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STRUGGLES FOR THE "SECOND INDEPENDENCE" IN CONGO-KISHANSA

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Lumumba's Assassination: Implications for the Struggles for National Independence

Patrice E. Lumumba, the first head of the government of the independent Congo (now Zaire, since 1971) was assassinated in Elisabethville (now Lubumbashi), Katanga (Shaba) on January 17th 1961. Internal and external forces opposed to what Lumumba represented, worked jointly to eliminate the strongest leader of the nationalist forces struggling for a genuine national independence. In August 1960, at a meeting of the American National Security Council (NSC), for example, President Eisenhower gave what was understood as a green light for the CIA to go ahead with the contingency planning to eliminate Lumumba as the necessary solution for the Free World cause in the Congo.¹ Timberlake, the US ambassador in Leopoldville (Kinshasa), and Lawrence Devlin, the CIA station chief in Leopoldville — who described himself as an "adviser to a Congolese effort to 'eliminate' Lumumba"² — had been for some time making suggestions (and pressures) to work out something for the ultimate elimination of Lumumba. Those suggestions were said to be in line with the sentiments of the Congolese moderates who included: Kasa-Vubu, Ileo, Bomboko, A. Kalondji, C. Adoula, etc.³ The African Division of the CIA's clandestine services then headed by Bronson Tweedy, put up a technical plan for the assassination of Lumumba by virus or poison. Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, whose secret code name was 'Joe from Paris' arrived in Leopoldville on September 26th 1960 with everything necessary for this operation. As Thomas

Kanza wrote in his *The Rise and Fall of Patrice Lumumba*: "Lumumba was a victim of a conspiracy worked out abroad, and put into effect in the Congo with the willing or unwilling help of his own compatriots."⁵ Among these were, of course, "personal and political enemies of the Prime Minister" brought "together by representatives of international financial monopolies and Western secret services working to combat communist influence in Africa."⁶

In this period following the "earlier cold war of the late 1940's and early 1950's"⁷ — as a phase of struggles for world hegemony —, given the strategical location of Congo-Zaire within the western zone of influence, the Soviet Union in a relatively *weaker* position could not possibly have risked a confrontation with a determined and expanding Pax Americana to rescue a Lumumbist type of national independence for the Congo. The other external forces favourable to such a genuine national independence — the Afro-Asiatic nationalist group — were too weak to be in a position to do anything substantive and not even sure of the capacity to defend their own national independence.

What then did Lumumba represent? Although, by class background, a member of the *evolue* (intelligentsia) fraction of the African colonial petty bourgeoisie — the other fractions being: traders, rich peasants, civil servants — by 1958 — 1959 deeply involved in the anti-colonial mass movement, Lumumba became a *radical nationalist*. With his participation at the Accra African peoples conference in 1958, his nationalist perspective became broadened. His party programme — presented to the public in 1959 — conceived of the future Congolese society as being *politically independent* with a *Congolese* capitalism developed in cooperation with Belgian capitalism. It expressed a perspective typical of an aspiring national bourgeoisie with an eye on foreign capital.⁸ This was the most advanced vision of the leading class (petty bourgeoisie) in the struggle for national independence; a class that was in the main tailing the radicalism of workers and poor peasants. The most reactionary element of the class — the chiefly rich peasant element tied to the colonial state or its reproduction of pre-colonial pre-capitalist forms of exploitation — was actively *opposed* to any idea of political independence, and the 'moderate' intellectuals were still agitating for a colonial programme of native preparation for independence. The ABAKO

leadership, due to its being rooted in a mass movement for 'immediate independence' dominated by radicalized workers and poor peasants, was, as an exception, forced to agitate for immediate independence by the late 1950s. Lumumba was catching up with the radical elements in the ABAKO petty bourgeois leadership and going very much beyond them by the end of 1959.

Between June and December 1960, Lumumba then majority leader and Prime Minister, had to confront many obstacles put up by imperialists and their local allies to prevent him from reaching his aim of a true national independence. The incident over the historiographical confrontation opposing Lumumba to King Baudouin of Belgium on the day of the independence festivities—June 30th 1969—left no doubt that, like the French in Guinea in 1958, Belgians, who favoured only a neo-colonial independence for the Congo were going to do all in their power to maintain and perhaps expand their imperialist exploitation and domination. It was also clear that some Congolese elements were supporting or coniving with Belgian interests.

