who himself was a sailor on the Congo river, became an acclaimed critic of colonial practices. Until present, the title of "The Heart of Darkness" has been used to paraphrase injustice and crimes in Africa. Joseph Conrad died near Canterbury, England on 3 August 1924. (bc)

## The Authoritarian Regime under General Mobutu



It has been only since 1997 that the Democratic Republic of the Congo is bearing the name it had been given in 1960. Between 1971 and 1997 the official designation of the state had been Zaire.

Zaire is derived from the expression "N'Zadi" which means river in Lingala, a Bantu dialect widespread in the Congo. The first Portuguese in the Congo used N'Zaire to name the river Congo.

The change of the name Congo into Zaire is closely connected with Joseph Désiré Mobutu. Since he became President of the country in 1965, Mobutu had been pursuing a policy of "Africanisation".

When the state party Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution (Popular Movement of the Revolution – MPR) was founded in 1967, an "authentic nationalism" was codified in the Manifesto of N'Sele. Its aim was to return the people to the traditional African way of life and to drive back foreign influence. In addition to the renaming of the country into Zaire (21 October 1971), a new national anthem and a new national flag symbolized this policy. All adult men had to wear uniform clothing, the *abacost*. French designations were removed from public life, the inhabitants were forced to "Africanize" their Christian names. The President himself appeared only under the name Mobutu Sese Seko. Foreign firms were expelled from the country, their possessions were seized. With the return to pre-colonial structures, Mobutu wanted to unify the country and swear the population to his person according to the tradition of the classic chiefs of tribes. In the subsequent years, the "authenticity" movement increasingly developed into a new ideology – the "Mobutism". The autocratic and almighty head of state presented himself as a kind of godsend Messiah.

The photograph shows Mobutu during the swearing-in ceremony for his third tenure as president in Kinshasa on 5th December 1984.



## The authoritarian regime under General Joseph Désiré Mobutu: A symbol of the Cold War

In the early 1960s, the Cold War in Africa aggravated when the colony of Belgian Congo gained its independence. The first Prime Minister of the young republic, Patrice Émiry Lumumba, who had asked the Soviet Union to help to prevent a secession of provinces, was labelled a Communist; and in early 1961 with American-Belgian support he was turned over to his enemies in Elisabethville (today: Lubumbashi) who killed him later on.

Almost at the same time as Joseph Désiré Mobutu came into power in the Congo as a result of a military coup on 24 November 1965, a number of political overthrows – which also could be described as "the fall of mankind in terms of democracy" - took place in Africa south of the Sahara. The West seemed to have lost the confidence that the democratic systems established through independence would be able to resist the feared "communist bacillus". Hence, pro-western military dictatorships were backed if only they were considered to be able to ensure political stability and economic development. Until 1975 alone, 18 military overthrows took place in Black Africa – often with western approval or support. Mobutu was in "good company" of numerous "newly-developed dictatorships" that were supported by the West. Some of them lasted until the end of the Cold War in 1990.

### State independence until Mobutu came into power

In 1960, Belgium yielded to international pressure and released its economically prosperous colony into independence on 30 June 1960, without having made the necessary preparations. The Parliament which had been elected in May 1960 agreed shortly before the day of independence to elect Joseph Kasavubu - the speaker of the important Bakongo people - as state president. Patrice Lumumba, the head of the anti-colonial national party Mouvement National Congolais (MNC) was given the, by constitution more important, office of the Prime Minister.

However, the ceremony on occasion of the country's independence alone became a signal. The Belgian King Baudouin thought to prize his predecessor King Léopold II as bearer of civilization and liberator from Arab slave traders although it was common knowledge how brutally Léopold had exploited his "Congo Free State" between 1885 and 1908. (cf. the article by Dieter H. Kollmer). Enraged Lumumba chimed in and delivered a speech on 30 June 1960 that made history: "For this independence of the Congo, even as it is celebrated today with Belgium, a friendly country with whom we deal as equal to equal, no Congolese worthy of the name will ever be able to forget that it was by fighting that it has been won [...] We have known ironies, insults, blows that we endured morning, noon, and evening, because we are Negroes".<sup>fn</sup> [Translator's note: Source of the English text [http://www.africawithin.com/lumumba/independence\\_speech.htm](http://www.africawithin.com/lumumba/independence_speech.htm)] After this speech, they were hardly able to prevent the Belgian King from departing immediately.

The new state enjoyed only a very short period of quiet. All hell broke loose on 4 July 1960 in the barracks of Thysville (Mbanzu-Ngungu) and Léopoldville (Kinshasa). When General Janssens who was still the acting Chief of the so-called Force Publique (cf. box on page ??) declared that the independence did not have any significance and everything would continue as before, the soldiers mutinied. Janssens was forced to leave the country and Lumumba appointed Colonel Joseph Désiré Mobutu, a clever young man, Chief of the General Staff of a new Congolese Army. Mobutu, however, had also close relations to the US intelligence agency CIA.

Mobutu, born 14 October 1930, had joined the Force Publique at the age of 19 and left the army in 1956 as master sergeant. Later, he had worked as a journalist and joined the MNC party in 1958. In 1960 Lumumba appointed him State Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office. Mobutu's appointment as Chief of the General Staff was the beginning of his unstoppable rise after President Kasavubu and Prime Minister Lumumba had dismissed each other. Since the 5 September 1960, government power

was officially exercised by a "College of Commissioners" (Collège des Commissaires) formed by Mobutu. Lumumba fled to Stanleyville, Kisangani, where he wanted to relocate the government. However, soldiers loyal to Mobutu arrested Lumumba on his flight. Pressured by Belgium and the US, Mobutu turned his former friend over to his archenemy Moïse Tshombé, who had proclaimed an independent state Katanga from Elisabethville (Lubumbashi). Lumumba was assassinated near Elisabethville on 17 January 1961.

The haste of foreign Mobutu supporters in the elimination of Lumumba was probably also connected with the imminent assumption of office by the American President John F. Kennedy on 20 January 1960. There were concerns that Kennedy would co-operate with the nationalist Lumumba to preserve the territorial integrity of the Congo. Later, Kennedy indeed supported measures of the UN to stop the secession in Katanga and the diamond province of South Kasai which also had declared its independence on 8 August 1960. On 21 February 1961, the UN Security Council de facto took over the administration of the Congo.

After the death of Lumumba, Mobutu dissolved the College of Commissioners, accepted a new government appointed by Kasavubu and withdrew with the army into the barracks. In 1963, the United Nations were eventually able to end the secessions of Katanga and Kasai. Mobutu himself got involved in the process when he and his troops, supported by a US financed army of mercenaries mainly from South Africa, finally put down further rebellions in the East and in the western Kwilu province in November 1964. Prior to that, on 10 July 1964, State President Kasavubu had appointed the former Katanga head of government, Tshombé, as Prime Minister under a policy of national unity. After the rebellions, Kasavubu thought it was time to get rid of Tshombé. When Evariste Kimba, the candidate he had nominated as Tshombé's successor did not obtain a majority in parliament and another vacuum of power arose Mobutu was encouraged to fully seize power through a military coup on 24 November 1965 – initially for five years.

### **Partner of the West during the Cold War**

Until the end of the Cold War Mobutu remained the absolute of the country of vast natural resources: he exploited it as ruthlessly as Léopold II had done as sovereign of the Congo Free State (1885 to 1908). In 1965 Mobutu took over a state which was prosperous irrespective of the above-mentioned confusion. Although in the meantime the Belgian colonial officers and their families had left the country, many other Belgians and Europeans had been awarded highly profitable private contracts and thus kept the economy and the state going. The exports of copper and diamonds permitted the new rulers and their "white coolies" to live a comfortable life. The situation changed in 1973 with Mobutu visiting the People's Republic of China and joining the socialist oriented movement for a new economic world order. In 1974 Mobutu was much applauded when he delivered a speech to the UN General Assembly declaring that the Congo, renamed into Zaïre, would now be under the "authentic" leadership of the Congolese. The economy would be "Zairized" i.e. nationalized and foreigners would no longer have a say. In the course of the "Zairization" policy Mobutu had changed his name into Mobutu Sese Seko already in 1972.

The ruler used the export revenues to finance his expensive way of living as well as his presidential guard and parts of the army. The inevitable happened: The economy of the country disintegrated with dramatic speed.

In 1975, Mobutu took a U-turn at least with regard to foreigners and attracted experts who demanded even higher "risk pay" than their predecessors before 1973. Politically, Mobutu fought all adversaries who did not want to bow to the new balance of power. His political change did not come up to his "authentic" verbiage, however, this was tolerated by the governments in Brussels, Washington, London and the Federal Republic of Germany where Franz Josef Strauß in particular remained faithful to Mobutu until he died. For the governments of Western Europe and the United States, it was crucial that Mobutu remained deeply loyal to the West on the barricades of the Cold War despite his domestic socialist experiments and that Western intelligence agencies had insight into all

important proceedings in "his" country. For the protection of his own person Mobutu, who had appointed himself marshal in the meantime, increasingly relied on foreign specialists, in particular from Israel.

Mobutu's power within the country and his reputation as ally suffered from the invasion of the "Katanga Gendarmes" in 1977 and 1978. It was only thanks to the support of Moroccan soldiers and Western funds that Mobutu's army was able to repel the rebels in the southern part of the country. The rebels were descendants of the Katanga secessionists who had found refuge in the neighbouring countries after the defeat of Tshombé in 1963, in particular in Angola which then was still Portuguese.

The importance of Mobutu for the Cold War was largely depending on the course of the civil war in Angola where he co-operated with Jonas Savimbi, the US ally, against the pro- communist government of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (Movimento Popular da Libertação de Angola, MPLA) which was supported by Cuban soldiers. It was in 1988 at the latest when the Cubans left Angola that even in the West voices were rising that it was no longer necessary to rely on the questionable partner in the Congo. Already in 1978, the Mobutu regime had been severely compromised in a confidential paper of the German International Monetary Fund expert Erwin Blumenthal. Blumenthal relentlessly described the self-service systems of Mobutu supporters and indicated that the private foreign assets of the rulers alone amounted to some 152 million US dollars.

### **The Collapse of State and Economy**

All attempts at reorganizing the state finances and boosting the economy failed. After 1980, the state less and less fulfilled its social obligations. Schools and hospitals were often maintained by religious institutions and affiliate international relief organizations. Since the army was no longer regularly paid the soldiers found their own way to make ends meet. The Mobutu system was described as "pilfering community" (cleptocracy). The situation of the people was bad but a small group lived on the fat of the land. Mobutu more and more retreated into his palace in Gbadolite near his home village in northern Congo. (The runway of his private airfield was able to receive even the Concorde, an aircraft often leased by him.) All over the country an autonomous democratic opposition movement formed. In late 1979, 13 parliamentarians wrote an open letter to Mobutu and condemned his policy as the cause of all evil. On 15 January 1982, this "Group of 13" under the leadership of law professor Etienne Tshisekedi wa Mulumba founded the first democratic opposition party, the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social, UDPS). Mobutu banned the party and Tshisekedi spent the next eight years either in prison or under house arrest. In 1988, the Catholic Church felt impelled to publicly criticize the regime. In 1989, even low-ranking public servants who were no longer regularly paid demanded the dissolution of the state party and the acceptance of a multi-party system.

### **Transitional Parliament and Re-stabilisation of Mobutu's Power**

After the end of the Cold War, in March 1990, when the American Secretary of State, James Baker, went on a trip to South Africa to welcome the South-African civil-rights activist Nelson Mandela, he made a stop in Kinshasa. Baker in the presence of his Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Herman Cohen, openly told Mobutu his regime could no longer count on American support. Mobutu understood the message, lifted the house arrest of Tshisekedi and on 24 April 1990 stepped down as chairman of his state party MPR which had been his actual pillar of power, apart from the army. The Americans financed a national conference which was to discuss the democratic future of the country and take decisions. In June 1990 at the Franco-African summit in the French spa La Baule, the French socialist president François Mitterand supported this notion and declared that future French support was only available if substantial moves towards democratization were made. On 15 August 1992, the National Sovereign Conference chaired by Laurent Monsengo, Archbishop of Kisangani, elected UDPS leader Étienne Tshisekedi prime minister. A constitution was drafted which contained a

balance of both centralist and federal elements. The national conference was replaced by a transitional parliament, the Haut Conseil de la République. The Mobutu era seemed to have come to an end.

One would have expected that after he took office on 20 January 1993, the democratic US president Bill Clinton would support Étienne Tshisekedi, the leader of the largest democratic party which also propagated non-violence as he was elected by the National Conference. However, this support never came and the UN suddenly introduced the Algerian diplomat Lakhar Brahimi as a mediator between the old Mobutu parliament and the transitional parliament. Even Archbishop Monsengwo took up a mysterious shuttle diplomacy between Paris, Brussels and Washington so that virtually Mobutu was given another reprieve.

In this situation, the so-called Masisi war broke out in March 1993. Thousands of people were killed in ethnic conflicts between traditional indigenous groups like (Hunde, Nande) and the non-native Hutus and Tutsis. Among others, one reason were land conflicts and the attempt to exclude immigrants (Hutus and Tutsis) from the election. Camps with some 50,000 people seeking refuge provided a considerable potential for unrest. (This "Rwandans problem" – in connection with the Hutu refugee camps existing since 1994 in both Kivu provinces – is the background of the Banyamulenge-Tutsi uprising of 1996 at the beginning of the war to overthrow Mobutu in May 1997. Cf. Article by Peter Hazdra.)

The Masisi conflict to a large extent contributed to the negotiations about a new transitional parliament in April 1993. Instead of the left Catholic Tshisekedi, the members of said parliament elected a dignitary of the Mobutu period, Kengo wa Dongo, as new prime minister in January 1994. Mobutu remained in office and the scheduled parliamentary and presidential elections were postponed.

### Changes in the International Environment and the End of the Mobutu Era

In the meantime, the international framework conditions had changed, too. A decisive factor in the further development in Zaire was the neighbouring country of Rwanda. In October 1993, after the Somalia mission of US forces on behalf of the UN (Operation Restore Hope) had failed, President Clinton made a far-reaching decision. Clinton decreed – and had this officially confirmed in the Presidential Decision Directive 25 during the genocide in Rwanda on 5 May 1994 – that in future, only in cases of highest national interest, US military personnel may be deployed to Africa. In October 1993, the US representative to the UN Security Council, Madeleine Albright, announced the US would go back on their promise to deploy US "blue helmets" originally made during the negotiations in Arusha in August 1993, which were dealing with establishing a new order in Rwanda. The US disavowed the principle of power-sharing and facilitated – with a breach of the previously usual arrangements with France – the victory of the Rwandan rebel army (Armée Patriotique Rwandaise, APR). They did not blink at the assassination of the two Hutu presidents Juvénal Habyarimana (Rwanda) and Cyprien Ntaryamira (Burundi) which on 6 April 1994 resulted in a vacuum of power in both countries, and supported the military conquest of Rwanda by rebel chief Paul Kagame.

Blue helmet commander General Roméo A. Dallaire did not object to the APR's victory, however, in his opinion this would be possible without sacrificing the civilian Tutsi population. When he was about to take action against the perpetrators of the genocide, the UN Security Council reduced the number of Blue helmets to a symbolic number of 270 troops on 21 April 1994. Hundreds of thousands of Tutsis had to pay for this decision with their lives (cf. Article by Peter Hazdra). And what was also obvious: the decision to secure the victory of the rebels would cause large streams of refugees to move from the West towards the Congo. Mobutu, who again ruled the area, was induced to admit the refugees into Zairian territory and to disarm the Rwandan army which had also fled into that area.

Mobutu had again become a dialog partner for the United States since apparently he was the only one able to monitor the refugee camps. When the new rulers in Rwanda pushed for a dissolution of the camps near their borders, Mobutu entered the national stage for the last time, in April 1995. In May, he accepted a half private, half governmental invitation to Bad Kreuznach where he was urged

inter alia by the Ugandan State President Yoweri Museveni to drive the refugees back to Rwanda by force. After his return, Mobutu gave the order to drive the refugees to the East. Many people died as the camp occupants were defending themselves. Eventually, the UN Security Council requested a cessation of the violent action. However, this did not solve the refugee problem. The "solution" to the problem finally adopted was provided by an archenemy of Mobutu's.

Around the turn of the year 1996, the armies of Rwanda and Uganda under the leadership of the life-long Mobutu opponent Laurent-Désiré Kabila (cf. Article by Dennis Tull, Warfare in the Congo since 1994) began destroying the refugee camps and repelling Mobutu by force. During the tenure of Madeleine Albright who had meanwhile been promoted Secretary of State, some 200,000 Hutu refugees were killed, based on conservative estimates. In early May 1997, Bill Richardson, her successor as US representative to the UN Security Council, was sent to Gbadolite to meet Mobutu in order to hand over his second "US certificate of discharge" in the form of a letter by President Clinton containing an ultimate call for resignation.

On 17 May 1997, Kabila was able to proclaim himself as president in Kinshasa after fatally ill Mobutu had left the Congo from Gbadolite the day before. The establishment of a new military dictatorship with America's blessing is part of a second "fall of mankind" in terms of democracy in Central Africa. Already before, on 25 July 1996 in Burundi Pierre Buyoya returning from Bonn had come to power through a coup. Heads of state like Museveni in Uganda, Meles Zenawi in Ethiopia and Isayas Afewerki in Eritrea were protected from democratic wind by the Clinton Administration until they left office on 20 January 2001. Kabila who proved to be not as "easy to handle" as expected from him, was assassinated on 16 January 2001. Mobutu had already succumbed to cancer at the age of almost 67 in Moroccan exile on 7 September 1997.

*Helmut Strizek*

### The UN mission in Congo-Kinshasa 1960 to 1964

In July 1960, a UN mission called ONUC (Opérations des Nations Unies au Congo) started in the Congo, only a few days after the country had gained its independence. The reason was an official request for help issued by the new government in Kinshasa to the United Nations. Since July 5 major riots had occurred following a mutiny of Congolese soldiers in the "Armée Nationale Congolaise" (ANC), the armed forces formerly called "Force Publique", against their Belgian officers. The violent protests were mainly directed against the Europeans who had remained in the country. In order to protect them, Belgian troops, that were still in the country, took over control in major cities. The secession of the province of Katanga under the leadership of Moïse Kapenda Tshombé aggravated the crisis even further.

Resolution 143 of the UN Security Council of 14 July 1960 authorized UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld to take all necessary steps to assist the government of the Congo in setting up national security organizations and reestablishing public order. Until 17 July more than 3,000 Blue Helmets were deployed to the Congo. However, they were not able to stabilize the internal situation.



The Nigerian Mjaro General Aguiyu Ironsi, commander of the UN Operation in the Congo (1964).

Disputes within the Congolese government rendered the situation even more difficult: While President Joseph Kasavubu increasingly sympathized with the United States, Premier Minister Patrice É. Lumumba seemed to approach the USSR. When the two leading politicians mutually dismissed each other from office in September 1960, the central government completely lost its influence.

The then army chief of staff Joseph Désirée Mobutu took advantage of this constellation. He supported Kasavubu and had Lumumba arrested.

Lumumba's extradition to the separatists in Katanga in January 1961 was carried out with the help of Belgian officers and the

CIA. Even the UN representatives to the Congo played an obscure role which has yet to be clarified.

Since February 1961, ONUC had basically taken over control of the Congo. From that moment on, a Congolese central power was no longer in existence. An increasing number of attacks against the Blue Helmets and the secession in Katanga expanding resulted in Resolution 161 of the UN Security Council of 21 February 1961 (UNSCR 161/later supplemented by UNSCR 169 in December 1961) which expressly allowed the use of force to achieve the aims of the resolutions. Those included the protection of the state integrity of the Congo, the prevention of a civil war and the withdrawal of all foreign military, police and advisor personnel.

The UN Security Council allowed for massive action of ONUC against the secession movement in Katanga which had previously remained unchallenged and received considerable assistance from Belgian and French mercenaries. Through several directed military actions ONUC – meanwhile increased in strength to 20,000 troops – succeeded in expelling all foreign mercenaries and advisors from Katanga by the end of 1962. Without further international support – the US, too, had ceased their assistance – Tshombé finally gave up his attempted secession. Apparently, the objectives of the UN Resolutions were met and the Blue Helmets were gradually withdrawn until mid-1964. In the course of the four years, a total of 250 blue helmet soldiers and civilian UN personnel had lost their lives in combat operations.

Today, the assessment of the UN operation ONUC is much disputed. While the blue helmets succeeded in improving the humanitarian situation of the population, their efforts to stabilize the Congo in terms of (domestic) policy failed. Instead of assisting the central government in setting up security organizations, ONUC itself assumed police tasks. Eventually the peacekeepers left without having created the basis for domestic peace and order within the country. This continuing instability had made it possible for Mobutu to seize power in 1965 and thus facilitated the subsequent three decades of dictatorship (*am*)

### Congo-Brazzaville (Republic of the Congo)

In contrast to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (also called Congo-Kinshasa), Congo-Brazzaville is the name of the independent state of the Republic of the Congo. For better differentiation between the two Congo states, the respective capital is often added to the state name (Brazzaville for the Republic of the Congo and Kinshasa for the Democratic Republic of the Congo). The Republic of the Congo borders on the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the West. The Republic of the Congo is much smaller (approx. an eighth of the area of Congo-Kinshasa) and has only some 3 million inhabitants, most of them members of the Bakongo ethnic group. The economic and social situation is much better than in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition to a positive foreign trade balance, this is particularly obvious in view of the relatively high literacy rate of 85 percent.

The existence of two states with the name Congo dates back from the colonial period. While in the 1870s, Congo-Kinshasa was explored on behalf of the Belgian King, between 1876 and 1878 the Frenchman Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza (the capital Brazzaville was named after him) was able to attach the areas west of the Congo river to France. The Congo Conference of 1875 decided on the distribution of the areas in the Congo Basin. Whereas the larger eastern part was assigned to Belgium (Belgian Congo), the smaller western part remained with France (French Congo or Middle Congo). Between 1910 and 1946, Middle Congo, from 1891 on officially a French colony, together with Gabon, Chad and Oubangui-Chari (modern Central African Republic) comprised the Federation French Equatorial Africa (Afrique-Équatoriale Française) with Brazzaville as capital. The transition into independence in 1960 did not go smoothly, however, not as troublesome as in the neighboring state. Despite the close relationship with the Soviet Union and China and the renaming into "People's



Denis Sassou-Nguesso casting his vote on 10 March 2002 in a polling station in Brazzaville. These were the first elections within the last ten years in the petrol rich country. Sassou-Nguesso had to run against six other candidates. He came to power in 1997 after a bloodstained civil war and a coup against the first president of the former French colony Pascal Lissouba who had been democratically elected.

Republic of the Congo" (1971 to 1991), the political and economic contacts with the former mother country of France were always good which contributed to a certain stabilization of the country. In the 1990s, democratization efforts were increasingly successful. Although State President Denis Sassou-Nguesso officially proclaimed democracy, the country to a large extent still lives under the conditions of dictatorship. (am)

»Rumble in the Jungle«

On 30 October 1974, one of the most memorable fights in the history of boxing took place in Kinshasa. In the capital of the then Zaire the fight for the heavyweight world championship pitted the titleholder George Foreman and his challenger Muhammad Ali. The fight was to comprise twelve rounds. Due to the climatic conditions it was torture for both boxers. Foreman, the obvious favourite overexerted himself when he followed Ali across the boxing ring, throwing punches. However, challenger Ali invented a new fighting style dodging and leaning back into the ropes (rope-a-dope). In the eighth round Ali launched a counterattack and knocked the exhausted Foreman out.

It was not just the fight that made sports history. It was the first big boxing event organized by Don King who later became famous as boxing promoter. Don King could not have the fight take place in the United States since the business of American professional boxing had already been distributed among other boxing promoters. When King looked for a suitable venue, Zairian President Mobutu who was very interested in positive press coverage, offered him particularly favourable conditions Don King wanted an exotic venue for the fight. He got it – and moreover a sensational course of the fight.

The atmosphere at the ring was characterized by the sweltering heat and the unusual time of the fight (05:00 AM, local time) which was due to the American audience. Muhammad Ali was wildly supported by the native audience. The challenger had spent the whole summer in Zaire in order to get used to the climatic conditions. Moreover, he had used that time to get to know Africa and the Africans better since – as he repeated again and again – he felt “as descendent of those people”. This way, the American became very popular and the audience in Kinshasa supported him shouting the phrase “Ali bumaye!” (Ali kill him!) In the course of the fight, the atmosphere became more and more heated and after Foreman’s knock out seemed to discharge like a tropical thunderstorm resulting in a gigantic chaos. President Mobutu had his bodyguard deployed to get the excesses under control. In Africa, that boxing match is considered the by far most important sports event of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (dhk)



Muhammad Ali (center) during the press conference after his spectacular knock-out victory against the titleholder George Foreman on 30 October 1974 in Kinshasa. In the background a huge portrait of president General Mobutu Sese Seku.





During the night of 6 to 7 April 1994, one of the largest genocides in the history of mankind started in Rwanda. In the course of only a few weeks probably 800,000 people were killed. Most of the victims were members of the Tutsi tribe but Hutu civilians also died during the pogroms. In the course of those pogroms, the victims were often bestially slaughtered with machetes or slain. The genocide was conducted against the background of the clashes between the then Rwandan government and the rebel movement Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF). The photo shows Hutu farmers doing communal work on the field. The social obligation to communal work (umugana) was deliberately exploited by the men behind the genocide in order to label the Tutsis as "well-organised traitors" and to incite the Hutu population to massacre their neighbours.

The events in 1994 had an essential impact on the domestic development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Until today refugees from the neighboring country of Rwanda have been living mainly in the eastern provinces.

Hutu rebels, among them many perpetrators of the genocide of 1994, contribute to a destabilization of the region from this place.

## Rwanda 1994: The Hutu Genocide and its Impact on Equatorial Africa

The population of Rwanda mainly consists of two ethnic groups: the Hutu (85 percent) and the Tutsi minority (15 percent). While the Hutu traditionally engaged in agricultural farming, the Tutsi lived on animal husbandry. Over the centuries, Rwanda was governed by a feudal system ruled by a Tutsi king. The whole country belonged to the Tutsi aristocracy which used the Hutu as workforce. The colonial powers, i.e. initially the Germans and later the Belgians (who administrated the country as mandate area of the League of Nations from 1920) based their power on the rule of the Tutsi elite and thus aggravated the old antagonisms between the ethnic groups.

In 1959, the accumulated hatred of the Hutu erupted into a bloody uprising which resulted in the abolition of the Tutsi monarchy and the flight of hundreds of thousands of Tutsi into the neighboring countries, in particular, Uganda. The first elections in Rwanda in 1961 brought a landslide victory of the Hutu party which also provided the government after the country had gained independence (1962). After a coup d'état in 1973, the fortune of the country was decided by president Major General Juvenal Habyarimana who initially acted moderately, however, he increasingly subjected to extreme Hutu ideologists. The situation escalated on 1 October 1990: A formerly relatively unknown rebel movement, the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) invaded Rwanda from Uganda. The RPF was mainly recruited from members of the Tutsi tribe who had fled Rwanda in the course of the 1959 violent riots. The leader of the RPF was Paul Kagame who had been a high-ranking officer in the Ugandan army.