Lumumba, despite regrettable diplomatic consequences, had, against the King, to vigorously set the historical record straight: the national independence was not a gift of the civilizing mission of King Leopold II and his successors, but an outcome of victorious difficult struggles of the Congolese people.¹⁰ Lumumba and other nationalists intended to lead the Congolese people's struggles to win and defend a true national independence. Belgian imperialists, supported by their NATO allies, were raising one obstacle after another to bar the nationalist objective of a genuine national independence. Within the first week of independence, a Belgian instigated mutiny of the Force Publique led to a situation of a major crisis, and allowed Belgians to militarily re-occupy the country. This was followed by Belgian settlers' supported secessions of two rich mining provinces. The UN operation that was invited by the Congolese government to redress the situation by dealing with the Belgian military invasion and the catastrophic disorders it gave rise to, instead functioned ultimately against the nationalist led government for the protection — if not expansion — of Western interests on the pretext of excluding Cold War in the Congo, that is, to keep the Soviet/Communist influence out of the Congo. All those manoeuvrers were triggered off with an ultimate aim of letting the nationalist government

collapse.

It was necessary for Lumumba to vigorously expose those manouvrrers; the toll, however, was heavy: the government became divided into opposite camps. Some MNC-L and close government collaborators were leaving Lumumba to join the bandwagon of puppets, imperialist collaborators or reformists. All those difficult circumstances of struggle for true national independence forced Lumumba's political and ideological positions to be drastically transformed. The massive response in most parts of the country given to Lumumba's call to struggle against Belgian military invasion and secessions was an indication that his new conceptions reflected the most advanced level reached by the mass movement against the threat of Belgian neocolonialism.

By the end of 1960, Lumumba had come to the following conclusions :¹¹

1. There cannot be any possible compromise with imperialism; the struggle between authentic nationalism and imperialism is an antagonist one, that is, one to the death. 2. Only the mobilization of popular masses constitutes a force capable of winning against imperialism. 3. Imperialist domination, based on the use of arms, can only be won against by armed resistance. 4. The struggle against imperialism cannot be won unless it is linked to a struggle against local imperialist collaborators.

As can be seen, Lumumba reached the conclusions which were in line with the radicalism of workers and poor peasants, especially in the rural areas where imperialist primitive accumulation had devastated the most. Workers of private settlers' plantations in Kivu, those who were made landless or confined to poor lands through land expropriation (state, concessionary companies, etc.), those reduced to sharecroppers or seasonal workers in the Lever's empire of Bandundu and those made very bitter by the local dictatorship of colonial administrators and their chiefly allies—through forced labour, taxation, forced crops, etc. — were indeed, in a position to understand, identify with and unite with Lumumba's call.

To summarize, From the point of view of the Belgians and especially the cold war crusading Americans, Lumumba's radical nationalism was seen as a potential threat to a stable future of the Congo under NATO. Thus, even before independence had been won manoeuvres were initiated in order to keep Lumumba out of power. This having

failed, the army mutiny provided the needed opportunity for Katanga to secede thereby cutting the main source of funds for the state, and thus politically destabilising Lumumba. For the western powers, this was the main purpose of the Katangese secession (Emmanuel, 1972). Unfortunately for the west it took a while for Tshombe and his southern white allies to realise this.¹²

Why did Lumumba fail despite the massive people's support? This question was the key to the continuation of the struggle for true national independence. It is too easy to simply say that imperialist forces and their local allies were too strong for the nationalist forces led by Lumumba to win. Fundamentally, the main problem was the insufficient political and theoretical development of the leading core of the mass movement of struggle for true national independence. Lumumba lacked any solid organizational structures capable of dealing with imperialism — let alone systematically organizing the large masses of people and isolating local imperialist allies. No real attempt, for example, was made by Lumumba's party, MNC-L, to make some inroads into the social base of ABAKO to win over some of the most politicized elements of the movement. Lumumba's own government, filled with all kinds of opportunists—since it was organized on the basis of "compromise for the sake of territorial unity" — was but a house of cards unable to resist against any imperialist blow. Some of his own ministers were actively conspiring to overthrow him. Two of his ministers — Bomboko and Delvaux — actually co-signed president Kasa-Vubu's act of revocation of Lumumba as Prime Minister. Ultimately, Lumumba and his few reliable collaborators became real hostages inside a colonial state in the process of becoming a neo-colonial one.

The nature of the existing parties (ideologically confused mass organizations) did not permit them to systematically organize, ideologically equip and effectively lead the masses of people to stage a victorious counter-attack against NATO imperialism and its local allies. The leadership lacked a satisfactory theory of the balance of forces within the world conjuncture in which the struggle was taking place and thus that of the revolutionary and *democratic* character of the struggle. *Unifying* forces that could be unified were lacking. Reformists who might not necessarily have been pro-imperialists were driven to become imperialist

agents. Carried away by majority vote, the Lumumbist leadership tended to *break* too soon the united front character of the national independence movement, thus failing to effectively continue isolating reformist/compradore elements especially when faced with Belgian aggression, secessions and UN pro Western powers operation. Being fundamentally *radical nationalists*, Lumumbists failed to realize that nationalism per se is never consistently anti-imperialist. As a bourgeois ideology, nationalism is often confusionist, as it hides, specifically, class interests under general interests of 'the people as a whole'. Therefore the necessity to uncover the class character of the consistent antagonism against imperialism evaporates. Imperialist interests are also, more often than not, justified by a form of nationalism.¹³

The crucial question in the pursuit of struggles for national independence, especially in the period of struggles for World hegemony, is the necessity for the leadership of the movement to be *politically and ideologically independent* from any world ideological centers. The lack of the national capacity of the ruling class-to-be was demonstrated by the fact that the nationalist government, faced by the Belgian caused crisis, was relying on the UN—at least at the outset — than on the the masses of the people themselves. Both the pro-secessionist and pro-US imperialist collaborator fractions of the ruling-class-to-be were relying respectively on Belgian settlers and imperialists and other NATO imperialist forces. It was, indeed a mistake for Lumumbists to tendentially let themselves be forced to rely on the Soviet Union. In these conditions, the ruling class-to-be was incapable of even achieving a political unification of the class: its members tending to be pulled from every direction so that the struggle to take control of the state was indeed settled by outsiders. "To readers of C.C.O'Brien's *To Katanga and Back* , wrote J. Depelchin, "it will not be difficult to recognize the whole period from 1960 to 1964 as unique in the history of Independent Africa, in the sense that while sharp struggles, to take control of the state, were going on UN officers and western powers' ambassadors (particularly that of the USA) were busy not only determining which faction was going to take over but also shaping and moulding the state apparatus to suit their own needs."¹⁴ The working class, not having developed any political autonomy, could have provided neither a state capacity nor a national capacity — nor even taken

up organizationally the tasks implied by Lumumba's conclusions. Those tasks included the completion of the seizure of the colonial state power; its transformation into a democratic one, that is, a state based on 'the principle that power comes from the people', organization and arming the masses of people, politically isolating imperialist local allies and confronting imperialist, political, economic and military assaults. Disarmed and determined not to retreat, even tactically, Lumumba had to die. Had he been able to retreat, could he have organized successfully, at least the political autonomy of the working class? It seems, in hindsight very doubtful.

Struggles for the "Second Independence."

The Independence has been sold to imperialist powers by the murderers of Lumumba. We must struggle for the second independence.

—Pierre Mulele.

With the death of Lumumba, nationalists and revolutionary forces lost their most courageous and shrewd leader. A period of confusion and opportunism among Lumumbist nationalists followed.

Nationalist parties, like other parties,¹⁵ degenerated shortly after the proclamation of independence. This was due, in part, to the class leadership of those mass parties that conceived these as a means to have access to colonial state posts after Belgian colonialists' departure. Parties for national independence, not necessarily being rooted in the mass movement against colonialism, never came together in an organized manner to form a broad large mass-based united front for national liberation. By the force of circumstances they were roughly grouped into three camps: the pro-colonial restoration camp of parties inspired by colonialists and settlers, the pro-US led NATO imperialist neo-colonialist camp—ultimately led by the Binza group, and the nationalist camp — ultimately led by MNC-L and PSA-G. Only the last camp could be said to have, at least *tendentally*, acted as a broad mass-based united front for national independence. The radicalization of the nationalist bloc brought about the unification of the two other camps.