Rwandese government troops had to resort to the military assistance of France and Zaïre to stop the rebels north to the town of Byumba. As a result the rebels occupied an area of 2000 sq km near the Ugandan border. International pressure forced president Habyarimana to introduce a multi-party system and to form a coalition government with newly founded small parties. Another consequence of the RPF invasion was that the regime set up self-defence forces and conscripted parts of the male population to serve there. As a result, the boundaries between the self-defense forces and the militias of the political parties blurred in the subsequent years. The most radical forces gathered in the militia of the government party MRND (Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour la Démocratie et le Développement), the so-called Interahamwe ("those who attack together"). Following a massive propaganda offensive of extreme Hutu politicians, a general perception of being permanently threatened by the rebels in the north and the local Tutsi minority spread in the country.

Nevertheless, in 1993 international pressure forced the signing of a peace agreement between the government and the RPF (Arusha Peace Agreement). It provided for, inter alia, the creation of a demilitarized zone between the opponents and later on, the disarmament and general demobilization of the combatants of both sides as well as the appointment of a transitional government and a transitional parliament until free elections are held. The agreement was to be monitored by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR).

### Immediate history preceding the conflict

The peace process soon slowed down as the parties were not able to constitute a transitional government and transitional parliament. The reason for this was that the small parties were not able to agree on their respective representatives in the institutions mentioned due to formation of internal factions. Radical Hutu circles were pulling the strings in the background: they feared to lose their positions of power and therefore, decidedly refused any compromise with the RPF. In early 1994, UNAMIR received confidential information that Interahamwe had compiled death lists and trained thousands of men for the mass murder of the Tutsis. In addition it gradually became known that weapons caches had been secretly built up in the weapon-free zone around the capital of Kigali. The force commander of UNAMIR, Canadian General Romeo Dallaire, thereupon planned a military action to clear those weapons caches. It was, however, prohibited by officials of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations (DPKO).

Subsequently, the security situation deteriorated almost from day to day. Violent demonstrations, attacks with hand grenades during the night, politically or ethnically motivated killings were an everyday occurrence. As it is known today, during that time the preparations for the subsequent genocide had already been in full progress. Already in November many mayors had started compiling lists of politically unwanted persons and issuing tens of thousands of machetes to Interahamwe activists. Its members, by the way, were trained in army camps.

On 6 April 1994, a regional crisis summit took place in Tansania after the UN Security Council had become impatient and prolonged the UNAMIR mandate the day before only under the condition that the transitional institutions would convene within 6 weeks. On the return from that meeting, the aircraft, aboard President Habyarimana and his Burundi counterpart and some of his closest staff, was shot down. Until today, it is still unclear who was responsible for the assassination. All passengers lost their lives. As a consequence, within hours the president's guard began to massacre members of the Tutsi minority and oppositional Hutu politicians. Ten Belgian UN soldiers who had been assigned to bring the Prime Minister - a moderate female Hutu - to safety were disarmed, tortured and finally killed. Thereupon, the Belgian contingent was withdrawn.

### **The Genocide against the Tutsis**

Radical Hutu militias were systematically hunting down Tutsis. They established roadblocks all over the country where they killed all Tutsis, including women and children, using axes, truncheons, machetes and similar weapons. The victims were easily recognized as Tutsis since at that time the ethnical origin had been indicated on the ID cards. Ten thousands of Hutu civilians took part in the massacres. Army and gendarmerie watched the events without taking action or were even involved themselves. Significant publicist support of the genocide was provided by the infamous radio station "Mille Collines"; skillfully exploiting the fears and faith in the authorities of the mainly uneducated population. Within a few weeks some 800,000 men, women and children had been killed.

Two days after the beginning of the massacre, the RPF reacted with a military advance through the demilitarized zone in the southern direction and the breakout of the RPF battalion originally deployed to protect the RPF politicians in Kigali from their camp near the parliament building. The 2500 UN soldiers stationed in the country did neither have the mandate nor the required strength to intervene. The UN force commander, General Dallaire, tired in vain to achieve a modification of the mandate, which was based on Chapter VI of the UN Charter, and obtain a reinforcement of the troops. The UN Security Council refused both and on 17 May 1994 decided to withdraw UNAMIR except for a symbolic presence of 270 troops in Kigali. No single UN member state was ready to provide additional troops.

Only in mid-June 1994, at a time when the imminent military defeat of the Hutu regime was already apparent, France suddenly declared its readiness to intervene with military forces and to establish a protected zone in Southwest Rwanda (Operation Turquoise). The intervention was authorized by the Security Council under Chapter VII for two months and conducted under national French command. The operation came too late to save a noteworthy number of lives but the intervention made it possible for many of those responsible for the genocide to flee to East Zaïre (today: Democratic Republic of the Congo).

### **Impact**

In the period between 8 April and 17 June, the RPF gradually conquered to whole territory of the state. They were stopped temporarily only in the south east by the French intervention force. The advance of the RPF resulted in a refugee movement of three millions of Hutu fleeing to the neighboring countries of Tansania and Zaïre. In part they fled because they feared reprisal actions of the RPF, in

part they were forced by the militias to come along under threat of violence. Ten thousands fell victim to hunger, thirst and epidemics. The pictures of endless columns of emaciated people and masses dying in Goma shocked the world public. After the military victory of the RPF, Kagame established a strict regime in Rwanda which is dominated by Tutsis. Radical Hutu rebels were recruited from among the Hutu refugees; until today they destabilize the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and often give reason for the Rwandese army to intervene. The crimes of 1994 are not only investigated by Rwandese courts but also by the an international court of justice, i.e. the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, or ICTR, established by the UN in Arusha.

*Peter Hazdra*

### Genocide

The term genocide, formed from the Greek *génos* (origin, tribe, people) and the Latin *caedere* (massacre, kill), was used for the first time in 1943 by the Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin in connection with a bill to punish national-socialist crimes against the European Jews. Lemkin was also referring to the genocide committed by the Osman Empire against the Armenians during first World War. Today, genocide constitutes a criminal offence in international criminal law as well as in national law. UN resolution 260, which entered into force on 12 January 1951, deals with the prevention of and punishment for genocide. It describes genocide as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group." This includes direct use of force but expressly also the infliction of destructive living conditions, the prevention of births or abduction of children. For the offence to be considered genocide it is sufficient to prove the intent. (*bc*)



On 20 May 1997, a soldier of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo, AFDL) uses his bayonet to stab at a picture of the overthrown president in Mobutu Sese Seko's residence in Kinshasa while looters are searching the rooms for useful items. After a bloody war, AFDL leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila became the new state president of the former Zaire now renamed into Democratic Republic of the Congo. The authoritarian regime of Kabila, however, was not able to stabilize the country. When his alliance fell apart in 1998, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi formed an alliance and supported the Congolese Rally for Democracy (Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie, RCD), a new rebel organization of disappointed supporters of Kabila which threatened the government in Kinshasa from the East of the country. In the subsequent years, further rebel groups emerged. For his part, Kabila invited troops from Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Chad which helped to prevent his being overthrown. The impasse made it possible in July 1999 to reach the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement which resulted in a new commitment of the United Nations. However, the war lasted until the foreign armies withdrew from the Congo in 2002 and the final peace agreement between the government and the rebels was achieved in December 2002.

## Warfare in the Congo since 1994

During the previous ten years, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (from 1971 to 1997 Zaire) has been the theater of two wars (1996/97 and 1998 to 2003) which were mainly the result of two political developments. They were caused by the domestic deterioration which had plunged the state of Zaire into a deep crisis since the 1970. However, both wars were triggered by the conflicts in the neighboring countries of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, which spilled over into Zaire in the early 1990s. Of particular significance was the Rwandan civil war between the regime of President Juvénal Habyarimana and the rebellion of the Armée Patriotique Rwandaise (Rwandese Patriotic Front) which lasted until 1994. The RPF was an anti-regime movement dominated by the Tutsi ethnic group which advanced into Rwanda from the northern neighboring country of Uganda. The Ugandan government under President Yoweri Museveni, which, too, had come to power as a result of a rebellion in 1986, was supporting the RPF. The Arusha Peace Agreement of 1993, which provided for a sharing of power between the government of Habyarimana and, inter alia, the RPF, was never implemented.

The assassination of Habyarimana on 06 April 1994 in Kigali under conditions which still remain in the dark was the signal for launching the genocide in Rwanda which had been carefully organized by the regime supporters. Approximately 800,000 Tutsis and opposition Hutu were killed between April and June 1994 (cf. Article by Peter Hazdra). After the RPF rebels had eventually occupied larger and larger areas of the country and advanced to the capital of Kigali, roughly a million people fled to the west in the neighboring Congo, among them the perpetrators of the genocide. The extremists used the refugee camps near the border to organize attacks on Rwanda and the new Rwandan government formed by the RPF. This was tolerated by the President of Zaire, Joseph Désiré Mobutu, who had maintained close relations with the Habyarimana regime (cf. Article by Helmut Strizek).

### The First Congo War

In an effort to counteract the security-political threats, the RPF government decided to invade East Zaire and to destroy the refugee camps in Goma (North Kivu) and Bukavu (South Kivu). Angola, Burundi and Uganda joined Rwanda as they were also threatened by the rebels on the territory of Zaire. In order to avoid the impression of an exclusively external intervention Rwanda and Uganda supported the foundation of a Zaire rebel organization "Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo" (AFDL). Supported by the foreign allies, the AFDL invaded Zaire in October 1996 and destroyed the refugee camps. Being already in a condition of advanced decay, the Zairian army put up almost no resistance. The rebel alliance reached the capital of Kinshasa already in May. Mobutu fled into exile and AFDL leader Laurent-Désiré Kabila became the new state president of the former Zaire now renamed into Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The euphoria over the fall of dictator Mobutu who had governed the country since 1965 was only of short duration. In many parts of the country the resentment at the presence of foreign troops was increasing rapidly. Due to their attacks and lootings the public opinion did no longer regard them as liberators but as occupying forces. Despite his dependence on them, Kabila was forced to request the allies to withdraw from the Congo.

### The Second Congo War

Only a few months later, in August 1998, the Second Congo War broke out. The initial conditions and the participating actors were mainly the same as in the first war. Again, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi formed a military alliance and again, a Congolese rebel organization was established as a result of the efforts of those neighbouring states – the "Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie" (Congolese Rally for Democracy) – which had been intended as a legitimization of the intervention within the Congo. Supported by the foreign allies, the RCD invaded the East Congo and set up its

headquarters in Goma. Shortly after the beginning of the war another rebel movement was founded – the "Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo" (Movement for the Liberation of the Congo – MLC), which advanced in the north of the country, backed by Uganda. Their proclaimed objective was to overthrow the dictatorship of Kabila. There were no secessionist ambitions. According to the neighbouring states the war was fought because of Kabila supporting rebels who used the Congo as a basis to threaten their countries of origin. Rwanda was particularly in danger since the armed units of the Hutu extremists and perpetrators of the genocide of the first war had not been completely destroyed. It was estimated that some 20,000 fighters attacked Rwanda from their retreat camps in the East Congo. However, in contrast to 1996, in this conflict Angola supported the government in Kinshasa. In cooperation with Namibia and Zimbabwe, Angola prevented the untimely fall of Kabila.



Although the rebels and their allies eventually occupied two third of the country, they did not achieve a major breakthrough. A military impasse was reached which in July 1999 resulted in the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. The agreement provided for the withdrawal of the foreign armies, peace negotiations within the Congo and the disarmament of the Rwandan Hutu rebels whose guerilla war conducted from East Congolese retreat camps had caused Rwanda to wage another military intervention. Subsequently, the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) was established to monitor the agreed ceasefire which has been largely observed since 2001. In January 2001, a bodyguard assassinated Laurent-Désiré Kabila. He was succeeded in office by his thirty year old son Joseph. Due to international pressure, the armies of the neighbouring countries were forced to withdraw from the Congo in autumn 2002. In December the "Inter-Congolese Dialog" finally took place; its objective was to solve the causes of the domestic problems and to set up a new political order in the Congo. After two attempts (in 2001 and 2002) had failed, a new round of negotiations in the

South African capital of Pretoria was eventually successful on 17 December 2002 thanks to the unremitting pressure exerted by external mediators (Belgium, the US, South Africa, the United Nations). The all party forum resulted in the Pretoria Agreement in which President Kabila, the various rebel movements as well as representatives of political parties and the civilian society agreed to share power and form an all party government. It held its first session in July 2003. Joseph Kabila remained head of state, however, he was henceforth flanked by four vice presidents, among them the leaders of the two rebel movements RCD and MLC, Azarias Ruberwa und Jean-Pierre Bemba. The political transition process was to be completed by democratic elections in summer 2005 but they were postponed to 2006. These elections are to make way for the first democratically elected government since the country gained independence in 1960.

### **Difficult Stabilization**

Despite the ceasefire along the official line of conflict being largely observed and a UN mission having been deployed no substantial stabilization was achieved between 2001 and 2003. All parties to the conflict acted like occupying forces in the territories they occupied: they ruthlessly exploited the large natural resources of the country like gold, diamonds, coltan and seriously violated human rights. Especially, the eastern parts of the country regularly witnessed massacres of the civilian population. Public services, e. g. security and education, were no longer provided by any of the parties. The already underdeveloped health system was not able to meet the challenges of war. Studies indicate that between 1998 and 2004 more than four million Congolese people died as a direct or indirect consequence of the war. This makes the Second Congo War the deadliest conflict since World War II.

In 2003, the situation in the district of Ituri escalated as a result of fighting between local ethnic militias which carried out massacres of the civilian population. Thereupon, the UN Security Council dispatched a short-term intervention force of 2,200 troops of the European Union ("Operation Artemis"). After the French-led mission had accomplished a stabilization, MONUC took over control in the district capital of Bunia. MONUC – gradually increased from originally 5,537 blue helmets in 2000 to 8,700 (2002), 10,800 (2003) and eventually to 16,700 servicemen (2004) – proved as the only security factor in the country, although they were not able to ensure security in all parts of the country. In particular, the regions in the East of the Congo (Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga) continued to be zones of insecurity where militias, rebels but also government soldiers represented a permanent threat to the population, even after the interim administration had assumed office. Among other things, this was due to the fact that the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants and the formation of a uniform national army proceeded very slowly. After almost ten years of war, the country faces a double challenge: first, to continue and consolidate the fragile peace process and second, to setup state structures capable of providing security and welfare services. Without the long-term support of the international community, it will not be possible to achieve these objectives.

*Denis Tull*



### Laurent-Désiré Kabila

Kabila, born on 27 November 1939 in Moba at Lake Tanganjika (province of South Katanga), was a member of the youth organization of the Balubakat party in the 1950s – a party that stood up for the interests of the Baluba (Luba) people in Katanga and was close to Patrice Lumumba. After the country had gained independence, Kabila took part in several uprisings in East Congo and commanded the South Kivu and Northeast Katanga fronts in the 1960s. The "People's Revolutionary Party" (Parti de la Révolution Populaire, PRP) founded by Kabila in 1967, focussed on this area and fought the government in Kinshasa from the East. After several military setbacks, Kabila left the country. In 1996 he became the head of the newly founded "Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo" (Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo, AFDL). After several months of fighting, the AFDL put an end to the Mobutu regime in May 1997. Kabila declared himself president and took over power.

He was assassinated in Kinshasa on 16 January 2001. *(bc)*



### Joseph Kabila

On 26 January 2001, Laurent-Désiré Kabila was succeeded as president by his son Joseph, born on 4 June 1971. Joseph Kabila had been fighting together with his father in the latter's rebel army. He received his military training in Uganda and Rwanda. Prior to the assassination of his father, he served – already a major general at the age of thirty – in the Congolese armed forces and participated in many operations against the rebels in the East of the country. In December 2002, Joseph Kabila reached a peace agreement between the government and the rebels. In March 2004, he survived an attempted coup d'état of followers of his predecessor in office Mobutu. An all-party government under the leadership of Kabila initiated free elections originally scheduled to take place in 2005. *(bc)*





Libyan revolutionary leader Muammar al-Qadhafi holds a speech at the stadium in Durban/ South Africa on the occasion of the founding ceremony of the African Union (AU) on 9 July 2002. The African countries have taken to developing own functioning security structures. On this way important results have already been achieved albeit with great differences between the different regions of the continent. With the support of the European Union in particular, the African nations want to define and achieve common objectives in this new union, based on cooperation in the areas of economy and security policy. A first step in this direction is the AU's own peacekeeping force, the African Standby Force (ASF), which, if compared with similar plans of the European Union, deserves respect.

### **The African Security Architecture**

The African continent currently faces considerable political, economic and social challenges, which have an impact on Europe and consequently on Germany. Natural disasters, armed conflicts and widespread bad governance hamper economic development and continue to cause humanitarian catastrophes and the collapse of state structures (cf. the articles by Volker Matthies and Volker Ressler). Moreover, in some regions rates of HIV/AIDS infections are extremely high. Additional risks are posed by migratory pressure, organised crime and terrorist structures. These crises and destabilising developments are of direct concern to the Euro-Atlantic security space. What is more, human rights violations and crimes against humanity are still commonplace occurrences in Africa. The growing unwillingness of the European public to remain passive in the face of these incidences draws more international attention to the African continent.

This section gives an overview of the security architecture in Africa. It confines itself to examining the African Union (AU) as a Pan-African organisation as well as selected regional organisations, which may serve as an example to illustrate cooperation. After all, a multitude of organisations exists on the African continent.

### **A Pan-African Political Unity?**

As early as 1963, the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) was founded in Africa. It was a loose federation of states with the main objective of protecting and preserving their respective sovereignty. In practice, however, cooperation was seldom successful. A successor organisation was thus developed starting in September 1999, coming into existence on 9 February 2002 as the African Union (AU).

Right from the beginning, it committed itself to good governance. In the future, the AU even wants to resort to military intervention in member states, if necessary, in order to enforce this objective, e.g. in the case of war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide. The AU headquarters is located in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa and is modelled on the European Union (EU). The work of the AU, as with most regional African organisations, focuses mainly on the economic area. Of the 54 African nations, all but Morocco are members of the new union. Its aims are promoting unity and solidarity among African states, coordinating cooperation inside Africa and worldwide, taking responsibility in coping with conflict and war, and fighting hunger and poverty. There are plans for the creation of a common central bank, an executive commission, a continental court of justice and a single currency in the nearer future. A Pan-African Parliament has been established based in Midrand, South Africa, and a common security and defence strategy has been drafted. Ratification of a mutual pact of non-aggression is underway. The Peace and Security Council (PSC), the most important organ in terms of security policy, has taken up its work in March 2004, and it has extensive powers. It can decide on military intervention in the event of e.g. an impending genocide, as was the case in Rwanda in 1994 (cf. the article by Peter Hazdra).

For this purpose, the AU has decided on the formation of five army brigades in each of the regions of Africa (Northern, Eastern, Southern, Western and Central Africa). The build-up of the peacekeeping forces is to be completed by the summer of 2010. They will be built up, equipped and trained by the nations in the respective African region, together they will form the African Standby Force (ASF). Every one of these brigades must cover a wide range of tasks. In terms of combat forces and combat support forces, there are plans for one brigade headquarters including up to 185 troops, four light infantry battalions (750 troops each), one engineer force (up to 505 troops), one communications unit (135 troops) and one motorised reconnaissance company (150 troops) respectively. Furthermore, there will be one helicopter squadron for each brigade comprising 80 troops and four aircraft, one logistics unit (190 troops), one medical element (35 troops) as well as 120 military observers and one civilian support component. The AU will additionally provide an "on-call list" including up to 500 military observers and 240 civilian police officers. Parts of the regional brigades are already in place; the different regions are at various stages of the build-up.

### Regional Structures

The most developed African regional organisation is the group of West African countries called Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Subordinate to ECOWAS is the ECOWAS Standby Brigade (ECOBRIIG). It is envisaged to have a future total strength of 6500 troops and the ability to deploy within 90 days as well as operate independently for the same period of time. It includes a task force of 1500 troops able to deploy within 30 days, operating independently for up to 90 days. The build-up of ECOBRIIG is progressing steadily. Drawing up of the baseline documents has largely been finished and everything is proceeding according to schedule. The Task Force Headquarter is currently being established to be operational in June 2006. The units to be placed under the command of ECOBRIIG have gained peacekeeping experience in several UN missions. On 31 January 2006, for instance, more than 7600 ECOWAS troops were currently involved in such operations.

Germany supports the build-up of African peacekeeping forces. In the Ghanaian capital of Accra, the "Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre" (KAIPTC) is currently being built as a tactical training centre for ECOWAS. To a considerable extent this project is funded by the German government. In addition, three German military personnel assist in operating this centre and conducting the training there.

The rather heterogeneous composition of the ECOWAS region poses problems. The fact that while some member states have closer relations to France, others are more oriented towards the UK, hampers integration. In the region itself, as for example in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone, there is considerable potential for internal conflicts. While Nigeria, the largest and most populous country of the region, is the biggest provider in terms of financial contribution and military forces and is considered the "motor" of ECOWAS, it has an equally high potential for internal conflicts (religious and ethnic problems, oil).

In *East Africa*, there is no umbrella organisation integrating all countries of the region. The AU has appointed the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), whose members are Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda, as the organisation responsible for the regional forces of the African Standby Force. The Eastern Africa Community (EAC), another regional organisation with the members Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, was instructed to coordinate its efforts with the IGAD. The East African brigade is called "Eastern Africa States Brigade" (EASBRIIG). It has already installed the Conflict Early Warning and Response (CEWARN) mechanism, which is to be established in a similar form in all African regions. In total, the EASBRIIG will comprise around 5,500 civilian and military personnel. The EASBRIIG's Peace Support Training Centre in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi is also supported with German funds and personnel.

Again, internal conflicts and the dangerous hot spots in Sudan and Somalia are obstacles to the establishment and growth of the regional AU brigade. The serious internal crisis suffered by Ethiopia after the 2005 elections and the on-going conflict with Eritrea following the last great war between these nations from 1998 to 2000 have a negative impact not only on the consolidation process, but on the entire AU.

*Northern Africa* has started to signal a willingness to contribute to the ASF. The AU has appointed the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), with the members Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, Libya and Tunisia, as the northern regional organisation. Libya and Egypt (the latter not being a member of AMU) have declared themselves willing to contribute. However, internal differences between the Arab countries, the dispute on Western Sahara, which is struggling for independence but claimed by Morocco, and finally the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have so far blocked any significant common action.

Germany maintains close contacts with the southern Mediterranean-bordering countries, with the exception of Libya. In 2006, Tunisia bought German speedboats whose crews were trained in Germany. By now, some North African states have expressed serious interest in participating in Operation ACTIVE ENDEAVOUR in the Mediterranean Sea.

*Southern African* nations have united to form the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Details of the provision and equipment of the SADC Standby Force's troops have been laid down and are binding. The first joint military exercises took place as early as June 2005. The creation of a civilian SADC police component is underway. The official SADC training centre is located in the Zimbabwean capital of Harare. Owing to the international ostracism of the Zimbabwean government, the centre is not supported by international sponsors. Hence, a motor for building up its own peacekeeping force is missing.

The fact that Southern Africa has by far the highest AIDS rate of the world is another obstacle (cf. the article by Sarah Tietze). The situation in Africa varies enormously from country to country: While the infection rate in Mauritania is at 1%, it is 40% in Botswana. Although Sub-Saharan Africa is home to only one tenth of the world's population, two thirds of all people infected with HIV live there. The situation is most serious in South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland. In the countries' armies, the rates of infection are even higher, since education and prevention are seriously lacking, and there frequently is no awareness of the problem. In this context, the large number of deployments to other regions increases the risk of infection with and spreading of the disease. (According to unofficial sources, the examination of two battalions of the South African Army has revealed an infection rate of 87 per cent!) This is more than a medical problem. A pandemic of this dimension directly affects the economic, social and health system, the society as a whole and thus the security structure.

Germany's relations with South Africa have been growing steadily during the past decade and have currently reached a high standard. South Africa is one of the few sources of stability in Africa, if not the most important. As "parent navy", the German Navy has established a close partnership with the South African Navy. A similar statement can be made about the closer cooperation between the German and the South African Air Force.

*Central African* nations have so far played no active part in terms of security architecture. Like Nigeria does in Western Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo could assume a leading role in this region owing to its size and its wealth in natural resources. As a result of the long crisis in Congo, however, it is not only impossible for the country to play this part; it is even destabilising the whole region. The civil war itself, the involvement of the neighbouring countries and the substantial participation of child soldiers have aggravated the situation: children from Angola, Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda are fighting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Nevertheless, a positive development has recently begun to emerge, even if still very much in its initial stages. In October 2003, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) has decided on building up its regional brigade of approximately 2,200 troops. At the same time, joint military exercises and the establishment of a regional training centre were agreed on. The headquarters, logistics base and planning cell will be situated in Gabon's capital Libreville.

### **A Look Ahead**

The security architecture developed by the AU is well thought-out regarding both the schedule and the contents. So far, the schedule could not be met completely. The AU mission in Western Sudan (Darfur/AMIS) has stretched the Union's capabilities to the utmost. The fact that the African nations are currently unable to cover the necessary expenses further aggravates the situation. They are thus permanently dependent on the support of international sponsors. The AU's ambitions to tackle and overcome Africa's problems by themselves are definitely to the benefit of Europe. This goal deserves to be fully supported, for there is no reasonable alternative.

*Wolf Kinzel*



The Mediterranean Sea is shared by Africa and Europe. Only at the end of the 20th century, however, due to the ever increasing migratory pressure, have Europeans become aware of the immediate neighbourhood to the continent most afflicted by economic weakness and political instability. Since 1993, the member states of the European Union (EU) have tried to coordinate their foreign and security policies. To this end, a concept based on the experiences and models of the EU's predecessor organisations was introduced in 2003. European and African heads of state and government attended the opening of the first EU-Africa summit in Cairo on 3 April 2000. The issues dominating the two-day event were globalisation and the search for better ways of integrating Africa into the world economy. Since the EU-Africa summit, there has been cooperation between the EU and its African neighbours based on an action plan. In this cooperation, the coordination of interests in the area of security policy plays an important part. The planned support of the elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2006 is a result of these cooperation efforts.

## The European Union and Central Africa

European external relations are a blend of economic policy, development cooperation and "classic" foreign and security policy. Some 50 years of European integration have created a system on several levels that is characterised by the multitude of players involved. Moreover, legal bases and competencies vary depending on which political area is concerned. The European Commission, the executive power within the European Union's political system, is not the only external representative and frequently operates in parallel to the activities of member states. In its relations to Africa, however, it is more than merely a trade organisation and far transcends the function of a development agency.