Three tendencies¹⁶ were competing for the leadership of the nationalist bloc: the national bourgeois aspiring elements, ultimately led by Christophe Gbenye; the radical petty bourgeois elements represented by Gaston Soumialot and Olenga; and the properly revolutionary — increasingly marxist inspired — elements — ultimately represented by Pierre Mulele, Theodore Benguila, Leonard Mitudidi, Thomas Mukwidi, Laurentin Ngola, Laurent Kabila, etc.¹⁷ Only this last tendency clearly understood the need for the patient political mobilization, anti-tribalist/regionalist unification and even military preparation of the large masses of the people. Unfortunately, this minority tendency needed more time to actually and completely win over the leadership of the entire mass movement of the second independence. The first two tendencies were more interested in replacing the neocolonial compradore bureaucratic class in the colonial/neocolonial state apparatuses rather than in fighting for a real national independence capable of transforming the conditions of mass domination, oppression and impoverishment.

By early 1961, some members of the Lumumbist bloc succeeded in regrouping in Stanleyville (Kisangani) and tried to organize a nationalist counter-attack to overthrow the imperialist puppet government of the College of Commissioners — principally composed of university students installed by Mobutu's coup d'etat of September 14th, 1960. A nationalist government was formed; it was headed by Lumumba's deputy Prime Minister, Antoine Gizenga. The resulting polarization of the class fractions of the ruling-class-to-be organized in three camps, thus led to a form of a geopolitical separation/opposition of zones of influences. The Stanleyville based nationalist government had the control of the northeastern and eastern parts of the country. The Leopoldville based neocolonial government of the College of Commissioners controlled the near-Western and Western parts of the country. And the Elizabethville/Bakwanga based pro-settlers' secessionist governments were in charge of parts of Kasai and Katanga (Shaba) provinces. Of course, the more the nationalist camp appeared to gain momentum, the more the two other camps joined forces.

The nationalist government had, internally, a strong mass-support especially in areas controlled by nationalist parties; and externally, it was immediately recognized by the 'progressive'

African states (the Cassablanca group, etc.) and most of the 'socialist' camp. Nevertheless, in the absence of a strong leadership and torn apart by regionalist fractionist tendencies and real ideologico-political differences (bourgeois, radical petty bourgeois and revolutionary), the government was unable to carry out a merciless protracted struggle against imperialist puppets and collaborators. Nor did it even begin, despite Mulele's advice, the politico-military preparation for a protracted armed struggle. Under the pressure of the 'bourgeois tendency', the nationalist government ended up falling into the imperialist instigated trap of 'national reconciliation'. The bourgeois desire for quick access to state posts made it fail to see that a genuine movement of the national unification/union of the Congolese people cannot possibly and successfully be led by a government of imperialist collaborators.

The nationalist government had hardly consolidated its social base before A. Gizenga and other Lumumbist ministers accepted to go to Leopoldville and participate in the pro-American Adoula's government of 'national union'. Gizenga became Adoula's deputy Prime Minister in this imperialist tactic of breaking off the nationalist momentum. It was a surprise to no one when, a few weeks later, Gizenga was arrested and sent to Mbula Mbemba's jail where he was kept for two years — only to be freed by Prime Minister Moise Tshombe in a new attempt to disorient the nationalist camp!

NATO imperialism, under cover of the UNC operation and through its local allies, took advantage of this period of nationalist political weakness to consolidate the emerging neo-colonialist compradore bureaucratic class ally. Through the College of Commissioners, pro-Western imperialist forces became the real administrator of the newly 'independent state in crisis.' Former colonial administrators, consciously or unconsciously opposed to Congolese political independence, came back as technical advisers for the 'new state.' Belgian 'technicians', who had been governing the secessionist Katanga, moved to Leopoldville to take up the governance of the whole country. Relatively 'neutral' UN functionaries (e.g. Dayal) were being eliminated. Local neo-colonial forces (e.g. those organized through the CIA inspired Binza group) were put in control of the former Force Publique army and other key state apparatuses while at the same time very

drastically curtailing the remaining democratic institutions won through national independence struggles. The Leopoldville US pro-consul, Ambassador Timberlake, perhaps expressed the general feeling of the Western imperialist opposition to democratic institutions threatening the continuation and deepening of imperialist domination in the Congo, when he said;

I do not believe there is one single Congolese who has more than theoretical idea of even the most elementary principles of democracy. They obviously cannot practice something they do not understand. This does not insult the many well-intentioned Congolese but does discount their ability to produce anything resembling democratic government until they have been taught.¹⁸

It is clear here that in the spirit of "freedom loving" imperialists, the colonial period having failed to "teach Congolese to practice democracy", a neo-colonial period, under American supervision, was needed to accomplish that task, if ever. One already saw the remote elements laying the ground for the US "going our way"¹⁹ foreign policy towards Zaire. The policy, strongly favoured a pro-American anti-democratic (repressive) centralized state led by a strong defender of US interest. Already in 1963, Adoula's government, seeking to silence the remaining Lumumbist parliamentary opposition, arrested many persistent Lumumbist nationalists and obtained President Kasa-Vubu's dissolution of the Parliament. Those, among nationalists who still dreamt of pursuing the struggle to occupy state posts by legal means — including the call for general elections — had to tactically join hands with proponents of armed struggle.

The masses of people largely stirred up by the fast deterioration of their socio-economic conditions in the face of the rising group of arrogant *nouveaux riches*; and being genuinely grieved by Lumumba and his colleagues'²⁰ assassination, were ready in many parts of the country to take up arms and struggle for the second independence. It was under these conjunctural circumstances that nationalist forces took up the organization of the political leadership of the mass insurrectional movement.

Representatives from four nationalist parties — PNCP (*Parti de la Convention Populaire - Bas Congo*), PSA-G (Gizenga's *Parti Solidaire Africain*), CERECA (Bisukiro's CERECA), and MNC-L (Lumumba's *Mouvement National Congolais*) — agreed

to create another political formation regrouping all the remaining Lumumbist forces: the national council for Liberation (*Conseil national de Liberation* — CNL) was formed in 1963. It was a form of a united front, reproducing again the contradictory tendencies of the nationalist bloc, to serve as the leading core of the Second Independence movement. This was clearly an advance over the Lumumbist conception of relying on state apparatuses to transform the colonial state and society. The different tendencies inside the CNL, however, had different conceptions of what was to be done on the basis of their different lessons drawn from Lumumba's failure.

The nationalist bourgeois tendency (C. GBenye, Bocheley-Davidson) wanted to use CNL and armed struggle to seize the neo-colonial state power and replace, in the state apparatuses, the imperialist collaborators, and colonial restorators, but not necessarily to deal with the *social question*. It thus could not conceptualize correctly the question of the political and organizational form of the *class leadership* of the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist people's camp in the absence of an organized political autonomy of the working class. Its conception of the CNL tended increasingly to be a kind of a government in exile, it started opposing and censoring truly revolutionary positions. It thus lacked a correct conception of the nature of the on-going struggle for the second independence and did not even hesitate to engage in compromising negotiations with colonial restorators such as M. Tshombe and imperialist forces, such as Henri Paul-Spaak and L. Devlin.²¹ that is, to beg for political power from imperialists themselves: 'give us power, we will protect your interests better than your local puppets'!

The radical petty bourgeois line, represented by Soumialot, Olenga and Marandura, tended to be *militaristic*, subordinating political mobilization to military recruitment and deployment of children (simbas). Politics was often understood by Lumumbists as the process of occupation of local administrative posts. That is why they often politically fell under the leadership of the bourgeois line that used them to contain truly revolutionary forces and seize political power in Stanleyville (Kisangani) proclaiming a Congolese People's Republic without consulting the revolutionary forces. Issues of crucial political importance such as fetishism, tribalism, male chauvinism and regionalism (localism), chara-

cterizing pre-capitalist forms of consciousness, were actually intensified instead of being dealt with, resolved or problematized. The fusion of marxism with the mass revolutionary movement became blocked, at least in the Eastern wing.

The revolutionary tendency of the CNL whose main leaders — Mulele, Benguila, Mukulubundu, Mukwidi, Mitudidi — studied the lessons of the most advanced experiences of the oppressed people's revolutionary movement²², had worked out a specific revolutionary strategy to lead the popular mass insurrection of 1963—1964.