### The Beginnings of a Common European Africa Policy

The beginning of common European action in Africa dates back to the foundation of the European Economic Community in 1958. Europe's relations with Africa are thus one of the sources of common European activities on the international stage. At that time, plans for creating a customs union especially affected key interests of the EEC founding members France and Belgium, still colonial powers at that time, in their overseas territories. Germany, on the other hand, had essentially forgotten its own colonial history. A good ten years after the end of the war, however, reconciliation with its neighbouring countries and reintegration into the global community was of national concern to Germany. In a one-to-one meeting with French President Charles de Gaulle, German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer thus consented to financial burden-sharing. This agreement led to the creation of the European Development Fund (EDF), which was designed to enable targeted economic development in the colonial areas. At that point – a mere six years after the plans for a European Defence Community (EDC) had failed – a common European foreign policy was unimaginable. Cooperation in this area thus remained the responsibility of the member states. And the rights granted to Community Institutions were limited as it was.

When the African nations gained independence in the 1960s, the EU conceded special economic rights to the former colonies, some of which had already been granted in colonial times. In economic terms, the new states still heavily depended on their former "mother countries". These had tailored the colonies' national economies to their own interests. Africa above all exported raw materials to Europe, which were mainly processed and converted into consumer goods by European enterprises (cf. the article by Rainer Tetzlaff).

Apart from Denmark and Ireland, the United Kingdom became part of the Community with the first enlargement of the EC in 1973, which considerably increased the number of former colonies involved. The relations with African nations and the island ACP states in the Caribbean and the Pacific were put on a new contractual basis with the Lomé Convention in 1975. In addition to payments from the European Development Fund, unilateral trade advantages conceded by Europe were to facilitate economic development in the ACP states. For a long time, this agreement on trade and development cooperation had been considered a key element in the peaceful international role played by Europe.

Excepting Botswana and Mauritius, however, the development efforts failed to produce significant successes. Originally, in the light of the colonial experiences made in the states that had only recently gained their independence, an explicitly non-political cooperation between Europe and Africa had been aimed at. Since the 1980s, however, European nations have increasingly demanded that their African "partners" comply with human rights, democratic and constitutional principles and good governance standards. On one hand, this concern is a consequence of European self-conception and of values that are universal and whose protection must therefore be universally demanded lest they lose their credibility. On the other hand, it is important to enable successful development in Africa to



indirectly strengthen security in Europe. For a state must have reached a minimum level of functioning to be an international partner, from an economic point of view as well as in terms of security policy.

### **A Change in Perspective after the 1993 Maastricht Treaty**

In development cooperation, there is increasing concern about how to support state structures in partner countries further than through the immediate improvement of living conditions. In this respect, foreign and security policy has in recent years gained significance on a European level, too. The 1993 Maastricht Treaty assigned an individual role to the EU in the field of external relations beyond commercial policy. The change of government in the UK led to a more EU-friendly political course which permitted further initiatives in common foreign policy. The 1998 Franco-British summit in St Malo is said to have set out the path for this. The new dynamics eventually reinforced European defence policy and led to the creation of the post of "High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy" in 1999.

In a way, this unwieldy title symbolises the relatively weak position (of power) attributed to the representative. At the same time, however, it gives a "face" to European foreign policy and thus a greater presence on the international stage: The office was assumed by former NATO Secretary General Javier Solana. Solana's international renown, intrinsically tied to his person, has added considerable weight to the office of Representative. Nevertheless, even an optimum use of the moderator role could not prevent open disagreement, as in the case of the Iraq war in 2003. The discord apparent in this context was internationally regarded as a serious set-back for a credible European foreign and security policy.

### **The European Security Strategy ESS**

As a direct reply to the Iraq crisis, the EU has been developing a European Security Strategy (ESS) under the direction of Javier Solana since December 2003. The paper represents a common analysis of problems rather than general guidance. The ESS draws a direct line between security and development and considers security to be a prerequisite for development. Fighting poverty is described as a global challenge for the EU, which goes so far as to explicitly demand combat against the "root causes" of insecurity. The ESS clearly goes beyond a purely military defence strategy, addressing elements of "human security". It is thus entirely compatible with the extended German concept of security.

The ESS lists three strategic objectives of European security policy: effective international cooperation, building security in the EU's neighbourhood and addressing the threats. As key threats it specifies terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and unresolved regional conflicts, but also failed and failing states and organised crime. Geopolitics and the EU's own interests are not disregarded by the strategy but balanced against the threats to "human security". This includes "robust missions", which may even involve the use of weapons to achieve operational aims.

Operation ARTEMIS was the first test for European security missions aiming at safeguarding "human security". Under a mandate imposing strict limits in terms of time and space, an EU response force led by the French in a determined effort managed to prevent the further spreading of violent ethnic conflicts in the town of Bunia (Ituri province). By 2007, there will be 13 mobile EU battle groups, each consisting of 1,500 troops that will be ready, within 10 days, for a one-month deployment in a radius of 6,000 km . The future relation between EU operations and UN missions is as yet unclear. Based on an EU decision adopted before the Security Strategy came into existence, "civilian crisis management units" have been built up since 2005. They will comprise experts from the areas of rule of law, civilian administration, civil protection and police. At the moment, however, these "units" promised by the member states do not consist of additional personnel, but partly of persons already working for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations.

The main emphasis of the European strategy is on creating an effective multilateralism, i.e. on strengthening the United Nations but also regional organisations such as the OSCE and the African Union (AU). The "African Peace Facility", for example, follows the logic of European security policy: 250 million euros from the European Development Fund were made available for the financing of African peacekeeping forces over a period of three years. Further financing up to a similar amount is considered highly probable. Compared to the tasks at hand and to the EU budget, which amounts to approximately 100 billion euros, these are small sums. On the other hand, this budget has only provided 50 million euros per year for foreign and security policy in the past. There are plans to increase this amount to a maximum 80 million euros by the year 2013, however. Should the EU gain more international significance and, as an alliance of democratic nations, intend to also contribute to their security, the member states will have to pool more of their own resources for the common financing of foreign policy, much as they do for military missions.

Africa is more than just a continent of crises. Then again, most of the current UN peacekeeping missions are carried out in Africa. Europe's neighbouring continent faces enormous challenges in economic, social, political and hence security policy terms. Africa is a key test case for the ability of European politics to turn words – such as the European Security Strategy and the EU-Africa strategy – into action. The question of which instruments to use will have to be answered for each case individually.

*Sven Grimm*



When a nation suffers from structural weakness and is afflicted by power struggles and violence, children are always the first victims. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the security situation remains unstable despite international engagement. Significant differences exist between the western part of the country, which seems calm on the surface, and the east, abundant in raw materials, where militia are bullying the population and fighting relentlessly for areas of influence and resources. In the city of Kinshasa, the representatives of the interim government and their opponents are taking position to put themselves into a favourable position for the upcoming redistribution of power in the country. Criminal actors from other African countries are aggravating the complex conflict situation in Congo. Like the militia, they want to gain access to the natural resources in the east and have no interest in an efficient central government in Kinshasa. It can only be hoped that the elections scheduled for the summer of 2006 will break the vicious circle of corruption and violence and thus form the beginnings of reforms and stability for the local population.

## **The Security Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as of Spring 2006**

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, members of foreign armies and representatives of international organisations are faced with an extremely complex conflict. It is primarily characterised by the key dispute over the formation of government in Kinshasa. The main adversaries are, firstly, interim president Joseph Kabila, secondly the two former rebel groups "Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie – Goma" (RCD-G) and "Mouvement de Libération du Congo" (MLC), now part of the government, and thirdly, the political opposition parties. In addition to the main conflict, the situation in Congo is significantly influenced by numerous regional and local conflicts particularly in East Congo, which are only partly related to the power struggle in Kinshasa. The interests of influential groups from the neighbouring countries of Rwanda and Uganda have a similarly negative effect on the security situation in this country abundant in natural resources and only marginally smaller than Western Europe. These influences in addition to the sheer enormity of the conflict as a whole, which has claimed an estimated three to four million lives since 1998, make a general assessment of the security situation difficult. Significant differences can be observed in the various parts of Congo.

### **The Struggle for Power in a Collapsed State**

Common to all parts of Congo is the deplorable economic and social situation, a state administration and political system which have almost completely collapsed, extensive corruption and crime as well as – mostly juvenile – gang activity. Apart from a few positive exceptions, all parties in the on-going power struggle – such as politicians, the military or militia leaders – are pursuing their individual interests aimed at political power or financial gains. In most of the cases, these aims are achieved by means of massive political pressure, criminal acts and even military force. The reasons for this behaviour lie primarily in the fact that sound state structures have been missing for decades and that criminal acts are rarely and, if at all, randomly punished owing to the lack of jurisdiction. The current interim government, formed without any kind of democratic legitimacy in 2003, is the best example of how political power can be wielded based on military strength in Congo today. Civil society or political groups, on the other hand, which have no military arm, have hardly been able to influence important decisions made in the country even in recent years (cf. the article by Christiane Kayser). Even the members of the present interim government have so far been better known for internal power struggles than for constructive cooperation.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a political system that has largely collapsed. None of the democratically inexperienced contenders for power from society, politics and the military have ever witnessed a functioning (Congolese) state that was not suffering from extreme corruption and arbitrary government. With a view to the new political order to be expected in the country, most players are doing their utmost to put themselves into a strategically favourable position. The beneficiaries of the lack of democratic order so far, such as the multitude of East Congolese militia, are in the meantime aiming at preventing this very order from being established – at least in their areas of influence.

### **The West and the Capital of Kinshasa**

Looking at the security situation from a geographic point of view reveals a clear west-east divide of the country. Large areas in the west are of little interest to the conflict parties and are thus relatively quiet compared with the remaining parts of Congo. The security situation here is primarily defined by the unstable state structure and the deplorable socio-economic situation of the people. As everywhere in Congo, everyday life is characterized by lawlessness, corruption and impoverishment. In the light of the upcoming elections, however, the majority of the population shows first signs of confidence in their own future.

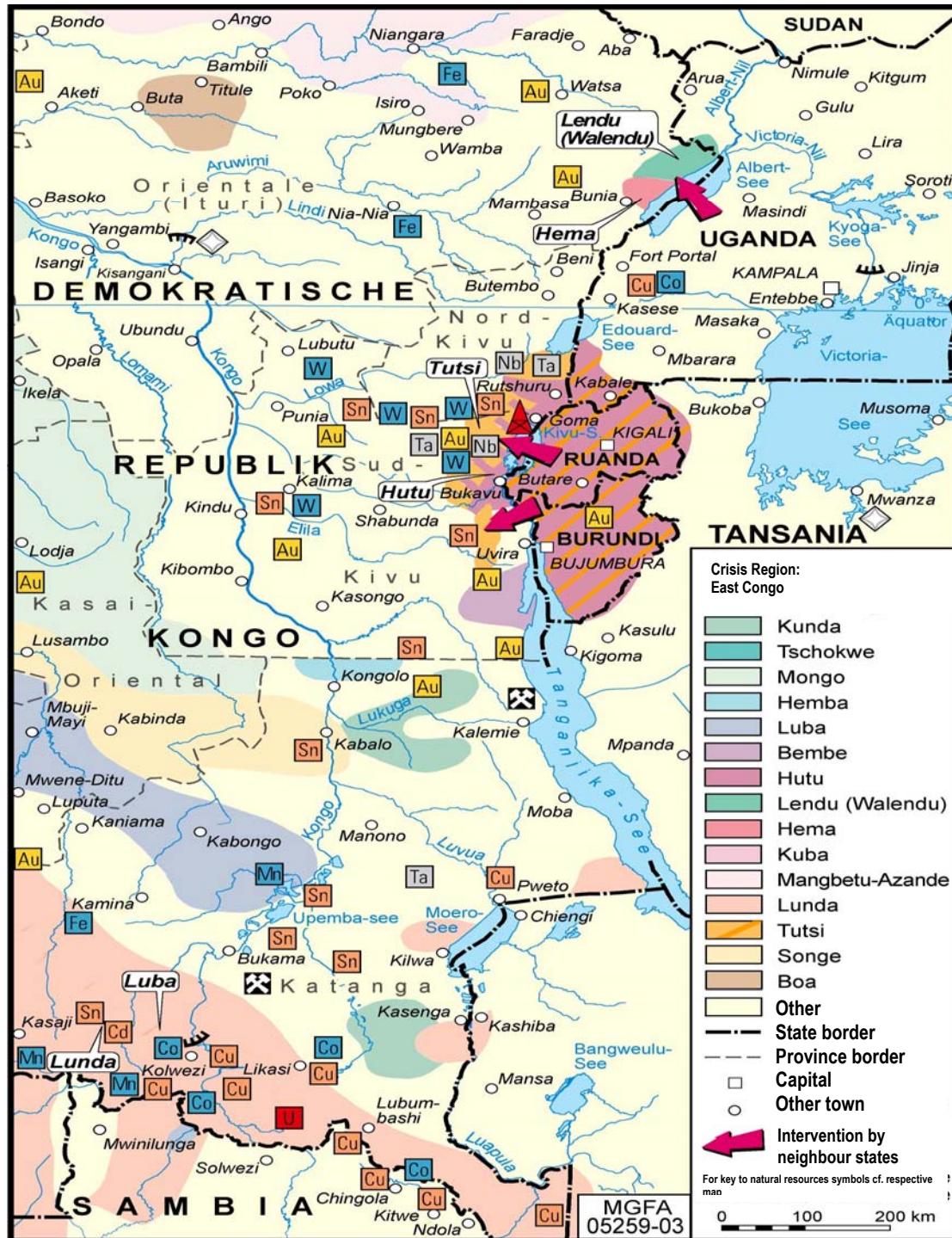
The situation in the capital, situated in the west, has its own rules. In the metropolis of Kinshasa, which officially has six and in fact probably eight million inhabitants, the key players in the on-going conflict are face-to-face with each other. At the same time, this is where the course is set for the new political order. The former adversaries now represented in the interim government continue to have thousands of security forces ready in the city. Despite agreements to the contrary, these forces largely defy the control of the interim institutions.

Although in the past years, the military and police forces employed to safeguard public security have kept the situation under control at least in the Kinshasa city centre, there is a latent threat of violent clashes. In some parts of the city, the larger political parties are capable of mobilising thousands of their followers at short notice and bringing them to the streets. Another negative influence are the activities of the youth gangs, called shégués. While the shégués present a security problem everywhere in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the metropolis of Kinshasa is particularly affected by them. These criminal gangs are well-organised and each of them may have up to a thousand members who are highly prone to violence. They control certain districts of the city and have so far defied every attempt at enforcing state authority. Frequently, the security forces who are underpaid and prone to corruption have made arrangements with these gangs.

### **The Conflict Region in the East**

While – in spite of the problems – the situation in the western part of the country and currently in Kinshasa is comparatively calm, even though unstable and extremely difficult for the population, large parts of the east are the scene of constant armed conflict and atrocities against civilians. Defending their interests ruthlessly and by means of force, it is above all the numerous regional and local militia groups that are responsible for assaults on the civilian population. Especially child soldiers are a problem in this context – according to a conservative estimate, at least 30,000 are active in East Congo. The key players in the pan-Congolese struggle for power cleverly take advantage of the militia, who are often fighting along ethnic lines, and support them logistically. Moreover, many of the persons and groups currently represented in the interim government have a considerable economic interest in East Congo, which is abundant in natural resources, trying to pursue this interest by resorting to the local militia – besides the political consolidation process. This also applies to economic operators from the neighbouring countries of Uganda and Rwanda, who have contacts even at the highest government levels in their countries. They would not benefit from the reinforcement of a central authority in East Congo and thus frequently provide support to the militia.

Despite specific demobilisation efforts by UN forces, an effective prevention of the constant terror inflicted on the helpless people of East Congo by the various militia and gangs could not yet be achieved. Even the government forces deployed for stabilisation purposes continue to commit massive human rights violations. As recently as in spring 2006, a joint military operation of UN and government forces had to be aborted as after committing assaults on the civilian population, the underpaid and undersupplied Congolese soldiers had even raided a UN camp.



**The Overall Situation Remains Problematic**

All in all, it can be said that despite its enormous wealth in natural resources, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is in a deplorable state that even intensifies from the west to the east. While it has been possible in recent years to take first steps towards a stable political order – also owing to the massive international engagement –, the political crossroads that will soon be encountered bear considerable risks for the already tense security situation. Taking into account the vast size of the country, the lack of administrative and infrastructural preconditions, the complex and diverging interests of the players involved and, above all, the armed conflicts prevailing particularly in the east, it must be concluded that the situation will remain unstable for the time being. On the other hand, with the upcoming

political decisions regarding a new and democratically legitimised executive power, there is a vague hope for the country, for the first time in decades. Now is the time to set the stage for breaking the vicious circle of inadequate state structures, violence, poverty and social need, if only in the medium to long run.

*Volker Ressler*

### Notes for foreigners visiting the capital of Kinshasa

The official currency is the Franc Congolais (FC). Foreign exchange dealings have been legal since 2001; before that, the purchase or possession of foreign exchange was punishable by law. There is no official exchange rate with the euro. There are banknotes in denominations of 200, 100, 50, 20 and 10 francs. Coins are not in circulation. Be careful when exchanging money outside of hotels or exchange bureaus – people may try to cheat you!

Credit cards are only accepted in the few larger hotels of Kinshasa. There are no cash dispensers. In some restaurants, you can pay with US dollars and euros. Although the local banknotes are frequently very old and worn, foreign banknotes are accepted neither ripped nor otherwise damaged.

In Kinshasa, service providers, porters or car-park attendants by all means expect you to tip them and will insist emphatically if necessary. Cell phones from Germany will usually function without problems in the capital, since roaming agreements have been negotiated with local providers. Phone cards can be purchased everywhere.

Drinking water supplies are insufficient in Kinshasa and the infrastructure is for the most part completely antiquated. Avoid drinking tap water if possible. *(bc)*



Rebels pose on 12 August 1998 in Goma, a city in the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the border to Rwanda. Soon thereafter armed militias advanced against Kinshasa. President Laurent Kabila had at this point in time already abandoned the capital. At a mass rally on 15 August in Bukavu, Sylvain Mbuchi, one of the rebel commanders called publicly for Kabila's resignation – otherwise he would be "taken alive".

In Africa and other parts of the world, the violent resolution of conflicts is experiencing a renaissance. Since the end of the Cold War many lawless regions have emerged, in which the struggle for power is carried out with military means. In parallel with the development of regions where the archaic forms of conflict predominate, the international community has been growing together into a "world society", increasingly tied together in a close network of communications, politics and economy. More than ever, regional conflict are seen in light of their global effects; resolving them increasingly requires international mechanisms. At the same time it is becoming increasingly clear, that lasting stability cannot be based on foreign engagement alone.



### Regional Anarchy as a Global Problem

The initial euphoria about a "new world order" after the end of the Cold War soon gave way to disillusionment and talk about the emergence of a "new world disorder". In the face of numerous wars in the Third World, but also in parts of Europe and the former Soviet Union, and impressions left by failing and failed states, "ethnic cleansing", humanitarian catastrophes and genocide, growing pressure from migration, and growing destruction of the environment, there is a perception of a "new unclarity" and Elements of Anarchy and Chaos. On the worldwide scale an unequal regional distribution of war and peace can be seen, uneven social, economic and political developments, and differing levels of "civilization" of societies.

#### Is There a Trend towards Regional Anarchy?

The political, social and economic phenomena often referred to and described since the end of the East-West conflict as "anarchy" (literally: absence of government, lack of order) consist as a rule of various elements: First comes underdevelopment and poverty as the result of difficult or failed processes of modernization and transformation. This includes mass impoverishment, urbanization with a tendency towards urban decay, the brutalization and criminalization of daily life, the rule of terror, human rights violations and political repression. Then there are "failed" states that are barely or not at all able to enforce their monopoly on the use of force, nor able to carry out elementary government functions. Finally, mention must be made of "warlordism" and "government-free area" in failing states and broken societies. The decay of the monopoly on the use of force generally results in "criminal anarchy" based on the arbitrary power of local warlords, their militias and armed gangs, as well as criminalized parallel economies in the form of smuggling, arms trafficking, robbery, extortion and plundering of resources. This leads finally to year-long regional and international civil wars with destructive consequences for the infrastructures and social fabrics of whole countries. Wars of this kind result in widespread social catastrophes such as famine and mass migrations, pestilence, "ethnic cleansing" and genocide, not infrequently accompanied by acute or creeping ecological catastrophes like draught, flood and deforestation.

#### From Local Crisis to International Problem

Apparently, a multitude of factors are at work. A local crisis or catastrophe comes to be a global problem causing concern to the international community. The interests of neighbouring states, regional organizations and distant Powers seem to play just as much a role as does solution-oriented "activism" on the part of international organizations, specifically the United Nations (UN), governments and nongovernmental relief organizations. Finally, mention must also be made of the role played by the media in forming perceptions of crisis and catastrophe, and in influencing public opinion and policy.

Since the 1990s, the UN and its Security Council have been playing a markedly more active role in international crisis prevention and management. They dispatch peace missions, carry out humanitarian interventions and arbitrate at the diplomatic level. This globally oriented responsibility for the crisis regions of the world can also be interpreted an expression of the vested interests of the major industrial nations. In today's "world community of risk" with all of its various interdependencies, these interests cannot any longer tolerate the descent of any one sector into chaos, even if it could be contained. The consequences of regional crises and catastrophes (e.g. migration, environmental destruction, terrorism) cannot be blocked out, as the events of recent years have shown.

Increasingly, short-term crisis and emergency management and humanitarian aid have taken the place of long-term development and structural policies. But this assistance is by no means equitably

distributed among all crisis regions or to all of those in need: On the contrary, the process is highly selective and it is not always clear how the priorities are set. Decisions by Great Powers sitting on the UN Security Council, UN peacekeeping missions and the influence of interest groups in the developed nations are important, as are media coverage, the accessibility of crisis regions, and the local security situation. For instance, despite the catastrophic humanitarian crisis of recent years in the Congo, it has largely been ignored by the international world community compared with other crisis regions.

### **Sub-Saharan Africa as a Region of "Anarchy"?**

A constant stream of reports about unrest and insecurity reinforce the "catastrophic" image of Africa cultivated by the media. Poverty, hunger, war, the misery of refugees, and the AIDS epidemic make the continent a perfect example of social catastrophe and economic underdevelopment. This image of "African chaos" implies that the region south of the Sahara is a "bubbling pot of conflict", from which ever and again new conflicts boil over. But Africa is not monolithic, but a continent made up of worlds more remote from each other than, for instance Sicily and the Shetlands – and not just in terms of geography. The roots, too, of African wars cannot just be blamed on bloodthirsty, primitive tribal feuds, but can be just as clearly explained in political terms as the wars of Europe. For instance, the cruel events in Rwanda in 1994 can no wise be explained merely as a chaotic massacre; on the contrary, it was a well planned and organized genocide against Tutsi people and Hutu dissidents involving the political and economic interests of the ruling elites. (cf. the article by Peter Hazdra) In light of the European tragedy in former Yugoslavia it must be acknowledged that some African countries have over decades been able to hold together ethnically and culturally diverse populations under the most difficult of conditions without any major conflicts breaking out. But progress and successes in the area of peaceful crisis management, democratization and economic reform receive much less attention from the international media public than wars and catastrophes.

A differentiated view of warlike events clearly reveals that Africa experienced anti-colonial and anti-racist wars of liberation followed by border conflicts, conflicts over resources and a variety of years-long separatist or anti-regime civil wars. During the Cold War, these conflicts often had the character of surrogate wars. Since the 1980s, the picture of Africa as zone of warlike chaos has merged with an economic and political crisis. This is where the poorest nations of the earth are found. When external aid dried up after the end of the East-West Confrontation, social dichotomies and struggles over the distribution of resources in many African nations became more acute. Because of widespread nepotism and patronage, government came less and less to serve the common good; on the contrary, the State was practically privatized, and individual interests ran paramount. The result was often the warlike decay of the state, social disintegration and the emergence of forced markets and war economies based on the plundering of resources. In the context of these power struggles, ethnic differences and the clan ties of the leading elites were often actively politicized, manipulated and instrumentalized.

The international community took various approaches in dealing with African wars and humanitarian catastrophes. One of the first major UN peacekeeping operations took place in the newly independent Congo during the first half of the 1960s after the outbreak of uprisings, power struggles and separatist movements. The UN also played an important role in peacefully resolving former surrogate wars in southern Africa. The first half of the 90s saw it involved in its spectacular and abortive operation in Somalia. In West Africa (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast) the UN approved and legitimized first intervention by ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) before becoming actively engaged in the peace process there. The genocide in Rwanda took place in 1994 under the eyes of deployed UN peacekeepers. The UN has only recently become engaged in the longstanding conflicts in the Sudan (southern Sudan, Darfur). The largest-scale UN operation worldwide and in Africa is currently ongoing with MONUC, once again in the Congo. (cf. the article by Thomas Breitwieser)

Africa is no more an international "welfare case" than any other crisis region in the world, but crisis solutions have to come from within, rooted in local socio-cultural, socio-economic and political

conditions. Such self-help requires massive international solidarity and assistance. Opportunities for chronically instable and endangered societies, aside from promoting the growth of effective government, lie in the strengthening of local self-help initiatives, social movements and democratization processes. (cf. the article by Christiane Kayser) For humanitarian reasons as well as in preservation of their own interests, the more influential members of the international community cannot tolerate the developments described above for such a large number of societies and regions, even if most of them lie outside the focus of world politics and economy. Otherwise, the effects of regional turbulence and catastrophes may impact negatively on the world's centres of power and prosperity in the form of growing migratory pressure, ecological repercussions or terrorist attacks.

*Volker Matthies*

New Wars and the Decay of the State

Worldwide, conflicts since the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been marked by the blurring of traditional boundaries between "war" and "peace", as was the case in the Balkan wars of the 90s, the conflicts in the Caucasus and in Afghanistan, and in the Middle East, including the Iraq War (after the end of "regular" fighting). For these conflicts the political scientist Herfried Munker has coined the term "new wars". A certain pattern of "new war" has emerged in connection with the failing state wars of Africa, particularly in and around the Congo. From 1990 onwards a conflict emerged that had its source in Uganda and Rwanda, which widened first into Burundi and the eastern Congo, and culminated in the horrific genocide in Rwanda.

The conduct of "new wars" is marked by their multitude of actors. Besides the conflicting armies' regular armies and forces from intervening foreign states, ethnic militias, criminal gangs, paramilitary organizations and mercenaries also are involved. However, the boundary between regular armies and rebel organizations is often fluid. The result is a mixed form, sometimes called "sobels" (half soldier, half rebel).

The form of combat most closely associated with "new wars" is also termed asymmetric warfare. In this form of combat, armies in the classical sense of the term confront irregular opponents. Because in this form of conflict "classical operations" and "battles" are often avoided, it is also known as low intensity conflict (LIC). But in view of the high number of victims involved, particularly among the population ("collateral damage"), this term is just as vague as the term "asymmetrical warfare".