The document of the CNL programme, written by Thomas Mukwidi and published²³ on April 15, 1964, summarized the conclusions reached at Nkata (Nkwilu) by those advanced cadres of the revolutionary tendency. It clearly explained that the ongoing struggle had a *national* and *democratic* character. It was a national revolution because imperialist domination controlling the country's economy, civil administration and army, represented the principal enemy to destroy. As imperialism relied on its Congolese agents, "an oligarchy whose reliance on the USA was the only coherent trait", the revolution therefore had also to be *democratic*: it had to aim at overthrowing a ferocious government sold out foreign interests so as to actualize the principle that power comes from the people. The document also noted that the Congolese people were actually fighting for their security, dignity, freedom, democracy and prosperity.

The document specified the objectives of the revolution. "The socialist experience based on the conditions of our country", it said, "is the surest road for the development of our popular masses". Specific orientations to follow in order to achieve that objective were said to gradually take shape through the protracted struggle itself. "While having opted for socialism", the document went on, "we must guard ourselves not to fall under the dependence of a foreign ideological center." The necessity for self-reliance for a genuine national independence was clearly asserted.

The fundamental means to achieve the objective was said to be the "revolutionary armed struggle". "It is essential, the document emphasized, "to rely on our own forces even when aid from friends — we welcome — may be an important element to accelerate victory." This radical solution requires that revolu-

tionaries fundamentally depend on the popular masses of the Congolese people as the sole social force capable of bringing it about. The document appealed to Congolese patriots, wherever they were, to organize themselves in committees of three to six people to take up the tasks specified in the programme. The historical process of the national and democratic revolution was believed to ultimately cleanse the masses of people of foreign induced alienations and other reactionary African traditions.

It is clear here that the organizational question of the class leadership of the CNL united front was not clearly dealt with. Were the committees to be formed by patriots supposed to function as party cells? Was the CNL seen as the fulfillment of Lumumba's call for a rigorous and homogenous party? As a united front, the CNL should have dealt with the question of its class organizational leadership. To actually be realized as conceived, the programme required a Marxist-Leninist type party to organize and lead the united front. The issue of whether or not bourgeois and petty bourgeois class leadership of a united front can achieve a national and democratic revolution is, in today's Africa, not an abstract question. Mulele and Mitudidi ultimately took up the study of the question of the foundation of a M-L type party. They faced a difficult limitation: the whole movement had about seven politically experienced Marxist-Leninist cadres. This grave limitation explains the failure by revolutionary forces to dominate not only the CNL united front but also to provide the overall leadership of the whole revolutionary movement.

At any rate, armed with the CNL programme,²⁴ patriots were ready to engage in armed struggle. They had already ruled out — on the advice of the PNCP — the suggestion that the opening Maquis be organized in the Mayumbe forest, close to Kinshasa, in the area of origin of president Kasa-Vubu as the local population was still fundamentally supporting Kasa-Vubu and ABAKO. By July 1963, Pierre Mulele began organizing the maquis in Kwilu. The idea was that partisans from all over the country would come there for politico-military training and go back to set up other Maquis. This proved to be difficult, if not impossible, due to the strictly clandestine character of the operation and the military and security capacity of the Leopoldville regime. Leopoldville was already informed of the whereabouts of Mulele just four days after his arrival in his village. It is important to note that bourgeois and

petty-bourgeois tendencies within the CNL did not support the conception that emphasized the *protracted* character of the struggle as they wanted to occupy state posts as soon as possible.

The truly revolutionary leadership, although confined to a smaller area, was provided by Pierre Mulele's *maquis*. Mulele was the first, in the Congo, to have attempted to organize a national and democratic revolution with a marxist-Leninist inspiration. He was the first to have organized and led the first great popular insurrection against a neo-colonial regime in independent post-colonial Africa. That no victorious case has yet taken place in Africa shows how difficult the operation is. It is thus still important to briefly study Mulele's experience.

Pierre Mulele, Former Minister of National Education and Culture in Lumumba's government, has probably been the most dedicated revolutionary the Congo has so far produced. That is perhaps why neo-colonial historiography of Zaire tries so hard to confine him to a *moral silence* or to treat him as the black sheep of Zairean history.