The essential characteristic of "new wars" is the interconnection between war, civil war, guerrilla operations, terrorism, organized crime and the systematic violation of human rights by the conflicting parties, for instance by mutilation of enemies and civilians, recruiting of child soldiers and the use of massive sexual violence as a weapon of war.

It is often the case that, depending on the phase of the conflict, the members of some given group may be, successively, a rebel group, a government unit, the henchmen of some warlord, or refugees, as was the case in and around Rwanda in 1994.

During conflicts of this kind politically, militarily and economically autonomous warlord zones emerge, lying apart from and astride the areas of government control. In these paranational zones, taxation of the inhabitants, exploitation of national resources and misuse of humanitarian aid all play a role. In addition, there are opportunities for financing with international capital, which can easily be shifted globally through network between the governments involved, persons and enterprises. The same applies to supplies of arms. Thus, the privatization of force is attended by a transformed war economy under the conditions dictated by globalization. Because the systems of government have been hollowed out, the persons holding positions of leadership in the power wielding organizations



A child soldier poses for the photographer displaying his machine gun. Taken September 2, 1998 in Kalemie.

cannot be compensated according to the standards of civil service salaries. Hence, in weak states, alternative systems of compensation emerge in the form of corruption. This offers a wide spectrum of opportunity: Besides salaries, compensation-in-kind plays are an important factor, e.g. mining concessions. The brutal self-enrichment of a Joseph Désiré Mobutu stands probably at the far end of this spectrum. (mr)



A Soldier of the Congolese Army registers rifles collected at a disarmament point established by the UN peacekeeping mission MONUC. (April 25, 2005 at Bunia) Following a pattern familiar from the Balkans and Afghanistan, the weapons turned over by the militias were for the most part inoperable.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations see themselves confronted with a situation that hinders any lasting peaceful settlement. After many years of war and civil war, all of the conflicting parties have to be integrated into the reconstruction effort so that escalating violence can be brought under control. If the Government and the International Community are unable to offer opportunities for reintegrating fighters into civilian society, the danger exists that armed conflict will break out once more. The Democratic Republic of Congo is one example for how difficult it is to get a robust peace process underway from the outside, to secure and to moderate it.

## Recent and Current Conflict Resolution Efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the International Community's peace efforts in general and especially the UN mission MONUC are in line with the ambitious intervention strategies the international community has developed within the last two decades.

Their implementation, however, confronts the actors with numerous challenges. One of them is the large number of conflicting parties. Some phases of the Second Congo War involved the armies of seven states, which aggravated peace negotiations. On the Congolese side three major rebel groups (RCD, MLC, RCD-ML) and a multitude of minor armed groups and militias were involved, numbering about 90,000 non-government combatants in 2001. The RCD in particular went through a process of disintegration, generating new rebel groups who also wanted a place at the peace negotiations. A negotiated settlement was made more difficult by the unclear political goals of the conflicting parties, which during the war increasingly overlapped with economic interests. Virtually every conflict party was involved in the exploitation of the vast natural resources of the area under their control. The material incentives of war economy were one reason why the cease-fire agreement of 1999 did not – initially – lead to the begin of a peace process. In the period following, conflict management by the International Community concentrated on the brokering of a power-sharing agreement between the government and its armed challengers to create political and economic incentives for laying down weapons and participating in the peace process. This form of conflict management, which has become usual practice in almost every conflict-torn country, led then finally to the desired success. An interim government including all of the major conflicting parties took office in June 2003.

The political engagement of violent actors in establishing the peace is not however without problems. One dilemma is moral in nature: All of the Congolese parties to the conflict have been guilty of the most egregious human rights violations. The International Community has passed over this issue in silence in the interest of pacifying the country. Nevertheless, confronting past war crimes and other injustices counts today as one important element of a lasting consolidation of the peace. It remains unclear, whether there ever will be a legal review of events in the Congo, and what for that might take. The only sign thus far has been the initiation of investigations by the International Criminal Court in The Hague against an unknown number of Congolese war criminals. Whether high-ranking members of the Congolese government will ever answer before a court of law remains to be seen, as does whether there will be initiatives in the country itself to address war crimes. In fact, there is a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as has been established in other post-war countries; it has not assumed work yet.

Another problem with the power-sharing agreement is political in nature. Conflicting parties who had battled each other for years, found themselves together in an all-party government where they are expected to cooperate in bringing the peace process forward. Mutual mistrust and diametrical interest place narrow limits on government effectiveness and efficiency. It is no wonder then, that the transitional government phase (2003-2006) brought little political improvement. This was particularly true with regard to the reform, better creation, of the security sector, which consists of two elements: first, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants, the so-called DDR Process, and, secondly, the creation of national army and police units. Both processes constitute a necessary prerequisite for the establishment of a state monopoly on the use of force, and thus for the lasting pacification of the country.

The provisional government did not submit its plan for the creation of unified national armed forces until May 2005. Thanks to the support of diverse donor nations, six of twelve planned integrated Brigades had nonetheless been formed by the end of 2005. Their effectiveness has however proven to be extremely limited. The reason for this were low and irregular pay, primitive equipment and

dependency on active support from the UN mission in the Congo. One cause of these deficiencies was corruption among Army leaders and government officials. The build-up of a national police force has not gone much better. Besides the government, the little progress that has been made has been due to international donors. Belgium, South Africa, Angola and the EU carried out projects in the area of Security Sector Reform. Lack of coordination between these bilateral projects as however hindered any tangible or broadly effective results. The DDR Process too was confronted with major problems, particularly in regard to the social and economic reintegration of the approximately 100 thousand former combatants, who either could not be, or did not want to be integrated into the Army. Although each former combatant was supposed to be entitled to a demobilization bounty of 410 US dollars, few received this "peace dividend", which was intended to ease their return to civil life. As in other post-conflict countries, the danger was great, that in the absence of promised aid combatants might be motivated to rejoin armed groups. This highlights why the use of force and the addressing of war legacy are more than just military, political and legal challenges. In the mid to long term, the creation of a sustainable peace regime is also economic development issue.

*Denis Tull*

## Mercenaries

The emergence of modern mercenaries is closely tied to the conflicts on the African continent. With the end of colonialism and the Cold War, arms were easily available in great quantity, as were out-of-work soldiers. This development accelerated further with improvements to the flow of information and financing via the internet, which made it easier than before to bring the right constellation of people and materiel together for any given purpose.

The term "mercenary" is not easily defined. The forms of military service form a triangle, where the professional soldier, the militiaman/conscript, and the mercenaries form the three apices, and within which there are a multitude of mixed forms; plus there are considerable differences in the perception of their status: how the respective party views itself and how it is looked upon from the outside.

According to the provisions of the Supplementary Protocols to the Geneva Convention on the protection of the victims of international conflicts, the following criteria apply to defining who is a mercenary: A mercenary is a person who was directly recruited for the purpose of actively



White mercenaries marching on Bumba, 1964.

participating in hostilities, and who actually does participate in them. Secondly, a mercenary serves for material advantage, an attribute which differentiates him from the member of an international volunteer force. This criteria is held to be fulfilled, when the material compensation is "substantially in excess" of the pay of comparable regular soldiers. Third, a mercenary is a "neutral" person, whose engagement in combat is for personal reasons unrelated to his nationality or place where the events occur. Finally, a mercenary is defined by the fact that he is not member of any regular army.

According to this definition, members of the Foreign Legion or British Gurkhas are not mercenaries, but regular soldiers.

"Mercenaries" falling under this definition are not accounted as combatants and need not be treated as prisoners of war when captured. Despite this risk – which, in view of the widespread violation of international law during "new wars", is relative – both supply and demand seem unbroken, not least due to the emergence of modern private military companies. (*mr*)





“Peacekeeping is not a job for soldiers, but only soldiers can do it”, once said the popular Swedish UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld, who held office from 1953 to 1961. Under his leadership began in 1961 the *“Opération des Nations Unies au Congo”* (ONUC), with which the United Nations attempted to bring stability to the newly-independent former Belgian colony. ONUC stands at the begin of a series of UN operations along the Congo. The operation symbolizes the long road the United Nations have travelled since then in the attempt to develop new forms of conflict resolution for Africa. The photo shows a helicopter on patrol over Kinshasa.

## United Nations Peace Efforts

In the night from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> of July, 1960 the Security Council and Secretary General of the United Nations (UN) opened a new chapter in the history of the world organization. In emergency session following an urgent request for assistance by the Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (=Congo-Kinshasa) and as proposed by the General Secretary, the Security Council approved Resolution 143. On the one hand, Belgium was to withdraw all troops from the country, on the other the UN Secretary General was authorized to take the necessary steps, in consultation with the Congolese Government, to provide the Government with such military assistance as may be necessary until the national security forces may be able to meet fully their tasks. It was with Resolution 143 that the UN system of military peacekeeping began. True, soldiers had been employed under its mandate for maintaining the peace since the June of 1948. But the first major military and civilian operation for what in today's language we would call "peacekeeping", "peace enforcement" and "post-conflict peace building" was the "Opération des Nations Unies au Congo" (ONUC). Because it received its peacekeeping mandate as early as 1961, it stands out among all other UN peacekeeping efforts, spanning the arc between classical "peacekeeping" and "peace support operations" since 1990 (see the box "ONUC", p. XXX).

The legal basis for these decisions was vague. Since military peacekeeping measures figure neither in Chapter VI (Pacific Settlement of Disputes), nor in Chapter VII (Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression) of the UN Charter. Also, they had not yet become an established part of customary international law. Dag Hammarskjöld, second UN Secretary General, is said to have coined the phrase "action under Chapter VIa of the Charter" of operations of this kind.

On July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1960, six days following the approval of Resolution 143, 20 African and two European infantry battalions along with a number of special units were ready for employment in the Congo. By late July, 1961, the contingent had grown to almost 20 thousand peacekeeping soldiers. It was the largest United Nations operation thus far. To more clarify the operation's only vaguely defined mandate the UN signed a treaty with the government of Congo-Kinshasa termed "basic agreement", which entered into force on July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1960. The surprisingly quick stationing of ONUC could not however prevent the outbreak of the "Congo Crisis" (see the article by Helmut Strizek). The slow withdrawal of Belgian troops and the denial of entry by peacekeepers into Katanga Province by the self-appointed government there led to tensions with the Security Council. Resolution 145, approved unanimously on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1960, called on Belgium to withdraw all troops immediately, and on the international community to refrain from any action which might tend to impede the restoration of law and order and the exercise by the Government of the Congo of its authority, and also to refrain from any action which might undermine the territorial integrity and the political independence of the Republic of the Congo. This language was directed both against the Congo's Premier and against the Soviet Union. Since Patrice E. Lumumba, who had been seeking help from any quarter, had gotten Soviet assistance. In this way, world politics intruded into the Congolese civil war. The West feared that the Soviet Union might gain a foothold in the heart of Africa the same way, as the US saw it, it was threatening to do in Cuba.

Only a few weeks later trouble arose again, this time between the UN and the government of Congo-Kinshasa: While the UN was emphatic that ONUC be neutral (i.e. favouring neither side), the Congolese government understood the Resolution to mean that the peacekeepers were in the country to support it and thus to suppress the secession of Katanga. This led to clarification by the Security Council, expressed in Resolution 146 of August 9, 1960, that ONUC must also be stationed in the rebel province of Katanga, emphasizing however, that ONUC was neither party to the conflict nor an intervention force. In direct negotiations with the leadership of Katanga province the Secretary General was able on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1960 to station two companies of the Swedish battalion in Élisabethville (Lumumbashi), accelerating the withdrawal of Belgian troops. ONUC's strict impartiality encouraged secessionist ambitions in the south and east of the country.

Because of this the operation was exposed to harsh criticism from both the warring parties and from members of the United Nations. On September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1960 the Security Council requested an emergency session of the UN General Assembly, although the Charter did not provide for sessions of this kind. The Assembly itself however had already given itself this option on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1950 with its Resolution 377 A (V). On September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1960 the General Assembly approved the actions taken by the Security Council and the Secretary General in Resolution 1474 (ES-IV). The XV<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly also dealt with the Congo Question in its Resolutions 1498 (November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1960) and 1592 (December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1960) without coming to any substantial conclusion. Anyway, under Chapter IV of the Charter resolutions by the General Assembly are merely recommendations and are not legally binding.

Subsequently ONUC's mandate, what had initially been mostly peacekeeping in nature, was expanded in two phases to one of peace enforcement. In February 1961, Resolution 161 gave ONUC the mission to use force as a last resort to prevent civil war and unrest. The new Congolese ruler, Joseph Désiré Mobutu, was called upon indirectly to reinstate the parliament, to reorganize the military forces and armed groups and subordinate them to political control. Escalating violence in the country, which increasingly was directed against ONUC installations and personnel, did not find the Security Council inactive. On November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1961 it authorized the Secretary General to use the force necessary to drive all armed personnel and advisors from the country who were neither Congolese nationals nor belonging to ONUC, and to prevent them from re-entering the country (Resolution 169). This was the basis for ONUC to occupy Katanga Province and end the secession there.

When Mobutu established a new central government in Kinshasa in 1963 ONUC reverted to its peacekeeping mission and reduced its personnel to short of a third of its former strength. The UN operation in Congo-Kinshasa finally ended in June, 1964, even though the Security Council Resolutions had not named any specific ending date. On October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1963 the XVIII<sup>th</sup> General Assembly's Resolution 1885(XVIII) approved final funding for this operation through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1964.

### **MONUC and Developments up to the Present Day**

Congo-Kinshasa did not, however, settle down. Therefore, 35 years later the Security Council once saw itself compelled to take action, calling on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1999 for a cease-fire agreement (Resolution 1234), which was in fact signed on July 10, 1999 in the Zambian capital Lusaka, but the conflicting parties only implemented it to the extent that it did not impede their own political and economic interests. It asked the UN to provide forces to support and enforce the peace process (expressly termed "peacekeeping" and "peace enforcement"). Unlike in 1960 the UN and its members were slow to react in 1999. In August the Security Council dispatched 90 liaison personnel (Resolution 1258). By November this number had already had to be increased (Resolution 1273), until on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1999 the Security Council was able to bring itself to decide to call the "Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies à la République Démocratique du Congo" (MONUC) into existence (Resolution 1279). At first, MONUC remained a peacekeeping, predominately civilian mission with minor military elements having observer status only. The Security Council's first action under Chapter VII of the UN Charter was Resolution 1291 in February of 2000. Following attacks on members of the Mission, military personnel was increased to 5,537. Under an expanded mandate, MONUC was authorized to use force to protect both itself and the Joint Military Commission (of conflicting parties) agreed to under the Lusaka accord. Additionally, the UN military forces received authorization to use force to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel, and protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence. Over the course of time the Security Council reinforced MONUC's military element and adjusted its mandate to meet changing conditions, so that by January 2006 a total of 16,700 soldiers and 475 police officers were stationed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In Lusaka an „Inter-Congolese Dialog“ had been agreed to as an assembly of all peace-seeking military and political groups. These met for the first time on October 15th, 2001 in the Ethiopian capital Addis Abeba, but the assembly was adjourned without result after just two days. At the invitation of South Africa’s president Thabo Mbeki, talks were resumed on February 25th, 2002 in Sun City, ending with an accord reached on the 19th of April, 2002. The agreement formalized the arrangements that have held to the present (April 2006). President Joseph Kabila and the members of the interim government hold office for the time being only until new national and provincial parliaments and government have been elected in general, free, equal and secret balloting. Military and police forces are to be reorganized, and former rebels integrated into them. The interim constitution, the „loi fondamentale“ of April 4th, 2003, provided for participation in the government by all peace-seeking parties to the conflict and for the separation of powers. In the meantime, nd electoral law has also come into effect. The date of the elections has, however, been postponed repeatedly. MONUC and EUFOR troops are intended to provide security for these elections.

Resolution 1484 of May 30th, 2003 marked a new stage in the development of military operations under UN mandate. With Resolution 1484 the Security Council resolved to deploy an »Interim Emergency Multinational Force« (IEMF) to Bunia and the neighbouring Ituri region through September 1st, 2003. (cf. the article by Denis Tull, page XXX for background information) This force had the mission of stabilizing security conditions, improving the humanitarian situation, protecting the airport and refugee camps and, depending on the situation, contributing to the safety of of the civilian population, MONUC personnel and humanitarian aid workers in the city. The IEMF was the European Union’s first military operation in Africa and was carried out under French command as "Operation Artemis". The MONUC mandate expires on September 30th, 2006, but an extension is likely.

In Central Africa, the Security Council networked two neighbouring operations for the first time. With Resolution 1565 of October 1st, regarding MONUC and Resolution 1650 of December 21st, 2005 regarding ONUB (»Opération des Nations Unies au Burundi«) the Security Council authorized elements of on contingent to be attached to another, but reserved the right to decide on a case by case basis. This was the basis for the most recent Resolution, number 1996 of April 10th, 2006 on MONUC, which authorized the Secretary General to reassign an infantry battalion, a military hospital and up to 50 military observers from ONUB to MONUC, initially until July 1st, 2006, the Security Council explicitly reserving the right to decide about any extension of this action.

### European Engagement

The EU’s IEMF operation was and is not the only EU activity on the African continent, nor in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Among the tasks of the EU and its members the European Security Strategy (ESS) „A Secure Europe in a Better World“ of June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2003 makes specific mention of “the Congo” as a „recent example“ of aid to failed states (cf. article by Sven Grimm). Based on the ESS, the European Council agreed on several measures in support of the peace process in Congo-Kinshasa. The first step was the publication on December 9th, 2004 of Joint Action 2004/874/CFSP which created EUPOL, the European Police Mission Kinshasa. On December 13th, 2004 the Council declared its willingness in principle to participate in security sector reform. Joint Action 2005/355/CFSP established the security sector reform support mission EUSEC DR CONGO on May 2nd, 2005 for a period of 12 months. Besides these decisions based on the ESS the EU has additionally developed a strategy paper entitled „EU and Africa: Towards a Strategic Partnership“, which was adopted by the European Council at its session in Brussels on the 15th and 16th of December, 2005. This strategy encompasses the years 2006 through 2015 and is intended to assist the entire African continent towards sustainable development, in security affairs, and towards good governance.

The security paper also contains political guidelines for upcoming EUFOR operations in Congo-Kinshasa: The EU will "provide direct support to African Union, sub-regional or UN efforts to promote peace and stability through Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and European

Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) activities, and military and civilian crisis management missions, including potential deployment of EU battle groups; continue implementation of the ESDP Africa Action Plan; and develop the dialogue with Euromed countries."

*Thomas Breitwieser*

### Dag Hammarskjöld

Dag Hjalmar Agne Carl Hammarskjöld was born on July 29th, 1905 in Jonköping as the fourth son of the later Swedish Prime Minister Hjalmar Hammarskjöld. He studied at the University of Uppsala, first literature, languages and history, later economics and law. He received his doctorate in economics in 1933, moving on to hold various positions with the Swedish national bank and in the ministries of finance and foreign affairs. He was his country's representative to the EEC and the UN General Assembly, 1951-53. On April 7th, 1953 Hammarskjöld was elected Secretary General by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Although originally nominated as a compromise candidate by the members of the Security Council, he was so successful that he was re-elected in September 1957 – more than six months prior to the end of his first term in office. During his period in office important events such as the resolution of the Suez Crisis in 1957, the Vienna Conferences on the peaceful use of nuclear energy of 1955 and 1958, and the monitoring of the Near East peace process since 1956 to place. During his fourth visit to the Congo, on the way from Élisabethville to Ndola in Zambia to mediate between the Congolese central government and leaders of the secessionist Katanga Province, Dag Hammarskjöld was killed under mysterious circumstances in an aircraft crash on September 18th, 1961. *(tb)*

### Kolwezi 1978

During the 1960s and 70s Shaba/Katanga Province was the primary seat of unrest in Congo/Zaire. Led by former army officer Nathaniel Mbumba, the Congolese National Liberation Front (Front de liberation nationale congolais, FNLC) rose to be the most important player in the fight for secession. Members of the Lunda tribe on both sides of the Angolan-Congolese border sympathized with the FLNC. The organization also cooperated with the regime in Angola. When communist rebels seized power in Angola with assistance from Soviet weapons and Cuban soldiers, the FLNC became involved in the East-West Conflict. Angolan governments supported the FLNC in order to limit Congolese influence in the region as much as possible.

The conflict escalated when FLNC fighters from Angola made a major incursion into Katanga in March 1977. Mobutu asked the African nations for help; Morocco sent troops. With their assistance the FLNC rebels were driven back into Angola. When they advanced into the recovered areas, troops of the Zaire army (Forces armées Zaïroises) committed numerous atrocities on inhabitants who had been friendly with the FLNC. Beginning on May 13th, 1978 the FLNC struck back: Its fighters crossed the border near Zambia and advanced towards the city of Kolwezi, driving the Zaire soldiers back. Most of the inhabitants of Kolwezi, insofar they belonged to the Lunda element of the city's populations, welcomed the arrival of the FLNC rebels. Later the same day violence broke out, directed against "white" residents of the city, particularly against French and Belgians. Am 14. On May 14th, Mobutu sent a plea for help to his French colleague, whose reaction came swiftly: Just three days later, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Parachute Regiment of the Foreign Legion had been alerted in Calvi on Corsica and deployed initially to Kinshasa, then French Legionaries were jumping over Kolwezi. They were immediately followed by one thousand Belgian Para-Commandos in support of the operation, during which 2,700 persons, mostly French and Belgian nationals, were successfully evacuated. Between June, 1978 and September 1979 the FLNC was finally driven from Katanga with assistance from Western nations. This classic Cold War "war by proxy" between the FNLC rebels and the central government of Zaire finally ended with the collapse of Communism in the early 90s. *(mr)*

"Accord Global et Inclusif", Pretoria 2002

More fundamental than the Inner-Congolese Dialog of Sun City in spring 2002, was an agreement the conflicting parties signed in Pretoria the same year. On December 17<sup>th</sup>, under the pressure of the international community, the warring parties, political opposition and civil society groups adopted a framework agreement named "Accord Global et Inclusif". This agreement set five major objectives for the reconstruction process in the country: i.a. the cessation of the fighting and enforcement of state authority throughout the country, also national reconciliation and the formation of national armed forces. First and foremost the Accord contained the commitment to preparing and holding free and secret elections. *(bc)*



On August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1998 demonstrators took to the streets of Kinshasa in an attempt to support their President Laurent Kabila, holding placards against Americans, French and Tutsis. Meanwhile, the rebels' advance on Kinshasa continued. Political disputes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo nearly always have an ethnic dimension. Negative stereotypes and the search for an "enemy" often follow ethnic lines. Ethnic groups in the population, however, are hard to define. An ethnic group is a community which comprises members of different tribes, different languages and different territories. It may form and fall apart. Ethnic groups often have the same aims, common challenges or are exposed to the same threats. Both the affiliation to a group itself and the importance of this affiliation for everyday life may change with the situation of the people concerned, in case of a change in location for example.

## "Tribal Structures"?

### The Issue of Ethnic Attribution

Since the mid-1990s, ethnic conflicts make headlines in the Western media landscape at regular intervals and stimulate hot debates in political and academic circles. The ethnic cleansings in the Balkans have shown that, even in Europe, such conflicts are in no case part of the distant past. The genocide in Rwanda and the growth in ethnic conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa seemed to confirm deep-rooted prejudices. By some people, the African continent has always been regarded as the origin of *primitive* tribal loyalties, the conflict potential of which periodically causes violent clashes.

But are ethnic loyalties really relics of an era long gone, rooted in customs and traditions believed to have already been forgotten? Or is this rather a new phenomenon, an answer to the variety of problems existing in the modern world? Let me answer these questions right away: both is the case. Both traditional structures and modern influences and challenges are playing an important role.

### Ethnic diversity in the Congo

Those who want to get an overview of the traditional communities in the Congo by referring to records from colonial times will get a confusing picture. Ethnologists have counted approximately 250 different ethnic groups and nearly as many different languages. Apart from the French language, especially the following four official national languages are of supra-regional importance: Lingala in the north and west, Koongo in the far west, Luba-Kasai (or Tshiluba) in the two Kasai provinces, as well as the Congolese variant of Swahili in Katanga and the east of the country. Similar to French, Swahili is mainly used as lingua franca and hardly learned as a native language. The diversity described, however, hides remarkable cultural commonalities. Except for the far north and north-east, all languages are part of the Bantu language group and are, therefore, closely related. Also in other areas, the resemblance between different cultures in the Congo is remarkable. Therefore, the country may not easily be divided by different cultural criteria. Only the natural environment may serve as a basis for a division into four parts: The northern savannah, the southern savannah, between them the central Congo Basin covered by tropical rain forest, and finally the mountainous east of the country, some parts of which are already influenced by East African cultures.

In pre-colonial times, at the southern edge of the rain forest, there were wide-stretched empires such as the Lunda Empire, the Luba Empire and the Kongo Empire, the centre of which was located in today's Angola (cf. article on the Kingdom of Congo by Bernhard Chiari). Most of the societies in the Congo, however, did not define their affiliation to a *political* community (state) via a territorial reign, as has been the case, for example, in Europe since the beginning of Early Modern History (about 1500), but via blood relationship which is often only determined by one line of a family – the male line in the north and central region of the country and the female line in the south.

The different related groups form the basis for the traditional political system, the leaders of which are nearly everywhere referred to as chiefs. The size of these groups could vary widely. However, the chief normally ruled only over a few villages. It was difficult for larger political communities to emerge due to the fact that, in the thinly populated forests of central Africa, the subjects were easily able to avoid the chiefs' authority by migrating. In large areas of the Congo and especially in the southern savannah region (as well as generally in Africa), the position of a chief was connected with an elaborate ceremony, giving the ruler a sacred aura and, thus, boosting his authority.

When the Belgian colonial rulers began to organize the country according to European ideas, the traditional structures were forming the basis for the local administrative units. The Belgians integrated the established leaders into the colonial system. Smaller groups were often placed under the central



authority of a ruler, whereas larger units were divided into several subunits for power-political reasons. This resulted in a system that was based theoretically on traditional rule, but in fact, created a new reality. The new system restricted the influence of leaders with too much power and extended their powers (or even redefined them) where it seemed to be necessary in order to control the local population.

The ten most common languages in the Democratic Republic of the Congo:

Language	Major region (province)	Number of speakers	Proportion of the overall population
Luba-Kasai (Tshiluba)	West Kasai, East Kasai	6.3 Mio.	11.7 %
Kituba	Lower Congo, South Bandundu	4.2 Mio.	7.8 %
Lingala	Equatorial Province, West Kasai, Bandundu	2.0 Mio.	3.7 %
Luba-Katanga	Katanga (in particular Haut Lomani District)	1.5 Mio.	2.8 %
Ngbaka	Equatorial Province	1.1 Mio.	2.0 %
Songe	West Kasai, West Katanga	1.0 Mio.	1.9 %
Koongo	Lower Congo	1.0 Mio.	1.9 %
Nande	North Kivu	900 000	1.7 %
Lugbara	West Kasai	840 000	1.5 %
Lendu	West Kasai	750 000	1.4 %

The vehicular languages French and Swahili have not been taken into account (last update: April 2006). All in all, 214 different languages and dialects are spoken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Hence, most of the people belong to a small or minor language group.

(Source: Ethnologue. Languages of the World, <http://www.ethnologue.com>)

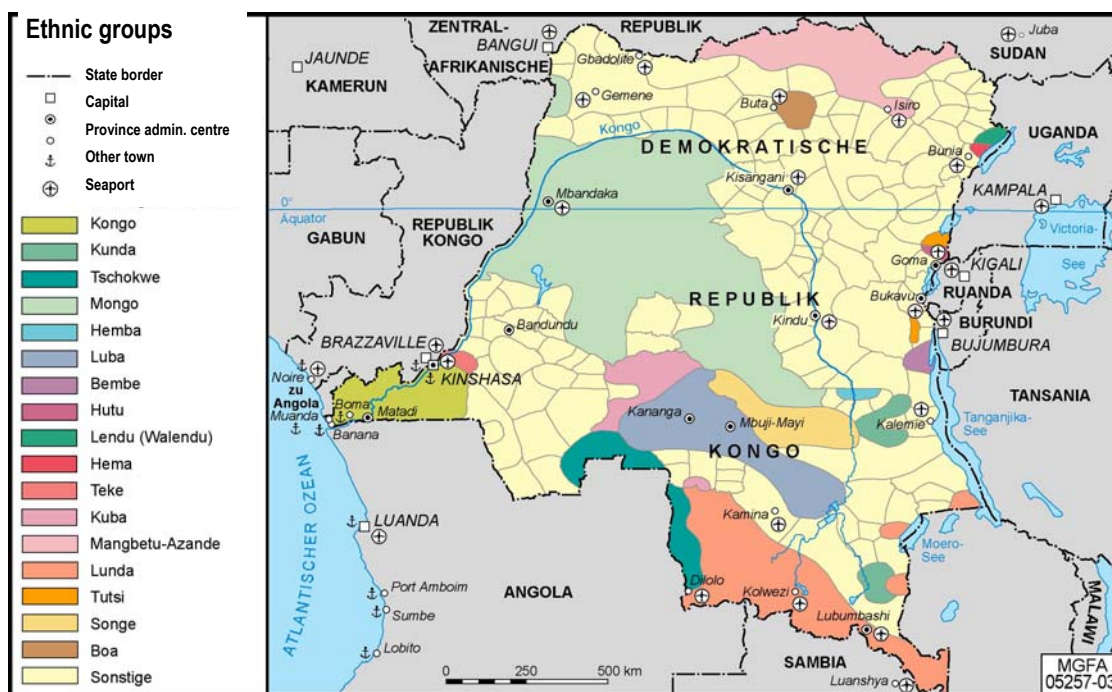
### The Importance of Ethnic Affiliation Today

In the country, these traditional leaders still play an important role in today's community life. In the towns which had been growing considerably since colonial times, however, people were beyond the control of the rural authorities. Therefore, former observers initially assumed that ethnic affiliation would lose its importance here, but the opposite was the case. In the towns, work migrants had to orientate themselves in a new environment. Here, solidarity within an ethnic group offered an option to meet these new challenges. The more members a group had, the easier it was to enforce its interests. At the same time, urban residents often made a sweeping generalization about migrants, judging by their home region.

Therefore, larger social entities were forming in the towns where members of different *ethnic groups* from one region and similar language came together. During the 1950s, migrants from the surrounding countryside and migrants from the north were facing each other in Kinshasa. The latter

were only united by the common language Lingala; they created the name Bangala for their group. In view of the spread of Lingala, urban residents speaking Kikongo established an association propagating the unification of their group in politics and language and championing the independence from Belgium. Also in other towns, there were such polarizations, for example in Lubumbashi where actually three ethnic associations were established: the Luba-Kasai coming from the west, the Luba-Katanga (or in short Lubakat) coming from the north of the province, and an association of Lunda and Yeke coming from the surroundings of the town.

These ethnic associations formed the basis for a number of political parties which were established in the course of the country gaining independence. In the run-up to the 1960 elections, votes were easy to gain by promoting the fear of domination by other groups. The deciding factor in voting was not class affiliation or political ideology, but ethnic affiliation. This resulted in an immensely fragmented political landscape which, together with heated ethnic rivalries, accelerated the collapse of state authority during the following couple of years. The large ethnic groups being a power base for today's political leaders, primarily go back to those times of change. In the urban environment, ethnic alliances had formed that, in consequence, became accepted in the rural regions.



When General Mobutu seized power in 1965, he interdicted any political activity outside his governing party whereby he also intended to call a halt to ethnic disintegration. Mobutu tried to promote a national ideology with the catchphrase "authenticity" instead – later on simply called "mobutism" (cf. article by Helmut Strizek). Under the surface, however, ethnic loyalties were maintained. Those who wanted to make a career in the political system had to be members of either the president's ethnic group or one of the few other ethnic groups Mobutu considered as not dangerous for him to remain in power.

When the Mobutu regime slowly began to lose its influence and was finally forced to make democratic concessions at the beginning of the 1990s, political demands again took an ethnic tone in many places. This became especially obvious in the east of the country where the provinces of north and south Kivu border Rwanda. During the Belgian colonial rule, peasants from Rwanda had been settled there. When Rwanda had gained independence and the Tutsi monarchy had been overthrown, also numerous refugees (mainly Tutsi) settled in this area. While the difference between Hutu and Tutsi was emphasized in Rwanda, in Congo, these two ethnic groups, at first, understood themselves

as one and the same ethnic group called Banyarwanda. Due to rivalries for political influence and access to scarce land resources, the Banyarwanda were regarded as "foreigners" and denied the right to vote and to own land. When finally the rebel movement of Laurent Kabila, together with the new Tutsi ruler in Rwanda, began its advance on Kinshasa in 1996, an anti-Tutsi mood was spreading throughout the country. In the capital, leading politicians were stirring up hatred against inhabitants from Rwanda and calling for a man-hunt.

### **The Present Situation**

As you can see from this short overview, ethnic loyalties mainly attract the attention of the rest of the world when it comes to violent clashes between rival groups. This is not only the case in the east of the Congo where the smoldering conflict between "natives" and Banyarwanda is followed with great interest. Also in the province of Katanga, old conflicts revive. Thus, the inflammatory speeches delivered by politicians of the Luba-Katanga (the ethnic group of President Kabila) and directed against the Luba-Kasai evoke memories of past violent clashes. At the same time, the growing dominance of people from north Katanga since Kabila's seizure of power again arouses the distrust of people from south Katanga. However, it must be stressed that ethnic groups are, above all, solidarity networks which especially become active when a weak state power is no longer able to satisfy the needs of its citizens. At the moment, political leaders tolerate these loyalties being used for stirring up ethnic tension and mobilizing violent gangs of youths.

*Eric Muller*



In the late 1990s, innumerable people died in the refugee camps of Eastern Congo, many of them children. Still, violence and brutal distribution fights prevail in the Eastern provinces which are rich in resources. They are ubiquitous, albeit different in intensity among the regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. All at the same time, the situation is determined by a national, Congolese identity of the inhabitants as well as a drifting apart of the different regions which largely differ on economic, ethnic and cultural level. The regional leaders try either to strengthen their dominions vis-à-vis the central authority in Kinshasa or often line their own pockets in acting as part of the capital's establishment. The capital of Kinshasa is where the opulent resources are allocated, while some regions of the Congo are hardly accessible and the state sees itself not even able to provide for the basic needs of the citizens in metropolis.

## United by Fate?

### National Identity and Regional Diversity of the Congo

"The Democratic Republic of the Congo is not a state but an area." This phrase was coined in the 1980s, when the country was still called Zaire and appeared seemingly stable under Joseph Désiré Mobutus' dictatorship. In addition to the process of state disintegration, it describes another Congolese feature: The huge country in the centre of Africa does not form a geographic, economic or infrastructural whole. Nevertheless, it still keeps together, preserving its national identity – even over the wars of the last years when the country was indeed split into several parts. In order to understand the Congo, one has to understand this Congolese paradox.

#### A "Green Hole" in the Middle

When Belgium's king Léopold II had the yet to be explored Congo River Basin declared international free trade zone at the Berlin Conference in 1884/85, neither he nor his host Otto von Bismarck realized the severe implications (cf. the article by Dieter H. Kollmer). Even today, the vast Congo River Basin is hardly populated or made accessible whereas on the plateaus at its edges there is a high concentration of various populations with their own historical background, distinguished by ancient kingdoms and rich traditions. The borders of the territory first called Congo Free State, later Belgian Congo then Republic of Congo, Republic of Zaire and finally the Democratic Republic of the Congo, roughly oriented on the borders of the river's watershed. It was only in the West and North West that France, Belgium's competitor in gaining colonial influence, extended its central-African possessions to the river itself.

In the South, South West, East and North East, the borderlines run right through the plateau regions which form the water shed of the Congo with other rivers like the Nile or Sambesi, thus dividing historically grown contiguities. Naturally, most inhabitants of the Congo have concentrated at the outer edges of the country, leaving in the centre an impervious "green hole" of rainforest and swamp which divides the areas of settlement from each other.

Congo's capital Kinshasa, third-largest city of Africa with a population of eight million, is situated directly at the border with the neighbouring Republic of the Congo (cf. info box on p. XXX). The latter's much smaller capital of Brazzaville is situated directly opposite, at a narrow section of the Congo river. When there are fights in Kinshasa or Brazzaville, they are visible from the multi-storey buildings of the respective other city.

The South of the Southern province of Katanga at the Zambian frontier – around the regional capital Lubumbashi and the mining regions of Likasi und Kolwezi – and the border regions of the Congo's Eastern Kivu provinces at the frontier to Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi are two further regions which are densely populated. Another rather densely populated area is the central diamond region Kasai around Mbuji-Mayi and Kananga towards Angola.

Each of these regions is characterized by its own distinctive identity and its own view of the world. The hot and sticky Kinshasa understands itself as part of the francophone West Africa. It is orientated toward the Atlantic Ocean, and closer to the Nigerian Lagos than to the Congo's Eastern border. Katanga's South is a typical plateau region with cool winters and cultivation based on large farms and private concessions. People here are looking towards South Africa rather than to Kinshasa. The Eastern Kivu on the other hand is part of the East African social and economic region, with close connections to the neighbouring countries of Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi as well as old trade relations towards the Indian Ocean. Today's connections also include relations to Dubai and the Far East.

Congolese politics as some exclusive concern of a certain upper class is made in the field of tensions resulting from the different regional interests. In fact, it is all about the rivalry between the elites of

Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, and Goma, the only cities of the Congo featuring exclusive residential areas to speak of and an abundance of expensive hotels and restaurants. The regions are practically only accessible by air, restricting any direct contacts between them to the country's few well-off. There is a rural road to the Atlantic Sea ports of Matadi and Boma, but no working connection towards deep inland. The only means of accessing the provinces are the ferry lines on the Congo river and planes. And most of the Congo is not situated near an airstrip or airport but can only be reached on foot or by bicycle or motorbike – thus practically isolated from the outside world. In many regions traders, who travel through the bush for days or even weeks, are the only contact from the outside world.

Still, the Congolese have always as part of one nation. This prevented the country's from completely disintegrating in the last ten year's wars. National identity of the Congo is based on the shared experience of collective suffering, first in colonial times and then during postcolonial decay. "Arise, Congolese, united by fate" – the first line of the national anthem expresses this better than any analysis. However much the Congolese may differ – they tend to recognize and understand each other easily because they all had had to learn distinctive ways of handling political problems and economic crises.

### **Striving apart: Katanga, Kivu, Kasai, Kinshasa**

The former notwithstanding, the regions with high population density cannot be more different, and they rather develop away from than towards each other. The Congo's export resources, securing the country's place in global economy, its strategic importance, and its forex income, come from the copper and cobalt mines of Katanga. The attempt of Katanga politicians to separate the province and integrate it into the economic region of Southern Africa after Congo had gained independence was put down. Nevertheless, in the provincial capital of Lubumbashi they still largely hold the view of being superior to the underdeveloped tropical rest of the country. Though since 1997 Katanga politicians, i.e. Laurent-Désiré Kabila and his son Joseph respectively, have held the political reins (cf. info box on p. XXX), they come from other, more rural parts of the province. On the one hand, this results in exacerbation of the inner-Katanganese tensions while on the other hand, the Katanganese's claim to supremacy is being increasingly criticized by the rest of the Congo.

Kivu is the agriculturally most fertile region of the Congo with the highest density of peasant population and the most distinct desire for self-determination. Its economy is completely averted from the rest of the Congo and interwoven with East Africa. It was from here that all Congo wars of recent past were initiated, and without pacification of Kivu, overall peace in the Congo is deemed unachievable. The political rivals in East Congo have always tried to assert their position against each other by gaining power on national level. The presence of a strong minority of Rwanda-speakers, partly integrated into Congo in the process of colonial demarcation and partly immigrated from Rwanda in colonial times, has regularly resulted in massive and bloody fights for regional power and land ownership. In this context, "ethnic cleansings" took place with regard to the "Rwandans" denigrated as "strangers" and "occupiers". (cf. the article by Eric Muller) The difficult relationship of the Congo with its Eastern neighbours has overshadowed national politics until today.

Already in colonial times, Kasai, the diamond region, was declared private restricted area. Until today, the region sees itself as something individual, therefore not necessarily required to subdue to general Congolese politics. This is where Congo's largest civilian opposition party, the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social, UDPS) comes from. Already in the Mobutu period, it actually led the region towards autonomy including an own currency, and positions itself today outside of the peace and transition process. Due to the boom in Congolese diamond mining, Kasai is also the region earning the most forex for the Congo. This development – a deliberate political outsider position and an economical central position – holds an enormous potential for conflict .

Kinshasa, on the other hand, is Congo's gateway to the world (cf. the second article by Dominic Johnson). It is the seat of the central state power in Congo, but it is mostly not "Kinois", as the inhabitants of the capital are called, who have a front-row seat. The key to political power in Congo is the control over the flow of goods and resources between the provinces and the capital. Those who can manage to direct the resources of Katanga, Kasai and Kivu to Kinshasa and redistribute parts of them from the capital to the elite of the whole Congo using private patronage networks, those can secure power over the Congo. Practically, distribution is mostly limited to Kinshasa, with 80 % of the Congolese amount of money in circulation and 85 % of the state budget being spent here, although the capital itself is largely unproductive and lives primarily off the considerable presence of the international community and the state authorities.

Congo's politics is always based on a complex balance of interests. Politicians who only represent their home province cannot credibly control the national networks. On the other hand, politicians who exclusively think on a "Congolese-national" basis cannot resort to a social basis they could make profitable use of. The Congo has not yet struck a balance between the two – or even a structure for a productive coexistence of these different levels – which undermines all attempts for its stabilization.

After years of war and increasing mutual isolation of the different parts of the country, even the much-cited Congolese identity is threatened. Consequently regionalism and tribalism are advancing. Today, the inhabitants of the different regions meet less and less, and a new generation grows up for which the Congo is altogether a mere abstraction: important for their self-conception with regard to the world, but meaningless for managing everyday life.

*Dominic Johnson*







After 15 years of war and civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the development of effective governmental structures is still far ahead. Private initiatives try to compensate for this deficit. This ensures that in some areas of public life the population is at least provided with basic supplies and services. This applies in particular for school and health institutions which would not be able to function without the commitment of churches, private groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This photo shows Congolese women marching to Bunia for a demonstration on occasion of the International Women's Day, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2005, to point out to local government authorities the desolate situation in this part of the country. According to Human Rights Watch statistics in Bunia ten women daily are raped by local militia. UN soldiers are buying sex from you girls for peanuts. Protests like in Bunia represent the beginnings of a civil society in the country. They give hope of stabilization in the Congo which has to be sustainable in a long-term perspective even without commitment of the international community.

## **Pillars of Everyday Life: Local initiatives and Civil Society Groups**

Since the beginning of the 1990s, a situation of crisis and war has been prevailing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Open warlike conflicts alternate with massacres at isolated places, short phases of pacification and newly kindling hope of peace. The only constant factors are destabilization, fragmentation and disruption of the official governmental institutions. For example, there have been no functioning social and basic services for at least 15 years. Civil servants, teachers, customs officers, doctors and nurses – they are all directly financed from the citizens' pockets, not to mention the military and the police. This situation has not much changed under provisional government, who is to prepare the elections and transition to democracy.

Nevertheless, many things function in this vast country that one would actually not expect: School children are taught, though conditions are difficult and by far not all children are included. Time and again, epidemics have appeared, but health centres and hospitals work surprisingly well in some places. Money is saved and loans are granted, though there have been no working banks for a long time in large parts of the country.

As many other regions that suffer from long-term crises, the Congo survives on the basis of a broad and manifold spectrum of locally rooted informal and traditional organizations. Not to pay them attention and recognize them, not to promote their strengths and not to analyze their weaknesses would mean to actively boycott any hope of the country's reconstruction. The spectrum of these organizations ranges from the churches, which are well organized countrywide, to traditional bodies and informal initiatives like women's associations and savings clubs to modern non-governmental organizations (NGOs) inspired from abroad.

### **Deeply-rooted and greatly fragmented churches**

The churches have played a very important role in the country for a long time (cf. article by Marco Moerschbacher). Without them, the educational and health institutions would be virtually non-existent. They are deeply rooted among the population and are very popular. The great majority of the population is Christian. Islamic groups form only a small minority. The traditional religions that existed here as in all other African regions were eliminated by the Christian missionaries in the last century more successfully than in other parts of the continent or at least superimposed Christian values on them. They are significantly less visible and tangible than for example in West Africa.

Clerical reality reflects the problems of society: They are fragmented into a large number of churches and divided according to ethnic and regional criteria. Lately, charismatic sects in particular are increasingly popular, though not all of them pursue serious and acceptable goals. It is therefore of great importance to attempt to create synergies between the religious communities. The development of a functioning society cannot be realized under exclusion of the churches. Unfortunately, their great strengths are being undermined by some autocratic church leaders, thus even enhancing the fragmentation. Foreign sponsors, both missionaries and investors, participate in this game in many instances or even are the originators. It has to be the aim to take the churches with their strengths and weaknesses at their word and to help them to learn from the experience of the last decades as well as to promote the overcoming of tribal egoism (tribalism) and social exclusion.

### **The Role of the Traditional »Chiefs«**

The traditional chiefs (chieftains) were already abused as the state's henchmen during Belgian colonial rule. Those who did not adhere to the demands of colonial government were discharged. For example, new chieftains were appointed when the old ones did not send enough workers from their territory or refused "transplantation" of population groups into mining and plantation regions. Joseph Désiré Mobutu continued this line and appointed the chieftains as administrative officials, so that they have been formally subordinate to state authority ever since. This "tradition" has been continued after Mobutu was overthrown and died.

The chieftains are still accepted by the population as legitimate representatives of traditional power. There are, however, many disputes as to which dynasties and clans exercise them rightfully and which do not. Most disadvantageous is the double role of chieftains as representative of the non-legitimated state on the one hand and of the traditionally legitimated local power on the other hand. Such a constellation may permanently hamper the faith in a central state power and question its legitimacy.

### **Transition to the Elections Undermines the Successful Council of Elders**

A remarkable initiative developed during the war against Mobutu in 1997 when North Kivu was already under the rebels' dominance. In the light of the fact that there had been armed clashes between various population groups of North Kivu since 1993, an inter-ethnic initiative seemed to be urgently required. The eight ethnics of North Kivu appointed their respective representatives for the region around Goma who then formed "*Barza Intercommunautaire*", an inter-ethnic council of elders. This council has contributed decisively to an approximation of the various groups and represented the population's interests. The council had the function to administer the law that was even acknowledged by the modern courts and promoted intercultural activities.

Unfortunately, the "*Barza Intercommunautaire*" became the victim of its own success and above all of the country's transition process. Meanwhile, most of its members migrated to Kinshasa and accepted political positions without continuing the accountability vis-à-vis their communities. The representatives of the council that remain on location are at odds with each other and try to establish themselves politically in the election campaign. In the case of the "*Barza Intercommunautaire*", a democratization and pacification model developed in the West has caused a practically well proven institution for conflict resolution to lose ground.

### **Money and Business Cycles**

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the banks have not worked anymore in many parts of the Congo. This is why informal savings clubs and the loan cooperatives have assumed a significant role. Workmen, market-women and traders belong to a business cycle that is based on informal networks and mutual trust. In parallel and partly interconnected with it, the black market and wartime economy prosper. Plundering of the country's resources involves the interplay of profiteers from the Congo and abroad. (cf. article by Rainer Tetzlaff) According to data collected by a Congolese parliamentary committee and international observers, this plundering has continued to increase under provisional government and in spite of a new mining act.

Economic development of the country can only rely on local initiatives and cycles. Prerequisite for that is, however, that a legal context will be created and enforced which promotes local economy and privileges local social and economic initiatives. This also includes extending and strengthening the networks of traditional money economy in rural regions.

### **Non-governmental Organizations**

Innumerable NGOs have been founded in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since the 1980s. In the 1990s, they were the most important receivers of foreign aid and often had the implied claim to substitute the state.

Most of them also claimed for themselves to be representatives of the population, the "basis". In reality, they often orientated towards the wishes and guidelines of the donors from the industrialized states. Each project area of international experts and developers worthy of foreign aid causes the creation of dozens of local initiatives at lightning speed. It is often very difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff among these projects. For example, many human rights organizations were founded over the last years, of which only a part, like e.g. "Voix des Sans Voix" (voice of the voiceless) perform a serious – and also brave and dangerous – work; in their case (legal) representation of civil rights activists in particular. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, those would otherwise be at the mercy of state despotism and hardly functioning courts.

In the context of the increase of sexual violence against women, a wide variety of groups has formed: Church groups, female lawyers, women's cooperatives, health services, traditional and modern initiatives. They focus mainly on three areas: healthcare for the victims (including AIDS diagnosis), consulting service for the rape victims, lobby work and legal support. They have in common fundamental principles like the protection of women's dignity. It will be a great challenge in the future to recognize and promote such sensible and useful initiatives.

### **Basis for Functioning State Structures?**

The strengthening of the "civilian powers" is the basis for the development of community services which might develop into a functioning state system. This would be no artificial structure imposed from above but the result of a social process. This process must have local roots in order to be sustainable. In this respect, there are numerous starting points for rebuilding state structures in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that have to be interlinked.

An important aspect is the question of legitimacy and accountability vis-à-vis those whose interests are represented. Citizens with growing self-confidence are an indispensable basis for any state governed by the rules of law. It is still a long way to get there, and the current situation is best characterized as war rather than peace. Intimidation and manipulation of the citizens in the run-up to the elections, the continuously disastrous security situation, the increasing impoverishment of the people in a country rich in resources: despite the election calendar and the quickly passed constitution, all of this does not suggest a successful democratization. But in the long years of crisis and war, at least rudimentary structures were able to form. They are growing and can then one day form the basis for a functioning state.

*Christiane Kayser*

### Non-governmental organization (NGO)

The term "non-governmental organization" is used to describe all types of civil groups that get involved in various social areas on a voluntary basis without being dependent on or organized by state authorities. The NGOs' fields of activity are mostly social, health-related and humanitarian areas. This is of particular importance in countries where there is no functioning central state. In the Congo, the NGOs assume governmental tasks like the distribution of food or the organization of the education and health institutions. The preparation of elections and the required sensitization of the population are also largely realized by NGOs. These projects are financed by money from donations and foreign aid. For example, Germany supported NGOs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with

EUR 13 million in 2003.

Due to the large number of NGOs, conflicts over the distribution of existing financial means occur with increasing frequency. At the moment, several hundred various national and international organizations are active in the Congo alone. They are constantly in quest for new, partly private sponsors who in their turn tie any financial commitment to demands regarding thematic or regional application of the means spent. As a consequence, the NGOs are not always independent or neutral. The noticeable concentration of NGOs in crisis zones that are in the current focus of the media is better understandable against this background.

In certain conditions, the worth of NGOs' assistance may even be doubted: lacking coordination sometimes rather worsens than resolves humanitarian and political crises. Some organizations lost their perspective of being a non-profit organization in the prospect of the enormous financial volumes involved in development aid. Criminal offences occurred above all where foreign aid was distributed without sufficient supervision. Due to the fragmented social structures and mutual trust established in the course of decades, it is in some instances the NGOs alone that – despite all difficulties and the deplorable state of affairs – are able to effectively help the needy population. *(am)*



The faithful receive Holy Communion in the catholic church of Nyakasanza in Bunia Province. Around 90 percent of people in the Democratic Republic of Congo are Christian, every second inhabitant is Catholic. Ever since colonial times the catholic church has been of central importance in the country. On its shoulder lie – aside from religious and pastoral tasks – vital functions in the areas of education and health care. In the Congo the church has had to constantly adjust its relationship with the government. During the colonial period religious organizations were involved in beneficial work for the inhabitants, but also with the oppressive apparatus of the colonial regime. After independence many church authorities made their arrangements with authoritarian government leaders, who exploited the country ruthlessly. This was counterbalanced by the irreplaceable work at the grass roots level of society, in which the laity had always played a strong role. Though the churches were headed during colonial times by foreigners, over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they grew more and more to be true local churches. In 2003 approximately 2900 diocesan priests, 1600 regular priests, 7900 nuns, 100 lay missionaries and almost 64,000 catechists were working in the Democratic Republic of Congo, most of them serving Christian communities in rural areas.

## The State of the Catholic Church in Society

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the catholic church numbers as one of the few well-functioning institutions throughout the country. With 30 million adherents (more than 55 percent of the population) it is present everywhere through this enormous country. The strengths and weaknesses of the major churches in the Congo are the direct result of the history of the country and the history of the mission in Africa.

### The First Missionaries in the Congo

In 1482 the Portuguese seafarer Diogo Cão discovered the mouth of the Congo river. Deeply impressed by the opulent court of the reigning Manikongo, Cão reported back to his patron, King João II (cf. the article by Martin Rink). A Portuguese delegation of merchants, tradesmen and missionaries reached the capital of Mbanza in the year 1491. King Nzinga a Nkuwu and his court allowed themselves to be baptized. Under the rule of his son, Mbemba a Nzinga (1506-1543), who had assumed the Christian name of Alfonso I, the Kingdom of the Congo, which included an area around a quarter of the size of modern Congo in the west and parts of Angola, flourished briefly, maintaining diplomatic and economic relations with Europe, particularly with Lisbon and Rome. Because of the prosperous transatlantic slave trade, Portugal came to see the Congo less as an allied Christian kingdom than as a central market for the slave traffic. Wars between the maritime nations of Europe and struggles for the succession to the throne led to the gradual downfall of the old kingdom of the Congo.

### The Modern Congo Mission

For the Europe of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, central Africa between the Zambezi and the Sudan was an enormous white space on the map. In his famous 999-day expedition (1874-1877), Henry Moreton Stanley was the first European to cross Africa from East to West. Stanley's spectacular reports aroused the interest of Belgium's King Léopold II, who by means of clever negotiating at the Berlin Congress (1884/85) managed to have awarded to himself an territory more than six times the size of the Federal Republic of Germany as "the Independent State of the Congo" or "Congo Free State" (cf. the article by Dieter H. Kollmer). In 1878 protestant missionaries of the British "Livingston Inland Mission" reached the Congo, erecting their first mission at Matatdi (the modern-day port city). The first catholic mission was established at Boma in 1880. This date marks the beginning of the "second evangelization" of the Congo.

The Belgian king sought to engage Belgian catholic missionaries in his program for "civilizing" the Congo, which in reality had more to do with economic exploitation. This initially proved to be difficult in view of the lack of enthusiasm among Belgians for the Africa mission. Léopold found support among the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart (Congregatio immaculatae cordis Mariae, CICM), also called the Scheutists after the place of its foundation, Scheutveld. The Congregation took over the "Apostolic Vicariate of Belgian Congo" created in 1886 and erected its first missionary stations in Kwamouth (1888) and Léopoldville (1899), the later Kinshasa.

King Léopold offered the missionaries generous grants of land, not least in order to grow support for his Congo enterprise at home. Land grants also helped the missionaries achieve financial independence. In 1892 the Jesuits founded their first mission in Kwango. Other religious orders such as Trappists, Premonstratensians, Redemptorists and various Belgian orders of nuns followed. The generous land policy was discontinued in 1897, primarily in reaction to the criticism from protestant missionaries, who were denouncing the inhumane colonization and exploitation of the black population. The so-called national missions, i.e. Belgian catholic missions, still continued to received

payments in compensation for providing school education. In 1906 an agreement was reached between the Vatican and Léopold II, who was required to demonstrate his “humane” mindset: each “national mission” was to be provided with a permanent grant of 100 to 200 hectares of land under the condition of maintaining a school to provide agricultural and vocational training to the Congolese population.

### Church Mission in the Belgian Colony

After the First World War international pressure forced Léopold II to surrender his personal ownership of the Congo to Belgium, where interest in the colony rose sharply, mainly due to its economic importance (especially ivory and rubber). Development of the Congo became a national undertaking, in which civilization, i.e. economic, social and medical development in accordance with European standards went hand in hand with the spread of Christianity. From Belgium, 22 missionary societies were active in the “Congo mission”; nearly every family provided a nun or missionary.

The cornerstone of catholic missionary work was the school system. In 1926 all state-run schools in the Congo were entrusted to catholic missions, the colonial administration providing considerable sums for operating the schools. This resulted in 90 percent of all schools being in catholic hands. Only the 10 percent private schools remained, most of them protestant. Non-catholic schools were theoretically equal, but did not receive state support until 1946.

The basic condition for children to attend school was they had to be baptized. In 1930 the Congo had 640 thousand Catholics (10 percent of total population); in 1959, one year before independence, there were 5.5 million (40 percent). The catholic church worked closely with the colonial government and grew to be a powerful force in Congolese society. With its system of missionary stations, where church, school and hospital were combined under one head at the same location, the catholic church succeed in building a robust country-wide infrastructure that remains to this day. The catholic church in the Congo, whose roots reach back to the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, was not only the oldest, but grew also to be the African continent’s largest national church of modern times.

Prior to independence the relationship between church and state was marked by various tendencies. The first missionaries were often critical of King Léopold’s enterprise in the Congo. Even though they definitely profited from the Belgian system, they were close enough to the native people to recognize quickly the difference between the colonial system of economic exploitation and development in accordance with Christian social ideas. The worst excesses at least were overcome in the period the Congo was a Belgian colony.

After the First World War, the network of large missionary stations led to missionaries being more closely tied to the colonial system. Their aloofness from the native population increased. Critical voices from missionaries against the colonial administration became more rare. After the Second World War attitudes began to change; an attitude of increased appreciation for traditional African culture, “négritude”, became more prevalent. The end of colonial rule led to ever louder demands for “Africanization” of the church, many in the European clergy opposed to. It was in particular the growing self-confidence of the local population which led to the independence movement which leading clergymen were initially quite hesitant but later affirmative about.

### The Church since Independence

Under the dictatorship of Joseph Désiré Mobutu (1965-1997) only six religious confessions had official recognition in the Congo: the Catholic church, the “Kimbanguists” (an African church founded in 1921, originally in Baptist circles under Simon Kimbangu), the protestant “Église du Christ au Zaïre” (a national confederation of various protestant denominations), the Moslem community, the orthodox church and the Jewish community. This might explain why sects and minor churches are a relatively recent phenomenon in the Congo, although by no means a harmless one.



In the early 1970s Mobutu turned against Christianity and the Catholic church with a campaign of "authenticity", which sought to reduce European influence. (cf. the article by Helmut Strizek) Christian forenames were prohibited, his party's youth organization was imposed on all religious seminaries, catholic schools and the catholic university were nationalized. The cardinal of Kinshasa at that time, Joseph Albert Malula, resisted the directives of the government and had to go into exile in Rome for a few months in 1972. When he returned the schools were turned back over to the church, since the government apparatus had proved to be incapable of running them. From this point onward, the catholic church was seen by wide sectors of the population as the one institution that would not let itself be corrupted by the power of the regime.

The 1970s were also the time during which the church of the Congo, which for so long had borne the stamp of Belgian missionaries and European thought, began to become "African". Native congregations of nuns emerged, more and more blacks were ordained as priests, and leadership positions in the church were filled by Africans. Rome officially recognized a specially written version of the rite of Mass for Congolese use. One particular phenomenon was the emergence, above all in Kinshasa, of "Small Christian communities", who under lay leadership were addressing the problems of the residential areas, and which to the present day play a major role in the political consciousness of the Congolese people.

The catholic church played a major leading role in the early phase of democratization in the early nineties. The Archbishop of Kisangani, Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, was elected President of the National Conference (*Conférence Nationale Souveraine*), whose task was the transition from one-party rule to a multi-party system. But Mobutu was repeatedly able in a kind of cat and mouse game to undermine the democratization process. When he dissolved the National Conference in January of 1992, wide sectors of the population reacted with the famous "Christian March", which can be seen as the work of Christian grass-roots communities. After the fall of the Mobutu regime and the subsequent wars in the Great Lakes region, which cost the lives of million of people and made internal refugees of several million more, religious leaders continued to raise their voices individually and in concert, calling for peace and democracy.

### The Present Situation

Since April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003, the official end of the war, the country has been in a state of transition, with elections to a democratically legitimated government planned for the summer of 2006. In this phase the catholic church is making every effort to involve itself in the process of social consciousness-building. The conference of bishops has established a permanent office to support and monitor the democratization process, for example through political education programs (*éducation civique*). The chairman of the Congolese bishops conference, Archbishop Monsengwo Pasinya, recently founded an International African Institute in Kisangani, offering programs of study and research in political ethics and catholic social teachings.

Church-run radio stations such as Station "Elikya" in Kinshasa participate in campaigns to create political-social consciousness. Church print media such as the weekly periodical "Renaître" are involved in the democratization process by providing background information and commentary. Christian human rights groups like the "Groupe Amos" or the "Réseau des organisations des droits de l'homme d'inspiration chrétienne" describe the high voter participation and voter approval of the constitutional referendum in December 2005 as a certain success for this increased engagement by the church.

This brief outline shows that the catholic church in the Congo is relatively independent in regard to the inner-Congolese conflicts because of its history and international connections. It has also been able to be active for dialog and reconciliation in the case of conflicts between African states, such as the combined conference of bishops from Burundi, Rwanda and the Congo. On the other hand, the church in the Congo is remains dependent on aid from abroad, particularly in terms of finance and, in part, personnel. This limits its freedom of action, and limited financial resources, also from European churches, remains an undeniable risk for the future.

*Marco Moerschbacher*

### Christian Mission

The term “mission” comes from the Latin *missio* and originally meant “a sending”. In Christianity, mission is understood to mean the spreading of the Christian faith, as the conversion of people standing outside of Christendom. At first, the Mission was closely tied to colonialism. In many regions of Africa, the Christian mission was on the one hand the precursor of, or at least dependent on colonial rule, and came in the company of subjection, exploitation, and the destruction of foreign cultures. On the other hand, the mission also took the form of opposition to colonial rule, and the church was often a refuge for exploited people. Over the course of time, Christian missionaries went from being founders and pioneers to being members of mass movements. Today, besides their religious duties, they also fulfil important social functions in many African countries, particularly in the areas of education and health. *(bc)*



AIDS (auch: AIDS (also: Aids) is the internationally used abbreviation of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. The immunodeficiency is caused by an infection with the HI virus (HIV) that gradually destroys the human immune system. For better readability, the text describes the immunodeficiency and the HI virus both simplifying as "AIDS". AIDS causes infections and tumours that despite treatment sooner or later result in death of the diseased. A frequent cause of death is liver failure due to hepatitis infections and side effects of medications. Today, at least in the rich industrialized countries, medical progress allows to suppress the virus and by treating secondary infections, to delay the illness' outbreak and patients' deaths by many years. In contrast, numerous AIDS patients in poor countries do not receive any medical treatment at all. At Mama-Yemo-Hospital in Kinshasa (photo above) 1,500 patients, including AIDS patients, are receiving medical treatment under disastrous hygienic conditions.

## **AIDS: The Immune Deficiency Disease as a Common Threat**

The African continent bears the major burden of the global AIDS epidemic. Ten percent of the world population, but 60 percent of all HIV infected live in Africa. In addition, the epidemic has spread very quickly among the under-developed states of sub-Sahara Africa. While the number of infected living South of the Sahara was 5 million in 1989, there are now (2005) over 25 million people infected with the deadly virus. The states worst affected in global comparison, with infection rates between 20 and nearly 40 percent, are all in Southern Africa. The conclusion that the epidemic may have an impact on national and international security is not a new one. Already in 2000, the UN Security Council passed a resolution declaring the AIDS epidemic a threat for international security and stability. This assumption shall be exemplified in this contribution by considering the relationship between the epidemic and warlike conflicts on the one hand and the phenomenon of state disintegration on the other hand.

### **AIDS and War**

The interplay between AIDS and warlike conflicts are manifold. Wars and civil wars promote the spread of the deadly disease. Already the first appearance of the virus in the 1970s in the region of the African Great Lakes and its rapid spread is associated with the wars between Uganda and Tanzania and troop movements, flows of refugees and rapes connected with it. Armies are both above-average affected by AIDS and especially effective spreaders of the disease since soldiers resort to prostitutes' services more frequently than other population groups. Infection rates in the army are four times as high as in civilian population, in war times even up to 50 times. Official numbers are not available, but an average infection rate of 30 percent for African armies is estimated. For the Congo's and Angola's armies, rates around 50 percent are deemed realistic, for Uganda's army rates of 65 percent and for the Malawi and Zimbabwe forces even infection rates between 70 and 80 percent.

Conflicts often trigger large-scale migratory movements – and the HI virus is spreading with the fighting forces and fleeing civilians. Social circumstances in refugee camps contribute to the spread of the epidemic. Girls and women, especially when separated from their families, are especially unprotected and often become victims of sexual abuse; they often see no other way than to secure their living by prostitution. In this context, the refugee camps in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo gained notoriety. UN employees had abused girls and women, exchanging aid supplies for sex.

Rapes have been used time and again as a means of warfare in African conflicts. Within a few weeks' time, between 200 000 and 500 000 women were abused during the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. 80 percent of them are today HIV positive. Half of the rape victims from the Sierra Leone civil war suffered the same fate. In the North of Uganda, where rebels and government troops were entangled in bloody hostilities, the infection rates in women are twice as high as in the rest of the country. Infection rate in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is officially stated as five percent, but they are at up to 20 percent in the provinces of Kasai, Kivu, and Katanga, which were especially afflicted by war.

In addition, prevention campaigns are hard or impossible to conduct in areas of war. Furthermore, rebel units are only reachable for such measures, if at all, via neutral relief organizations.

The Congo conflict has resulted in various HI virus strains from different African regions coming into contact with each other, thereby promoting the development of new mutations.

This is hardly astonishing since infection rates in the seven armies involved in the Congo conflict are very high and thus a huge virus pool has formed. The consequences of these processes are not yet foreseeable, and the fear is not unrealistic that a virus may thus emerge which is resistant against current treatments or becomes easier to transfer.

### **Social and Political Repercussions**

The illness infects the most powerful part of the population, i.e. young adults. Since the remaining are largely children and the elderly, social structures are destroyed with long-lasting effect. Estimates speak of twelve million AIDS orphans in 2003 in Africa alone. A catastrophe of this extent cannot be handled by Africa's traditional social net, the extended family. Many underage children cannot be taken in by relatives anymore and live in so-called children's households without care by adults. These unprotected children, who lack sufficient family and social connections, form a rewarding reservoir for the warlords' armies in the states afflicted by civil war. It is pure poverty that induces many members of the "lost generation" to hire themselves out as child soldiers. (cf. the info box on "New Wars", page XXX) The easy availability of "cannon food" may fuel existing conflicts or even contributes to the outbreak of new wars.

It may be feared that the defence readiness of the concerned units will decrease due to soaring infection rates in African armies. This may lead to serious consequences in an instable region like sub-Saharan Africa since weakened national armed forces facilitate the invasion of hostile groups, increasing the risk of war. It is often non-commissioned and commissioned officers who are affected by AIDS. As a consequence, combat units are left guideless or can only resort to inexperienced leaders. This situation does not only affect defence readiness; in a long-term perspective an army weakened on leadership level could also be a threat to the inner security of the affected states: Either because military units get out of control or because a power vacuum is created which is exploited by violent-prone groups. Out of the same reason, the high infection rates in the police forces of African states are a danger for interior peace. In Kenya for example, AIDS is responsible for 75 percent of all deaths among members of the police.

International peacekeeping forces are not exempt from the situation described above. On the contrary, UN troops are deemed significantly responsible for the spread of AIDS in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Fears that blue helmets spread AIDS in their area of deployment or introduce the illness in their home countries when coming back from operations in countries with high infection rates cannot be dismissed. Also, the disease decreases states' willingness to dispatch peacekeeping troops and to tolerate them on their territory, respectively. Strategies which aim to increasingly deploy African soldiers for peace missions on their own continent are questionable in the future due to high infection rates in the African armies. It should also be mentioned that the forces of the two major African powers, Nigeria and South Africa, have to struggle with infection rates between 20 and 40 per cent as well. This may pose a threat to regional stability in sub-Saharan Africa as well as to future Peacekeeping operations which are to be conducted under African command and with major African participation.

### **AIDS and State Failure**

One of the greatest political issues south of the Sahara is the possibility of state failure up to complete collapse of state structures. Countries where public order has broken down completely, like Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as such are already a threat to regional and international security. In addition, the phenomenon of state disintegration accelerates the spread of AIDS, since the lack of functioning state institutions makes efficient action against the epidemic difficult. At the same time, economic and social consequences of AIDS fuel the tendency of state failure. Members of the elites, like teachers, civil servants and health sector employees, are above-average infected with AIDS – although those are sufficiently informed about the disease because of their level of education. But it is exactly those social groups which are needed to develop a successful development policy and fight AIDS. In addition, they represent the majority of the sparse middle class and the small basis of taxpayers in the African states. In Malawi, for example, the number of deaths doubled among the

employees of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation between 1996 and 1998 due to AIDS. Infection rates between 25 and 50 per cent are estimated for the next years for employees in the Malawi health sector. In Botswana, an estimated 35 to 40 per cent of all teachers are infected.

To sum up, the AIDS epidemic is fuelled by warlike conflicts and state disintegration processes. At the same time, AIDS provides the basis for these two phenomena due to its devastating consequences. This creates a vicious circle of cause and effect which is hard to escape.

*Sarah Tietze*



Two workers wearing protective masks load sacks of quinine powder at the Pharmakina pharmaceutical factory in Bukavu in August, 2000. The air is filled with yellow dust. Pharmakina is the leading producer of quinine, which is primarily used in anti-malarial therapy and as a fever-reducer. The Democratic Republic of the Congo's wealth in natural resources – it is one of the resource-richest nations of the world – provides hardly any benefit to its inhabitants. The profits from exploitation of the rich mineral resources gold, coltan, tin and diamonds go to warlords, corrupt officials, speculators and international corporations. A help-yourself mentality predominates that, time and again, provokes armed disputes. Also, the Congo's agriculture is inadequate to feed its own population, and more than 50 percent of the country's government budget is financed by foreign credit. As a result of this desolate economic situation the country's debt grows from day to day, especially since the gross domestic product (GDP) of just 5.3 billion Euros has sunk to its lowest point; in the same year, Germany produced a GDP of 2244 billion Euros.

## The Curse of Natural Riches: the Economy and Natural Resources

The Congo is one of the world's richest countries in terms of natural resources. Despite this fact, by the time it became independent in 1960 after 80 years of colonial rule, it had become a raw-material economy, completely at the mercy of the world market. The majority of the people live as subsistence farmers, that is, they produce exclusively for their own consumption. To the present day, the people of this natural resource-rich country live in bitter poverty. This contradiction has been called "the paradox of plenty".

The average annual per capita income of the Congolese people lies today at about 90 US dollars. According to estimates by the World Bank, 80 percent of the population earn less than half a dollar daily. More than three quarters of the people live below the absolute poverty level. Life expectancy has fallen to 45 years: a result of persistent economic misery, dictatorship and war.

The country's real economic growth as measured by the increase in gross domestic product was about 7 percent in 2004, that was 10 percent more than in the year preceding. This growth however had nothing to do with healthy economic development. The source of growth was above all the increased sale of raw materials, mostly diamonds, petroleum, copper and tin. Even official trade figures are anything but reliable. Most raw materials (principally diamonds, gold, coltan and tin) are smuggled over the borders and so do not appear in any Congolese statistics.

### Mineral Resources

The mining of copper ores and cobalt occurs primarily in the Province of Katanga. Rich lodes of coltan and cassiterite (tin ore) are found the two Kivu provinces in the East near the borders with Uganda and Rwanda. Worldwide, both of these minerals are relatively rare. While coltan is needed for the production of cellular phones, the demand for cassiterite has grown as a result of environmental protection regulations, since tin is being used to replace poisonous lead.

Due to the war, mining occurred mostly using private laborers and occasional workers, who dug out the ore under primitive working conditions. Marketing of the minerals occurs through a multitude of middlemen, and relies on cooperative customs officials. Government soldiers, soldiers employed by warlords, civilian or military members of provincial or local governments, and local militia are all involved in the struggle for control of resources. They all demand fees, taxes and protection money from prospectors and miners.

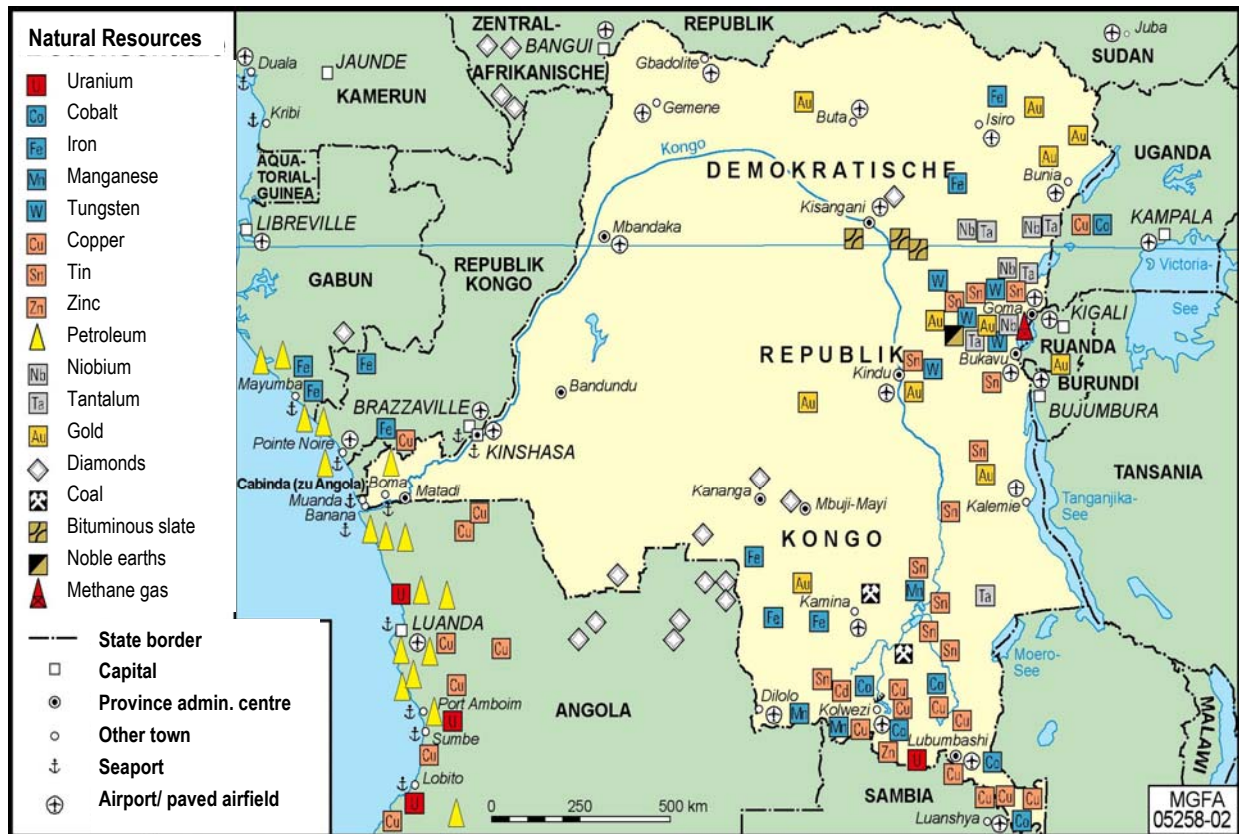
It has been estimated that 64 percent of known world reserves of coltan are to be found in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Australia is the biggest processor of this metal; the USA is the largest consumer. At the height of the "coltan boom" in 2000 a kilogram of coltan brought a price of 164 US dollars. The coveted mineral was mainly smuggled to Rwanda and from there sold on the world market. In this way the Rwandan army is said to have collected about 240 million US dollars. This was possible only because the Rwandan occupation army cooperated with its allies, the RCD rebels, in the systematic production and marketing of the ore.

In late 2001 demand fell off sharply, and the precious metal cassiterite (tin ore) took its place. Cassiterite's price rose threefold between August 2003 and May 2004 to 9600 US dollars per ton, unleashing a new mineral boom in the Kivu provinces. The biggest cassiterite mine is located in North Kivu Province in Bisie, west of Goma. Another source lies near Kalima in Maniema Province. In 2004 the Congo officially exported only about 8300 tons of cassiterite to a value of 46 million US dollars. Rwanda on the other hand – although not itself a producer – exported several times this amount. Its source was discovered to lie also within the rebel-controlled areas of the eastern Congo.

The mining of gold in the Northeast and South of the country might also benefit the Congolese economy if the revenues from sale were distributed more equitably. To date however, it is officially not exported at all from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Rather, the gold is brought illegally to



Uganda and exported from there to Western countries. There are currently eleven gold mining companies operating in the Congo, to include the international Anglo Gold Ashanti company, which also operates mines in Ghana. In Bunia in the eastern Congo, the OKIMO (*L'office des mines d'or de Kilo-Moto*) company controls a gold-mining concession extending over 83 thousand square kilometres, equivalent to about two thirds of the size of Belgium; Anglo Gold Ashanti participates as a joint venture partner.



Gold production is considered a curse by many Congolese. Disputes about the exploitation of the Mongbwalu and Durba goldfields in Haut Uélé District have repeatedly led to conflicts costing many lives. The most well-known of these were the fighting between the Hema and the Lendu in the country's East. This could be viewed as just another "ethnic tribal conflict", but in truth was a no holds barred contest over access to the gold mines and appertaining infrastructure. In this, local groups act in concert with accomplices on the other side of the borders with Uganda and Rwanda. It is the civilian population which suffers most under this form of cooperation. Hundreds of thousands of already impoverished Congolese were driven from their homes.

Another example of the problems growing from the wealth in natural resources are the consequences of copper mining. This was already a outstanding section of the economy in 1960. Bringing 34 percent of export revenue, copper is the Congo's most important source of foreign exchange, eclipsing the Congo's other export items coffee (8 percent), palm oil (8 percent), diamonds (6 to 7 percent), cotton (6 percent) and cobalt (5 percent). By 1970 copper's share of total exports had even risen as high as 66 percent. This essentially made the country highly dependent on a monoculture. Even minor price variations on the world market and at the London commodities exchange resulted in painful turbulences on the revenue side of the national budget, and to sharp loss of foreign income. As a result, the country's foreign income fell during the 1970s by more than a third. This should have resulted in painful economies on the part of Joseph Désiré Mobutu's government. Instead, he chose the dangerous expedient of foreign debt through borrowing, which led to exorbitant inflation rates. Between 1970 and 1990 copper's share of export value fell continuously and was only

27 percent by 1979. First place as a source of foreign exchange was taken instead by diamonds with an export share of 34 percent. This natural product is in high demand worldwide, and has the “advantage” that it is produced in small quantities and can easily be smuggled, for instance by marauding soldiers. Many people fell victim to diamonds, and the Congo’s economy as well had very little profit from them. The state lost untold millions in revenue to smuggling. On the other hand the mineral wealth of this country, too weak to protect its production sites, roads or borders, soon awakened the greed of neighboring Rwanda and Uganda for resources and foreign currency.

Overall, the Congolese economy decayed more and more despite the wealth of resources. The country’s foreign debt rose from 557 million US dollars in 1972 to 3.7 billion dollars ten years later. The International Monetary Fund, concerned about the government's disappearing ability to fulfil its financial obligations, dispatched the German banker Erwin Blumenthal to Kinshasa to bring order to the government’s finances. And well it might, since the government had received 656 million US dollars in IMF credits alone by 1985. But the cure did not take, and Blumenberg returned home unsuccessful. During Mobutu’s presidency the national debt had to be refinanced several times until by the end of his period in office the official debt had reached 15 billion US dollars. When Mobutu and his family fled the country in 1997 the country was on the verge of bankruptcy. The dictator is said to have illegally transferred billions in foreign currency abroad.

Mobutu left behind a completely ruined economy. The inflation rate stood at 73 percent. Exports amounted officially to no more than 1.3 billion US dollars, of which diamonds made up the major share (38 percent), followed by the export of coffee (29 percent). Annual per capita income had fallen by more than 500 percent. At the same time, the country had to contend with the spread of diseases: AIDS and malaria had spread rapidly (cf. the article by Sarah Tietze).

### The Current Situation

The coalition government of President Joseph Kabila has been just as incapable of halting illegal and sometimes criminal activity in the Congolese economy. Between 2002 and 2004 the land has received about 700 million US dollars in foreign aid to combat poverty. The Congo’s foreign debt was more than 10 billion US dollars in 2003 – resulting in several hundred million in interest payments each year. In November, 2004 the IMF gave the green light for yet another partial remission of the national debt. As a result, this year's interest payments could be reduced by two thirds.

Against the will of Joseph Kabila and his supporters the National Assembly appointed a investigative committee on April 24, 2004 to review all business contracts made with foreign firms since 1996 in light of whether they benefit the country or not. The committee’s final report, which was submitted to the parliament in June 2005, brought serious accusations against leading politicians of every party in the interim government of the Congo. That is the reason why to date it has neither been debated in parliament nor officially published. The most important string pullers besides those involved in the Congolese interim government are still believed to be the presidential dictatorships in Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe. It has long been suspected that high-level officers there with close ties to Congolese elites and good connections to their presidents collude to plunder the Congo’s resources and smuggle its products out of the country for their own profit.

There are additional aspects that stand in the way of economic recovery. Corruption continues to be a serious obstacle to national recovery. An internal review of 53 para-national companies (i.e. semi-private public service providers headed by government-appointed directors) found recently that the inspected companies were ignoring practically every law, and that irregular transfers of money, in other words illegal expenses and embezzlement, are commonplace.

A multi-party government with more than 60 ministers and as many deputies that wants to reconcile the divergent interests of several political camps, needs a lot of money. This draws the ire of the IMF, the World Bank and international creditors, who after all fund 56 percent of the government budget. An above-average share of international development money is absorbed above all by the political Establishment. It is only the hopes of ministers and party politicians for getting their "fair share" of money resources and an "appropriate" role in distributing government jobs that is keeping the coalition together before the elections.

In summary it can be seen that the exploitation of the existing natural resources is more a curse than a blessing to the country as long as there is no central government capable of establishing a monopoly on the use of force and willing to build the country a functioning economy. Widely spun networks are involved in extracting, transporting and the sale of natural raw materials. They consist of domestic ministries and politicians in Kinshasa, national semi-private companies, foreign mining companies like Anglo Gold Ashanti or de Beers, and a multitude of small merchants, miners, soldiers, middlemen, smugglers and customs official working on their own account and profiting from the illegal trade in raw materials. The international community must deal with these networks so that the natural riches of the country will benefit the native population. Only then will the Democratic Republic of the Congo become what because of its extraordinary wealth in natural riches might be: the motor of economic growth in Central and Equatorial Africa.

*Rainer Tetzlaff*

### The Food Situation

Because of its climate and vegetation only about four percent of the area of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is arable or otherwise suited to the planting of perennial cultures. Despite this, almost two thirds of the population work in this sector of the economy. For the most part, this consists of tiny peasant farms producing just enough to provide for family needs. The population as a whole cannot be fed by Congolese agriculture. This situation is exacerbated by the permanent instability of politics and society. Existing fields are destroyed in fighting or because the tillers have been driven off, or they lie fallow because farming techniques are ineffective and the infrastructure for transporting foodstuff does not exist or no longer exists. In the East of the country in the Kivu-Provinces organized agriculture has not been going on for many years.

In all, some 16 million people (almost one third of the population) are totally dependent on food delivered from abroad. Especially in the major crisis areas near the border to Rwanda, regular deliveries of foodstuffs cannot be ensured. The main burden here is borne by international aid organizations (NGOs), who are hindered in their work by continuous fighting. Sometimes aid organizations are forced to withdraw their personnel completely from the areas of conflict to ensure their safety. The suffering people are then left to fend for themselves, since the Congolese government is unable to provide adequate assistance. (*am*)

### The International Monetary Fund

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is a special organization of the United Nations. The IMF began to function in May, 1946. The basis for its creation were the decisions reached at the Bretton Woods Conference. It was in this small town in the US state of New Hampshire in July, 1944 that international representatives negotiated the reconstruction of the world economy after the soon to be expected end of the Second World War. The IMF, together with the World Bank group, makes up the so-called "Bretton Woods Institution". Both are involved in the encouragement of world trade, the stabilization of monetary exchange rates and the support of international cooperation in the area of monetary policy. The IMF and the World Bank monitor international monetary policy and provide technical assistance. Under certain restrictions the IMF gives credit to nations with economic problems, in the past for instance to Brasil, Turkey or Argentina. The IMF helps African countries to draw up prosperity and development plans, insofar as they adhere to the principles of good governance. An additional precondition for receiving assistance is the fulfilment of specific obligations such as liberalizing government controls and regulation, privatization of government controlled facilities, reductions in government spending, increase of exports or active measures to reduce inflation. 184 member nations influence the decisions of the IMF. Their voting rights depend on their share of the Fund's capital. In all, the EU states control 31,89 percent of the votes, the combined share of the Euro-countries is 22,91 percent. The member states with the most influence are the USA with 17.08 percent, followed by Japan (6.13 percent), Germany (5.99 percent), France (4.95 percent) and the United Kingdom (4.95 percent). The first German and eighth Managing Director of the IMF since 1946 was the current Federal President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Horst Köhler, from 2000 to 2004. (bc)



Am 22. On January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2001, one day before the funeral of murdered President Laurent Kabila in Kinshasa, a brass band continuously played funeral music. In Germany, knowledge about African music and literature is marked by ignorance and stereotypes. This, even though the Congo has a rich cultural heritage. In the area of literature, it is based on material transported by word of mouth. But tradition and public performance are much more than mere entertainment and education in the European sense. An important element of life, it influences the way time, history and “historical truth” are understood.

The Congo owes its written literature to the colonial powers. The first books written in the local vernaculars were religious texts. Since 20<sup>th</sup> century however, writers from the Congo, who had been educated in schools during the colonial period, have mostly used French. Authors from the Congo have made an important contribution to francophone literature.

## Congolese Literature between Oral Tradition and French Influence

In French-speaking countries, above all in the former colonial powers France and Belgium, the development of African literature and music has long been followed by the public. In Germany though, culture from Africa has mostly had to contend with ignorance and prejudice. These for the most part have their origins in a time, when the Germans amused themselves at so-called Africa shows. These were shows similar to travelling circuses, where African wild animals and "African song and dance" could be seen. Scenes from "African village life" gave the impression that the "dark continent" was peopled by primitives living under horrible conditions, just waiting for European colonial powers to bring order and "culture". After the "Africa show", visitors were able to buy exotic products like coffee or cowry shells.

European influences have left their stamp on the Congo's language and culture. Signs of the colonial period are obvious, particularly in the major cities. But there is also an impressive treasure of African tradition. It is not only the latter that gives Congolese culture its special note. It is the interaction between local tradition and Western influence that especially fascinates the visitor.

When speaking of "culture in the Congo", one has to keep the enormous regional diversity of the country in mind, to which no introductory description can do justice. (cf. the article by Eric Muller) Instead, an attempt will be made to show from which springs the country's culture flows, using literature as an example.

### Literature from the Congo in French and the Vernaculars

The Congo owes its written literature to the Portuguese. In 1556 the first catechism was published in the local Kikongo language. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, several Kikongo songbooks and gospels had appeared, and during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a tradition of vernacular edifying and allegorical writing had emerged. In 1928 a teacher named Timoteo Vingadio published a version of Daniel Defoe's novel "Robinson Crusoe".

But since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, literature in the Congo has mostly been in French. From the very beginning, its origins were tied to the question of the future of the Belgian colony. Three factors favoured the creation of an independent literary consciousness. First, in the period after First World War Europe saw a flood of popular novels about the colonies, which were printed in large numbers. In contrast to similar books of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that described black Africa above all in terms of the exotic, the newer colonial literature made a claim to "authenticity" and "truth" in describing life on that continent. This brought on objections from Africans, who raised their voices to correct the image projected in Europe. African authors – for example officials in the service of colonial governments – began more and more to voice the perspective of the local people. The second reason was closely tied to the First World War. During the interwar period, the persons concerned, but also European authors, began to investigate the role colonial troops, for instance France's *tirailleurs sénégalais*, had played in the armies of the World War. Tens of thousands of black Africans who died for their colonial masters stood mute witness to the fact that the time had come to think about more freedoms for people in the colonies. Third, reflections on the German occupation in France during the Second World War ignited a debate among intellectuals over whether the French colonial rule in Africa would have to be reevaluated in light of the own experience of National Socialism.

It was above all in the France of the 1930s that intellectuals began to discuss the question of whether or not there was any such thing as an independent African literary "style" (so-called *négritude* movement). Authors educated in colonial schools published mainly in French language

periodicals and publishing houses in France or Belgium. In 1943 the Jesuit Jean Comélieau founded the publishing house "Bibliothèque de l'étoile". Its program included the first two Congolese novels ever published, "Victoire de l'amour" (Victory of Love) by Dieudonné Mutombo (1954) and "Le mystère de l'enfant disparu" (The Secret of the Lost Child) by Thimothée Malembe in 1960, the year of independence.

Several periodicals, such as the journals "Brousse" and "La voix du Congolais" encouraged the emerging literary scene in the Congo through contests and by publishing native authors. Many young Africans owed their discovery to French broadcasting, particularly in the field of radio plays. The beginnings of theatre also stretch back to the 1950s. It stood initially in the tradition of educational theatre, often containing historical elements. Theater festivals such as the "Festival de la francophonie", held annually since 1983 in Limoges, in France, offer African dramatists an international stage. Mikanza Mobyem was one of the first Congolese authors to become widely known outside of his own country with his 1975 play "Procès à Makala". Using the example of a court trial in Kinshasa as an example, the play describes Congolese society and the crimes committed in the Congo.

Even after the end of colonial rule a broad literary network of "francophone" organizations continues to exist. This highlights one of the fundamental problems of African literature, that African reality continues to be reflected in a language spoken and used on a daily basis only by the educated social elites. For all practical purposes, francophone literature and African language literary traditions have entered into a close web of interrelationships, influencing each other reciprocally. In recent time a trend towards increasing "africanization" of French language African literature can be noted. Authors are beginning to reach back to traditional elements of their own cultures. In literary texts this can lead to a hybrid of French with African languages.

### **The Literary Traditions of Illiterate Societies**

In an illiterate society, which the Congo, in fact, had been for a long time, the oral tradition of history and stories is very important. Over centuries, countless works of various genres have been created in the languages of the Congo (cf. the article by Eric Müller). Fairy tales and epics (narrative heroic poems, verse poetry) centre on such themes as the hunt, war and magic. In some regions, singers, part-time poets, storytellers or panegyrists perform recitations.

One example for an heroic epic is the Lianja Saga (Nsong' a Lianja) of the Mongo-Nkundo tribes in the northern Congo. It is folk literature, and has never been committed to writing. There is no precisely prescribed text, rather a story line with specific important situations, interrupted by typical songs. Lianja is a folk hero of the Mongo-Nkundo, to whom unusual deeds are attributed. Some of the tale's elements include mythical characters (Lianja is born from his mother's leg), the story's context is however historical and tells of the wanderings and divisions of the Mongo-Nkundo tribes.

Besides fairy tales and epics, oral literature recounts legends, myths and fables, but also spells, riddles, sayings and songs. Common to them all is that the authors remain unknown. The various types obey more or less firm laws regarding form. The storyteller has many options for structuring his tale in an individual way, for instance through rhythm and repetition. Recitation is a highly complex process, where mute gestures are just as important as the spoken word. The appropriate time of day, as well as music and percussion are part of the presentation. The Luba in the northeast of the Congo for instance, may only tell animal stories during the daytime, while tales about people or magic are only told in the evening (after nightfall). Bards only recite the Lianja Saga of the Mongo-Nkundo, which has already been mentioned, at night by the fire. He paints his face and body with asymmetrical figures. A feather headdress and spear are part of the costume. A men's or women's choir sings the characteristic songs accompanying each new chapter of the saga.

The wide variety of the examples existing in most of the vernaculars of the Congo has not yet barely been recorded. Research on oral literature first became fashionable with European missionaries and ethnologists in the 1970s, and has increasingly been taken up by native scholars in recent times. Individual collections of African oral literature had however appeared and become popular, some of them even prior to the First World War, including the “Black Decameron” (Leo Frobenius, 1910), the “*Anthologie nègre* (Blaise Cendrars, 1921), or “*Afrikanische Legenden*” (African myths, Carl Einstein, 1925).

Tradition and oral culture in the Congo are by no means merely the object of historical or ethnological research. They still influence – much like in the tribal societies of Afghanistan – all sectors of life and determine the way in which time, historical “truth” and history are understood.

To interpret traditionally recited tales in terms of modern European ideas about entertainment or education would be an oversimplification. At family gatherings or funerals, oral recitations express the connection with and to the living past and one’s own ancestors. Stories are an essential part of individual life and therefore are held to be true – regardless of whether events actually transpired exactly the way the story tells. As a traditional value system, this orally transmitted heritage is taken as the basis for solving personal or social problems. This heritage, which deserves to be preserved, is reflected in contemporary Congolese literature and film, even when the medium is a non-African language.

Visitors from a German language background are reminded by the oral literature of the Congo that European cultures too are rooted in a wealth of traditional sagas, myths and legends. Suffice to recall that as late as in 19<sup>th</sup> century the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm collected and wrote down German folk tales which had so far been passed on only orally from generation to generation.

*Bernhard Chiari*

### Popular Music from the Congo

In contrast to the area of literature, the Democratic Republic of the Congo plays a leading role in African popular music. Popular music originally meant urban mass culture in contrast to the folk music of the countryside on the one hand and the art music of the concert halls and opera houses on the other. Over the course of colonial period, European sailors, soldiers, merchants and colonial officials brought early forms of popular music – for example ragtime, the tango, waltz or polka – to the Congo, along with Western instruments such as the harmonica, guitar and banjo. Native musicians adopted these influences and blended them with African musical traditions. The result was independent forms of musical expression, which spread from coastal cities inland. Performers like Papa Wemba, Wendo, Kabasele, Luambo Makiadi, aka Franco, Tabu Ley, aka Rocherau, Pepe Kalle, Mbilia Bel, and many others are hardly known in Germany, but are listened to by an enormous fan community throughout Africa. (*bc*)



Tchicaya U Tam'si

The author Chicaya U Tam'si (actually G eral d F elix Tchicaya) was born in Mpili on August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1931. In the language of the Zulu, his pseudonym means "Small Leaf Who Speaks For His Country" Tchicaya is an example for the emergence of a Congolese national literature that is closely tied to the French-speaking world and describes developments in the Congo from the perspective of simple people. Tchicaya long lived and worked in Paris. He did not return to his homeland until 1960 and became one of the Congo's best-known novelists and lyricists. Tchicaya's central themes are the expectations and hopes for a new African society. His most important work, besides several anthologies of poems, is his French trilogy of novels "Les cancrelats" (The Cockroaches, 1980), "Les m duses ou Les orties de la mer" (published 1982, appeared as the only novel of the trilogy in English as "The Madman and the Medusa"), and "Les phal nes" (The Moths, 1984). The three novels use a variety of individual fates to tell the story of conditions in the Congo from Belgian colonial rule to the present. Cockroaches and other vermin serve as allegorical symbols for annoying or disturbing things that cannot be driven out of the country. In his works, Tchicaya calls for "creating a Congo that is a country where everyone, without exception, is free. Politics with a triple orientation: identification, transformation and enthusiasm." Tchicaya did not live to see a free and stable society emerge in the Congo. He died in Paris on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1988. (bc)



All at the same time, Kinshasa is gateway to the world, capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, residence of the country's rich elite and gigantic poorhouse. Situated at the Congo River, the city of millions today is an individual society where a metropolitan consciousness has formed beyond

any ethnic affiliation. Kinshasa has long been an irresistible magnet for the rural population. Boosted by war and violence, an innumerable army of people is drawn to the Congo River in their quest for happiness each year. Employment and earning possibilities are rare; most of the inhabitants, a number between 6 and 8 million, live from hand to mouth. Nevertheless, Kinshasa is a vibrant cultural melting pot that cannot be understood by applying European standards alone. The picture shows the port with a view towards Brazzaville, the capital of the Republic of the Congo on the other river bank (cf. info box on p. XXX).

## Kinshasa: A City Portrait

Kinshasa is a Moloch. With its approximately eight million inhabitants, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is the third-largest city of Africa, after Lagos (Nigeria) and Cairo (Egypt), and among all African megacities the poorest. The majority of the population lives in absolute poverty, with less than US\$ 1 of daily income. Most count themselves lucky when they can secure one daily meal. Paid work is seldom to find. It is hard to survive in the megalopolis spreading over 30 kilometres without a functioning transport infrastructure. And yet, Kinshasa is a city full of vitality and surprising ways of survival, active civic pride and a cosmopolitan self-conception.

### The Congo's Gateway to the World

Kinshasa is situated at the periphery of the Congolese territory, though at a strategically crucial point of the country: It is situated where the vast Congo River Basin ends and the traffic routes to the Atlantic Ocean, the global gateway, begin. After having made its way several thousand kilometres through the continent, the Congo River widens into a lake of up to 15 kilometres width. Its outlets are blocked by rocks and mountains; the river makes its way to the ocean as a relatively small stream through a series of canyons and rapids. The river is not navigable from this point. Instead, traffic is handled via road and railroad. In opposite direction, goods from the Atlantic are transferred here to the river to be distributed all over the country in a few weeks' course. Kinshasa is a two-way transloading point: gateway to the world and gateway to the Congo's inland.

The city originates from the times of colonial conquest. In December 1881, Henry Morton Stanley bought from chief Ngaliema a hill above the village of Kintambo which provided a good view over the river and the lake. There he founded the core of what was later to become the Belgian Léopoldville. The colonial capital of Belgian Congo spread from Kintambo towards the East to the fishing village Kinshasa along a swampy and wet plain. A residential area reserved for whites was built there, later to be surrounded by African quarters.

Today, Kintambo is still one of the oldest and most traditional parts of Kinshasa. It is situated in the West of the metropolis, beyond the Ngaliema quarter which is distinguished by the presidential palace and military bases. This is followed on the East by the vibrant city centre named Gombe, the former European quarter with its high risers and eternal traffic congestions. The *Boulevard du 30 Juin* cuts through the area, continuing to the train station and the port in the Eastern part of the city. Léopoldville was renamed Kinshasa in 1972, when dictator Mobutu Sese Seko ordered the Africanization of all European names.

Belgium's colonial policies determined the later Kinshasa in a way which still influences its character today. Different from the British in Southern Africa, the Belgians promoted the influx of migrants from rural parts to cultivate a stable and loyal urban middle class. Different from the French – for example, in Brazzaville on the opposite bank of the Congo River – they actively propagated ethnic commingling in order to eliminate "tribal consciousness" (tribalism). The urban residents were meant to live in a Christian and monogamous tradition and leave traditional loyalties behind that would have endangered a society according to the European model.

Hence, in contrast to most other African megacities, there have never been any mono-ethnic quarters in Kinshasa – a great luck in times of civil war. It was seldom an identity-generating factor that in colonial times the majority of the population belonged to the West-Congolese people of the Bakongo. (cf. the article by Eric Muller) Already under Belgian rule, the ethnic groups in Kinshasa were systematically mingled, for example by the moving in of single women from the mining region of Kasai whose men worked the mines. Families of different ethnic groups have been living side by side or even together sharing the lot. In default of a mutual origin the necessity to feel bound by traditions and promoted individual advancement decreased.

This traditional history still makes the city stand for a breach with the "old Congo". Those who

head for the capital free themselves from the obligations of their settlements and rural regions. He, and above all she, can define himself or herself new, act independently, lead a self-determined life, catch up with modern times and feel part of the global community at least in thought. Compared to provincial life, Kinshasa means freedom and adventure. The poor infrastructure in the huge Congo makes it nearly impossible to travel from the capital to the rest of the country. Kinshasa is a world of its own.

The "Kinois", as the inhabitants of Kinshasa call themselves, are therefore connected with each other in their self-conception, distinguishing them from the other Congolese. Even Lingala, Kinshasa's native language, does not originate in the region but in the settlement area of the Bangala in the extreme North of the Congo. It was spread from there by the Belgians and later Mobutu as common language of the army and military, quasi as a native counterpart to French used as administrative language.

### **The Art to Survive in Kinshasa**

The development and the growth of Kinshasa over the last decades could not upset the specific Kin identity. But in some instances they changed the city beyond recognition. At the time of independence in 1960, the former Léopoldville had 400 000 inhabitants. Three years later it was already a million. At the beginning of the 1990s, an estimated four to five million lived in the city, today it is six to eight million people. The city has long outgrown the plain by the river. It has taken hold of the surrounding hills and spread away from the river. Vast quarters not served by public transport have emerged, one day's march from the city centre. Here, below subsistence level, peculiar laws of survival apply. The spirit which Kinshasa represents is visible from here merely at the horizon. It is symbolized by the Gombe high risers as an omnipresent dream that is never attainable. Desperation and poverty may easily turn into rage and hatred here when once again the rich elite tries to keep the people from economic and politic decisions.

Population growth in the capital increased especially in times of crisis because desperate people from the surrounding area and from remote parts of the country came flocking to the metropolis. According to rough estimates, the Congo Wars since 1996 have caused two million people to migrate to Kinshasa. They do not live as obvious refugees or displaced persons but are taken in by friends and family. The average number of household members has thus increased significantly and is said to be today about 8 people. Before the war, an average household numbered only 5 people.

This would have already been a great strain under normal circumstances, but in addition it is accompanied by a large-scale breakdown of productive economy. State exploitation of the economy under Mobutu and the marauding campaigns of the presidential guard and the army in Kinshasa between 1991 and 1993 – which were approved by state leaders – have thrown nearly the whole city population into misery. In 1997, Laurent-Désiré Kabila's victorious rebels marched into the capital, heading a pan-African intervening force under Rwandan command. They were exhausted after a 7-month forced march across the vast country but were greeted with exultation by the inhabitants of Kinshasa's slums. At this point in time, state power had all but vanished. Against this background, self-organization of civil society (cf. article by Christiane Kayser) had taken on more and more regulative functions. This was why Kinshasa did not turn into a battlefield in 1997 and at the outbreak of the Second Congo War in 1998.

But social self-organization did not prevent, however, Kinshasa's immiserization during the war. Today, Kinshasa is a city of permanent improvisation which has largely lost its political standpoint. An observable, organized protest culture has not yet emerged from this. The paramount objective is naked survival. Daily routine of most "Kinois" is determined by the attempt to procure the next meal or the financial means to afford it. Since virtually nothing is being produced in Kinshasa and the city lives off trade and governmental administration, work has to be invented. It is the most simple service trick of the world: the artificial complication of the easiest processes accompanied by the offer to remove these very complications. The following examples may illustrate this: Locals meet traders

arriving by ship or visitors arriving at the airport to ease or even spare them the tedious dealings with customs. They shovel sand out of road holes and back in again, asking for money from passing car drivers. They secure a place in the water pump queue or find a free seat on a minibus, of course in exchange for money. They have themselves hired as delivery boy, guide, helper. They sell everything that might make money, even without actually having the goods. You simply have to establish contact to someone who might have the desired good or to someone who might know somebody who knows where perhaps to find it.

Maybe at the end of the day they will somehow have managed to scrape together enough money for a meal. At least there has to be enough money for the ride back home: if they are lucky, in one of the seldom running busses, otherwise on the roof of the constantly overcrowded suburban trains or in one of the improvised shared taxis, mostly private cars with empty seats. Early in the morning and late at night, crowds of people walk alongside the endless main roads nursing the faint hope of a lift. This provably fills half of their time awake and they thus symbolize what has become of Kinshasa – a megalopolis that is still regulated by the rules of the village. The inhabitants are only able to tolerate this because they deem themselves escaped from their original village. This is the paradox of Kinshasa.

*Dominic Johnson*

Africa	Congo Political events	Congo Culture, religion, society
<b>Pre-colonial and early colonial period before 1885</b>		
<p>~ 1000 BC: Bantu peoples migrate into central and eastern Africa; Neolithic nomads of the Khoisan cultures, San (also known as "Bushmen") and Khoi ("Hottentots") in southern Africa</p> <p>~ 500-1000 AD: Bantu peoples spread into the modern provinces of Kasai, Kivu and Katanga</p> <p>~ 1200: Second major Bantu migration begins</p> <p>~ 1420: Kingdom of the Luba founded</p> <p>1498: Circumnavigation of the Cape of Good Hope (Cape of Storms) by Bartolomeo Diaz</p> <p>1499/1500: First voyages to Brazil by Amerigo Vespucci and Pedro Alvares Cabral</p> <p>1499–1502: First circumnavigation of Africa by Vasco da Gama</p> <p>1575: São Paulo de Luanda (mod. Luanda) founded; city grows to become principal slave market on the southwestern coast of Africa</p> <p>Cape Colony founded by the Dutch</p> <p>Late 16<sup>th</sup> to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Triangular trade with slaves to Brazil, sugar to Europe, finished goods, weapons, liquor to Africa</p> <p>1807: Slave trade abolished in the British Empire in 1816</p> <p>1865: Slavery abolished in the southern States of the USA</p> <p>1888: Slavery abolished in Brazil</p>	<p>~ 1350: Emergence of Kingdom of the Congo under Nimi a Nzima</p> <p>1480–1550: Kingdom of the Congo (aka Bakongo) flourishes</p> <p>1482: Diogo Cão reached the mouth of the Congo; diplomatic relations between the King and Portugal</p> <p>1506–1546: Mbemba a Nzinga baptized as Alfonso I; rules over the Bakongo with Portuguese help</p> <p>1653: Major parts of the Kingdom of the Congo come under Portuguese rule</p> <p>1568: Congolese capital São Salvador destroyed by the Jaga</p> <p>18th/19th centuries autonomous tribal chiefdoms</p> <p>1800: Afro-Arabian trade in the eastern Congo</p> <p>1816: British voyage of discovery to the mouth of the Congo by James Tuckey</p> <p>1854: Scottish missionary and discoverer David Livingstone in Katanga</p> <p>1871: Meeting of Livingstone and Henry Morgan Stanley in Ujiji (10 Nov)</p> <p>1881: City of Leopoldville (Kinshasa) founded</p> <p>1874–1877: British-American journalist and adventurer Stanley explores the Congo basin</p> <p>1876: "Study Committee for the Upper Congo" founded in Belgium, replaced in the late 1880s by the "Association internationale du Congo"</p> <p>1878–1887: Stanley's expedition for Leopold II of Belgium</p>	<p>post-1480: Catholic missionaries in the Kingdom of the Congo</p> <p>1491: King Nzinga a Nkuwu accepts baptism</p> <p>1492: Martin Behaim of Nuremburg makes the oldest still extant globe</p> <p>post-1500: Christianization of the Congo</p> <p>1518: Dom Henrique, son of Congolese ruler Mbemba a Nzinga (Alfonso I), consecrated as bishop during a visit to Europe in 1508</p> <p>1682–1706: Prophetess Doña Beatrice active (so-called "Black Joan of Arc")</p> <p>post-1870: Second wave of missionaries in central Congo</p>

<b>Colonial period, 1885-1960</b>		
<p>1884/85: Africa conference in Berlin chaired by Otto von Bismarck</p> <p>1898: Fashoda Crisis between Britain and France in the Sudan 1899–1902: South African Boer states conquered by the British</p> <p>1919: First Pan-African Congress in Paris 1919: League of Nations mandates over former German colonies 1925: Mandates for Rwanda and Burundi fall to Belgium</p>	<p>1885: King Leopold II of Belgium claims ownership of the Congo as "Congo Free State" 1890–1894: Belgian-Arab War in the „Congo Free State“</p> <p>1904: International protests against "Congo atrocities" 1908: "Congo Free State" ceded to Belgium, henceforth Belgian Congo</p> <p>1926: Capital moved from Boma to Leopoldville (Kinshasa)</p> <p>1941–1944: Army revolts</p> <p>1957: First local elections in the Belgian Congo 1958: All-Congo party ("Movement national Congolais", MNC) founded (10 Oct) 1959: Belgian decision to withdraw quickly from the Congo (13 Jan)</p>	<p>1891: Forced labor decree for Congolese (21 Oct)</p> <p>1898: First rail connection between Matadi and Leopoldville completed</p> <p>until 1908 Up to 10 million natives die as a result of "Congo atrocities" 1910: Forced labor abolished due to international pressure ~ 1920: Emergence of prophetic-religious movements, e.g. "Kimbanguism"</p> <p>1928: "Société générale de Belgique" founded to intensify exploitation of natural resources in the Belgian Congo after 1933: Forced settlement of Africans ("payonnats ingigènes") 1942: Uranium delivered to USA, used to produce the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki 1950: Cultural association "Association nationale du Congo" founded</p> <p>1959: Hutu revolts against the Tutsi in Rwanda; expulsion of the Luba from Kasai Province (approx. 100 thousand people) after 1960: Mass emigration of Europeans (July)</p>
<p>1948–1990: Apartheid regime in South Africa</p>	<p>1957: First local elections in the Belgian Congo 1958: All-Congo party ("Movement national Congolais", MNC) founded (10 Oct) 1959: Belgian decision to withdraw quickly from the Congo (13 Jan)</p>	<p>1959: Hutu revolts against the Tutsi in Rwanda; expulsion of the Luba from Kasai Province (approx. 100 thousand people) after 1960: Mass emigration of Europeans (July)</p>
<p>The First Republic (1960-1965) 1960: "Year of Africa" Most French colonies become independent</p>	<p>1960: Belgian Congo independent (30 Jun); mutinies against Belgian officers; unrest begins (4 Jul); copper-rich Katanga Province secedes under Moïse Tshombé until 1963 (11 Jul) 1960–1964: UN peacekeeping mission in the Congo (ONUC); 1960–1965: Civil war in the Congo 1961: President Patrice Lumumba assassinated (17 Jan)</p> <p>1964: First federal multi-party constitution adopted (1 Aug)</p>	<p>1963: Massacre against Tutsis in Rwanda</p>
<p>1963: Organization of African Unity (OAU) founded</p>	<p>1964: First federal multi-party constitution adopted (1 Aug)</p>	<p>1963: Massacre against Tutsis in Rwanda</p>
<b>The Second Republic / Zaire (1965-1997)</b>		
<p>1967–1970: Civil war in Nigeria (Biafra)</p>	<p>1965: Military coup; Joseph Désiré Mobutu (later Africanized as Mobutu Sese Seko) seizes power (24 Nov)</p> <p>1967: N'Sele Manifesto 1969: Students at the Lovanium University take to the streets to demonstrate against the Mobutu regime (May)</p>	<p>1966: Leaders of the "Pentecost Conspiracy" publicly executed</p>
<p>National flag of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1963-1971)</p>	<p>1967: N'Sele Manifesto 1969: Students at the Lovanium University take to the streets to demonstrate against the Mobutu regime (May)</p>	<p>1966: Leaders of the "Pentecost Conspiracy" publicly executed</p>



<p>1975: Convention of Lomé signed between European Community (EC) and ACP (Africa, Carribbean, Pacific) countries</p>  <p>National Flag of Zaire (1971-1997)</p> <p>after 1985: Democratization process begins in many African countries</p> <p>1992–1996: Boutros-Boutros Ghali first African UN Secretary General</p> <p>1993: Arusha Peace Accord to stabilize Rwanda (4 Aug)</p> <p>1994: Apartheid ended peacefully in South Africa</p>  <p>National flag of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1997-2006)</p>	<p>1970: One-party rule proclaimed (Mouvement populaire de la revolution) (23 Dec)</p> <p>1971: Congo renamed Republic of Zaire (27 Oct); so-called Africanization program begins</p> <p>1975/76: Cuban intervention in Angola</p> <p>1977/78: "80 Days' War; Front pour la liberation nationale du Congo (FLNC) intervenes in Shaba (Katanga) Province to topple Mobutu; French and Belgian troops intervene to protect Mobutu</p> <p>1979: Open letter of the "13 Parliamentarians" against Mobutu's authoritarian regime (1 Nov)</p> <p>1982: Oppositional party "Union pour la démocratie et le progress social (UDPS) founded (February)</p> <p>1983: General amnesty for political dissidents (21 May)</p> <p>1990: University of Lumumbashi stormed (30-100 students dead); withdrawal of non-humanitarian assistance by EU, USA and Canada (11 May); Mobutu proclaims the "Third Republic)</p> <p>1992: Étienne Chisekedi becomes Premier (15 Aug)</p> <p>1995: Renewed serious Ebola outbreak; 244 victims (March)</p> <p>1996: Oppositional "Alliance des forces démocratiques pur la liberation du Congo" under Laurent-Désiré Kabila (18 Oct)</p> <p>1996/97: Civil war in Zaire ("First Congo War")</p> <p>1997: Mobutu flees to Morocco (17 May)</p>	<p>after 1972: Africanization of Christian family and forenames; conflict between state and Catholic church</p> <p>1976: First outbreak of Ebola virus in Zaire</p> <p>1992: Christians demonstrate on the streets of Kinshasa (16 Feb); Luba victims of "ethnic cleansing": 100 thousand people expelled (August)</p> <p>1993: Conflict between Hunde and Nande, and with Hutu and Tutsi immigrants in northern Kivu cost thousands of lives.</p> <p>1994: Rwanda genocide. Some 800 thousand Tutsi and oppositional Hutus massacred in the eastern neighbor country (April-June); over 1.2 million Hutus flee from Rwanda after Tutsis seize power (July)</p> <p>1996: Banyamulenge-Tutsi rebellion in South Kivu against planned expulsion by the DR Congo</p>
<p>The Democratic Republic of the Congo (since 1997)</p> <p>1998–2003: The "Second Congo War"</p> <p>2000: First EU-Africa summit in Cairo (3 Apr)</p> <p>2001: OAU reconstitutes itself as the "African Union"</p>	<p>1997: L.-D. Kabila proclaims himself President of the newly renamed Democratic Republic of the Congo (17 May); Mobutu dies of cancer aged 67 (7 Sep)</p> <p>1998: Military units rebel agains Kabila in the eastern Congo (3 Aug)</p> <p>1999: Lusaka Peace Accord, but war rages unabated (11 Jul); UN Security Council resolves to dispatch the "Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies" (MONUC, 30 Nov) mission is ongoing</p> <p>2001: Laurent-Désiré Kabila assassinated, succeeded by his son, Joseph (16 Jan)</p>	<p>since 1997: Continued violent conflict between Hutus and Tutsis in the East</p>

<p>2004: African "Peace and Security Council" (PSC) begins work (March)</p>  <p>National flag of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (since 16 February 2006)</p>	<p>2002: Peace agreement to end the war signed in Pretoria (South Africa) (17 Dec)</p> <p>2003: French-led UN mission IEMF (Operation Artemis)</p> <p>2003: Interim constitution in force (4 Apr); interim government under Joseph Kabila (30 Jun); MONUC authorized strength increased to 10,800 (28 Jul); in 2004 again increased to 16,700</p> <p>2004: Government and "International Criminal Court" reach an agreement on investigations into war crimes (6 Oct)</p> <p>2005: Interim government extended (17 Jun)</p> <p>2006: First democratic elections (planned)</p>	<p>2002: Volcano erupts in Goma, at least 100 thousand people homeless (17 Jan)</p> <p>2003: Influenza epidemic in the North with up to 2,000 dead (February); ethnically motivated fighting between the Lendu and Hema peoples in the Ituri District escalate</p> <p>2005: Unrest in Katanga Province; 60 thousand persons flee after fighting between the army and Mai-Mai militia (August)</p>
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## Important commemoration days and public holidays

[Square brackets indicate the dates for the 2007/08 church year.]

1.1.	<i>Le Jour de l'An</i> – New Year's Day
4.1.	<i>La Journée Nationale des Martyrs de l'Indépendance</i> – Commemoration of the Martyrs of Independence
6.1.	<i>Le Jour des Rois Mages</i> – Epiphany
8.1.	Airplane crash in Kinshasa, 350 dead (1996)
16/17.1.	<i>Les Journées des Héros Nationaux et de leurs compagnons d'infortune</i> – National Heroes Day
17.1.	Volcano eruption destroys Goma, 100,000 people homeless (2002)
16.2.	Day of Victims for Democracy
20.2.	Garrison of Luluabourg mutinies (1944)
8.3.	Attacks by "Katanga Gendarmes" against the Mobutu regime begin (1977)
4.4.	Interim government constituted (2003)
6.4.	Aircraft of Rwandan President shot down, Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi killed, subsequent massacres of Tutsis and moderate Hutus in Rwanda (1994)
14.4.	<i>Vendredi Saint</i> – Good Friday [6 April/21 March]
16.4.	<i>Dimanche de Pâques</i> – Easter Sunday [8 April/23 March]
23.4.	King Leopold II of Belgium declares ownership of the Congo (1885)
24.4.	Mobutu announces transition to the "Third Republic" (1990)
1.5.	<i>La Journée internationale du Travail</i> – May Day
17.5.	<i>La date anniversaire de la Libération du Peuple de la tyrannie</i> – National Liberation Day
25.5.	<i>Le Jour de l'Ascension</i> – Ascension Day [17 May / 1 May]
4/5.6.	<i>Pentecôte</i> – Pentecost [27/28 May or 11/12 May]
4.6.	Birthday of President Joseph Kabila
15.6.	<i>La Fête-Dieu</i> – Corpus Christi Day [27 June / 22 May]
30.6.	<i>La date anniversaire de l'Indépendance</i> – Independence Day (1960)
1.7.	UN ONUC mission begins ("Opération des Nations Unies au Congo"; 1960)
9.7.	Foundation of the African Union (AU), successor to the Organization for African Unity (OAU; 2002)
11.7.	Congo Crisis begins (1960–1965)
30.7.	Joseph Kabila and Paul Kagame (President of Rwanda) sign peace accord ending the Congo War in Pretoria, South Africa (2002)
1.8.	<i>Le Jour des Parents</i> – Parents' Day
2.8.	Tutsi militia and Rwandan and Ugandan regular army units open offensive against Laurent-Désiré Kabila (1998)
15.8.	<i>L'Ascension</i> – Assumption Day
24.8.	Kasika Massacre with more than 1000 dead (1998)
24.9.	Birthday of prophet Simon Kimbangu (1889)
14.10.	Birthday of Mobutu Sese Seko (formerly <i>Le Jour l'Adolescence</i> – Youth Day)
18.10.	Revolt of Banyamulenge Tutsis in eastern Zaire (1996)
27.10.	Country renamed Zaire (1971)
30.10.	World championship boxing match between George Foreman and Muhammad Ali in Kinshasa (1974)
1.11.	<i>Toussaint</i> – All Saints' Day
15.11.	Congo Free State sold to Belgium – subsequently known as the Belgian Congo (1908)
17.11.	<i>Le Jour de l'Armée</i> – Army Day
24.11.	Military coup by General Mobutu (1965)

<b>30.11.</b>	UN mission MONUC begins ( <i>Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo; 1999</i> )
<b>25.12.</b>	Noël – Christmas

## Places to Remember

Here follow descriptions of 18 cities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Each city is marked on the map with the number corresponding with its description.

**1. Banana:** This city at the mouth of the Congo river is home to an important naval base. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the port mostly served the slave trade. Henry Morton Stanley reached Banana in the year 1879 in order to explore the Congo river basin for King Leopold II of Belgium. In a formal ceremony here on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1885, Leopold proclaimed the foundation of the Congo Free State. During the civil war of the late 1990s, Banana was the scene of fighting between Kabila partisans and Rwandan rebels.

**2 Boma:** This seaport on the right bank near the mouth of the Congo river was the capital, of the Congo Free State from 1887 to 1908, later of the Belgian Congo until 1926.

**3 Bukavu:** Bukavu lies in the country's East at the southern end of Lake Kivu. It was founded in 1901 as "Costemansville" by the Belgian colonial power. Originally, prominent European settlers lived here. The city developed over the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to become an important centre of transportation and administration. As a result of the Congo Crisis from 1960 and 1965, more revolts in 1991, and the continued growth of the neighbouring city of Goma, Bukavu lost in importance. It came in to tragic prominence during the first and second Congo Wars. Ethnically and politically motivated disputes between Hutus and Tutsis following the Rwanda genocide in 1994 led to recurring terrible massacres on both sides. Bukavu is the seat of a Catholic archbishopric.

**4 Bunia:** Bunia is the capital of the Ituri District in Orientale Province. The city lies between the rivers Ituri and Shari, right on the border to Uganda. Bunia is the center of the "Ituri Conflict" between the Lendu and the Hema. At the heart of this ostensibly ethnic conflict lie land disputes dating back to the 1970s. The situation escalated during the invasion by Ugandan troops in 1998. The invaders allied themselves with the Hema; there were massive clashes between the two peoples and more than 50 thousand people were killed. The UN subsequently stationed a large MONUC contingent in Bunia to watch over the conflicting parties. In reaction, nine members of MONUC were murdered in February 2005, presumably by Lendu rebels. The peacekeepers carried out a counterstrike against a rebel camp, killing around 50 fighters. The conflict could be deescalated in July 2005 by disarming 15 thousand militiamen. MONUC Sector 6 has its headquarters in Bunia.

**5 Gbadolite:** Gbadolite, which lies in the North on the border to the Central African Republic, is surrounded by rain forest and is practically inaccessible except by air. Gbadolite was the residence of the former President of Zaire, Mobutu Sese Seko. He expanded the city beginning in the 1970s, building three palaces giving Gbadolite its nickname of "Versailles of the Jungle". The palace complexes contained, among other facilities, a church, an amphitheatre, two swimming pools with views over the Ubangi river, and magnificent gardens with fountains. Mobutu transformed Gbadolite into a second seat of government, and buildings were erected for all of the ministries. After Mobutu's expulsion in 1997, Gbadolite was taken by rebels and pillaged completely. Today (in 2006), the city is the seat of the MLC (*Mouvement pour la liberation du Congo*), whose leader is the rich businessman Jean-Pierre Bemba.

**6 Goma:** Goma, capital of North Kivu Province, lies in the extreme East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The city lies between the Nyiragongo volcano to the north and the shores of Kivu Lake to the south. During the civil war in Rwanda in 1994, Goma was destination to a flood of refugees. After over a million people had flooded into the city a cholera epidemic broke out in their camps, several thousand people falling victim to the disease. In 1997 and 1998, as the civil war following Mobutu's overthrow escalated, Rwandan troops conquered Goma. During the pursuit of Hutus that had sought shelter there, hundreds of civilians were murdered. In 2002 a stream of lava from the Nyiragongo volcano destroyed large parts of the city. Many buildings were affected, particularly in the city centre, as was the airport. Approximately 250 thousand inhabitants had to flee, many of them remained

homeless. In 2005 volcanic activity broke out anew in the region .

**7 Kananga:** Kananga is the capital of West Kasai Province, and lives primarily from cotton farming and gold mining. The settlement was founded in 1884 by the German discoverer Hermann von Wissmann (1853-1905). The city retained its original name, “Luluabourg”, until 1966. In 1895 Kananga lay at the centre of the Betetela Revolt against the Belgians after colonial soldiers shot the chief of that tribe. With construction of a railroad connection from Ilebo through Luluabourg to Lubumbashi at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century economic development began. Endemic ethnic conflicts between the Luba and Bena Lulua peoples contributed to the growth of secessionist tendencies after the Belgian Congo became independent.

Today, Kananga is the seat of a Catholic archbishopric. The population of the city is estimated at up to one million people.

**8 Kikwit:** In March 1995 Kikwit became the focus of international attention when an outbreak of Ebola virus infection with a mortality rate of over 80 percent was reported. The virus cost 244 people their lives and threatened to spread to the millions of inhabitants of Kinshasa.

**9 Kinshasa:** This city on the banks of the Congo lies on the Malebo Pool (Stanley Pool), about 350 km from the coast. It was founded in 1881 as a trading station by Henry Morton Stanley and named Léopoldville in honor of the reigning Belgian king. The railroad to the coastal city of Matadi was completed in 1898. With the transfer of the capital of the Belgian Congo from Boma to Léopoldville in 1926 the city experienced a period of rapid growth. In the mid 1930s it had around 40 thousand inhabitants, including about 2500 Europeans. A university (Lovanium University) was founded in the early 1950s. Prior to independence Léopoldville consisted of a European and an African city (“*quartier indigène*”), the inhabitants of which were forbidden to enter the other part after 9 o’clock in the evening without special authorization. Around 1950 the city got a 70 thousand-seat stadium, the largest in the Congo (this was where the legendary boxing match between Mohammed Ali and George Foreman took place in 1974). In 1960 Léopoldville, with its 400 thousand inhabitants, was the most populous city in central Africa. With independence it became the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s capital city. After Mobutu had seized power in 1965 he renamed Léopoldville to Kinshasa (1966), which was the original name of the settlement, out of which the city had grown. A six meter-high monumental statue of King Léopold II on horseback, which had been removed in 1967 at the order of then-President Mobutu Sese Seko, was reinstated by the current government on the “*Boulevard du 30 juin*” (Independence Day). Currently (as of 2006) as many as eight (officially six) million people inhabit the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; about nine million live in the greater Kinshasa-Brazzaville (capitol of the Republic of the Congo) area.

**10 Kindu:** The capital of Maniema Province is located on the upper reaches of the Congo river in the Central East of the Republic. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century Maniema was an important center of the trade in ivory, gold and slaves. Around 1860 Swahili-speaking Arabs lived here, who organized the slave trade with Zanzibar. Reminders of Swahili and Islamic culture are still visible in the city.

**11 Kisangani:** The city lies on the middle reaches of the Congo below the Tshunga Falls. This is where Henry Morton Stanley founded the Stanley Falls Station in 1883, from which came its former name of “Stanleyville”. The Scottish technician Binnie remained behind as representative of the Congo Free State and operator of the trading station. A conflict with Arab slave traders subsequently erupted, the station had to be abandoned temporarily. From 1887 on, Stanleyville was the seat of slave trader Tippu Tip (1837-1905), Governor under the authority of Léopold II. In 1964 during the Congo Crisis the city was the scene of massacres by “Simba” rebels against white civilians and the subsequent “Opération Dragon Rouge”. In a joint military action, Belgian and US troops evacuated 1500 white hostages. During the wars of the 1990s and at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Kisangani was the scene of several major outbreaks of violence between various conflicting parties. Kisangani is an

archbishopric of the Catholic church.

**12 Kolwezi:** Kolwezi lies in the country's South, about 100 km east of the three-way border with Zambia and Angola. In March 1977 and May 1978, rebels of the FNLC movement (Front de la liberation nationale du Congo) known as "Katanga Gendarmes" irrupted into Shaba Province (formerly and now once again "Katanga" Province). Their object was to separate the natural resource-rich province from Zaire and to bring about Mobutu's overthrow. The invaders, with Cuban and Soviet support, were able to occupy Kolwezi on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1978. With the arrival of reports of massacres against civilians – including Europeans – in Kinshasa, the government responded with 1700 Belgian, 700 French and thousands of Zairian paratroops. After two weeks of bitter fighting leaving 1000 Zairian and 200 foreign soldiers dead, the FNLC fighters were finally expelled from the country in May of 1978.

**13 Likasi:** During the colonial period this southern city was named "Jadotville" after the Belgian engineer Jean Jadot. During the Congo Crisis in 1961 Likasi became known under the headline, "The Siege of Jadotville", when Irish UN troops had to surrender to the soldiers of the Prime Minister of Katanga, Moïse Tschombé. During a phase of "ethnic cleansing" in the former province of Shaba (Katanga) in the early 1990s, violent excesses were committed against the Luba people. Likasi is the town where former President Laurent-Désiré Kabila was born.

**14 Lisala:** Lisala lies on the middle reaches of the Congo in Mongala Province. This is where on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1930 the later dictator Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu wa Zabanga ("the mighty warrior who, because of his stamina and will to win, strides in flames from victory to victory") was born. Lisala – during the colonial period a strategic crossroads – was called "Nouvelle Anvers" until 1926.

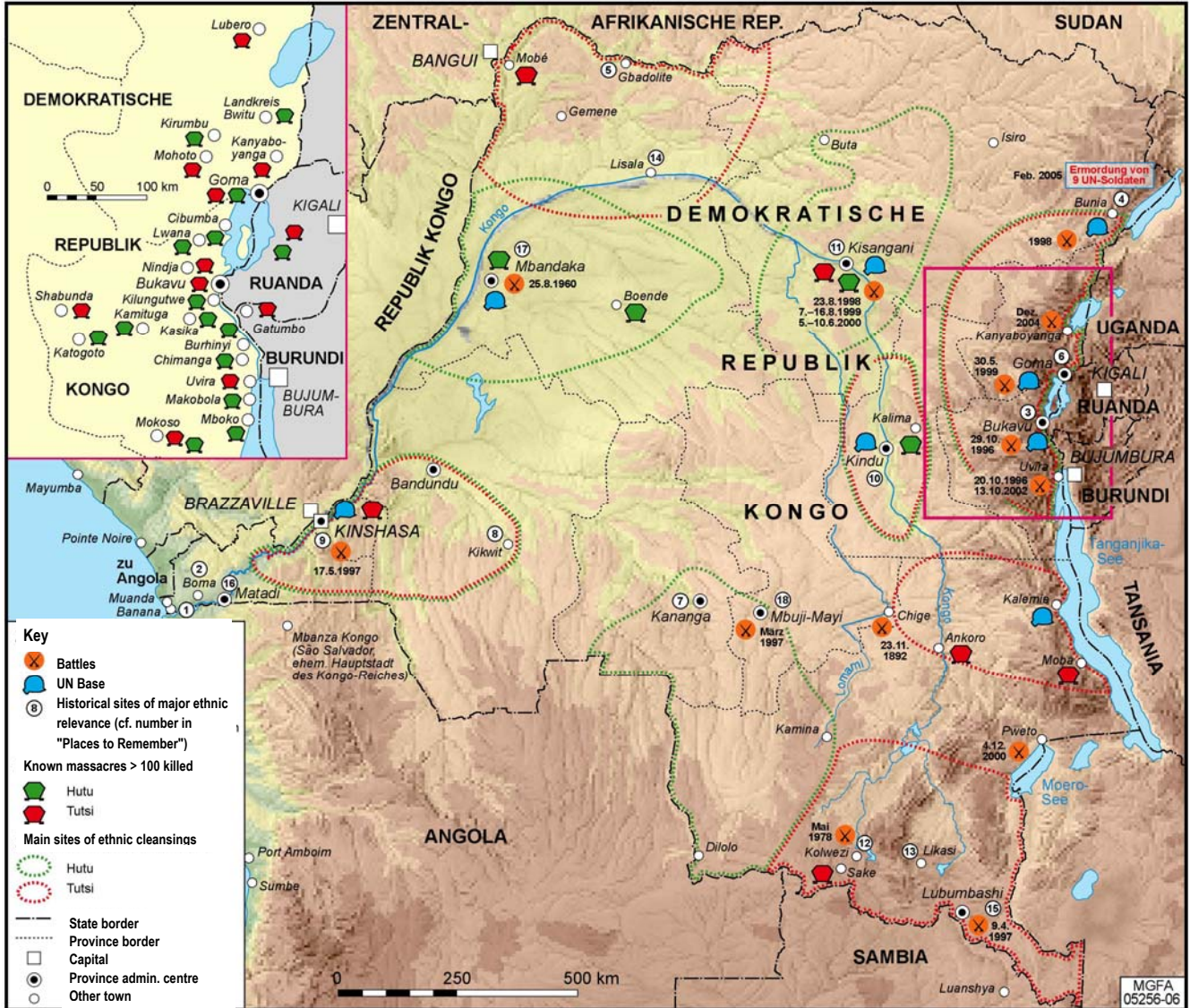
**15 Lumumbashi:** This city of a million inhabitants lies on the border with Zambia, and was founded as "Élisabethville" (Flemish: Elisabethstad) in 1910. Élisabethville grew to become the center of copper mining in the Congo. Other minerals were and still are mined, such as cobalt and zinc. The Belgians founded a university in 1955 (today the University of Lumumbashi). It was in local elections held in this region in December 1957 that the nationalist "Alliance of the Bakongo", which had campaigned on a platform of immediate independence from Belgium, got its highest proportion of the vote. During the secessionist period (1960-1965) Élisabethville was capital of the short-lived "state" of Katanga. As part of the process of "africanization" initiated by Mobutu, the city received the name Lumumbashi in 1966. In May, 1990 government troops stormed the campus of the "Université du Zaïre". Presumably up to 100 students were killed. On May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1997 the leader of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo (*Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo, AFDL*), Laurent-Désiré Kabila, proclaimed himself President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**16 Matadi:** The city lies on the left bank of the Congo, about halfway between the Atlantic and the capital, Kinshasa. Since 1898 the two cities have been connected by a 366 km-long railway and the road named "Route de Matadi". Since 1983 the river has been spanned by a 722 meter-long road and railway bridge. Originally named "Pont Maréchal", it's name today is "Pont Matadi". It connects Matadi with the city of Boma. Matadi is the Democratic Republic of the Congo's principal ocean seaport.

**17 Mbandaka:** Mbandaka is the capital of Équateur Province and lies on the eastern bank of the Congo near the confluence of the Tshuapa river. It is an important river port in the country's northern river system. The city was founded by Henry Morton Stanley in 1883 under the name of "Équateurville". Under Belgian rule it was renamed "Coquilhatville". Since 1965 Mbandaka has borne its current name, which was given by President Mobutu. In December, 1997 the city fell victim to a flood disaster which left around 6000 people homeless. Mbandaka is the seat of a Catholic archbishopric.

**18 Mbuji-Mayi:** This southern city was founded by Europeans after 1910 as a diamond mining station

and was called Bakwanga until 1966. After independence in 1960 the city grew rapidly due to an influx of Luba people. During the Congo Crisis (1960-1965) Mbuji-Mayi served until 1962 as the capital of the separatist "South Kasai" Province. Its recent history has been marked by violence and misery. Since 1993 there have been difficulties in supplying the region because of the many refugees from Shaba. The region surrounding Mbuji-Mayi counts as one of the world's most important source of diamonds.



Map: Places to Remember



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