Mulele was basically a self-educated man having been expelled from the seminary for refusing to believe in the 'Saint Virgin Mary' mystery (immaculate conception). Before his involvement in the organized politics of national independence struggles, he served a couple of years in the colonial Force Publique.

He, together with Gizenga and Kama, founded in 1959, the Parti Solidaire Africain (PSA), after studying carefully all that transpired on the important experiences of anti-colonial struggles (Vietnam, Algeria, Kenya's Mau-Mau, etc). PSA was, with ABAKO, the most organized anti-colonial political party. It was at this time that Mulele became aware that a long and protracted struggle was needed to actually win national liberation. He, in fact, was among the least surprised and shaken up by imperialists' treatment of Lumumba and his colleagues. In December 1959, he went to Conakry with the aim of further studying the most advanced nationalist experiences of Africa. He met Andree Blouin²⁵, a left-pan-africanist woman and an extremely talented organizer. She became Lumumba's head of protocol after participating, on the side of Mulele and Gizenga, in the PSA electoral campaign (April — May 1960) in Kwilu. She helped considerably politicize women in the area; four years later, some of those politicized ones played an important role in Mulele's *maquis*.

As minister of Education and Culture, Mulele, already well known for his opposition to imperialism and its religious aspect, created panic in the Church establishment which had the monopoly over the schooling system by advocating the complete nationalization of the entire educational system.

Mulele was with Lumumba on his way towards Stanleyville, after Lumumba had escaped from his Leopoldville house arrest and when, after crossing over the Sankuru river, he decided to go back to the other side to rescue his wife and child and was thus ultimately arrested by Mobutu's soldiers. It is said that Mulele told Lumumba as he said goodbye to him, that he preferred his family to the people's continuation of struggle against imperialist domination. In other words, it seemed clear to Mulele that Lumumba confused the interests of the whole with those of the part. Mulele arrived safely in Stanleyville. After having tried his best to advise A. Gizenga, he told president K. Nkrumah that in his view, Gizenga was "incapable to resist against the assaults of the neo-colonial forces."²⁶ He spent sometime in Cairo where it is said that he became quite close to Nasser. In March 1962, he went to the People's Republic of China where he stayed for more than a year studying the Chinese revolutionary experience with emphasis on elementary military and civil technology.

Sometime in 1963, Mulele returned clandestinely to his home area in Kwilu. He found that the local situation had become almost catastrophic. In relation to 1960, the standard of living had gone down by about 50%. Though people had still to pay taxes, peasants had almost nothing to sell. Police and military officers were descending on villages, grabbing any available property (goats, chicken, pigs, etc.), imposing arbitrarily one kind or another of taxes, and detaining or imprisoning people on futile charges. A few days after Mulele's arrival, his presence became one major reason to mobilize and justify military violence. The regional government put aside 1,000,000 C.F. as a prize for the head of Mulele. By September 1963, the national army organized military operations in the area to look for Mulele. Villages were terrorized and devastated. Tarra, a priest, who witnessed these events described how these military operations were taking place in these words:

This is how the military officers proceed. They arrive in

the village early in the morning. They summon the village head right away and ask him to assemble the whole village by clans. The head of the clan is required to check on the families of his clan. If a child, girl or boy is missing, the head of the clan is responsible and must bear the consequences for such an absence. He is thus tortured and so are the parents and it does happen that the heads of all the clans are beaten up due to absences in every one of the clans. They are required to pay heavy tributes; clothes of the parents and heads of the clans and their other property of basic necessity are confiscated. These are very horrible scenes to watch. All the villagers are lined up: women on one side and men on the other. Men are asked to lay down on their stomach. Police and military officers must walk on the men's backs. They are thoroughly whipped as if they were dogs. And blood is shed. Goats, chickens, etc., sometimes filling a whole truck, are collected for the officers.²⁷

This went on for months before Mulelist partisans started defending themselves and the people through armed struggle.

To start organizing for armed struggle, Mulele had first to gain the confidence of traditional chiefs who also felt victimized by the new bureaucratic rulers and who had control over the village masses. He assured them that military terrorism was going to be dealt with and the well-being of the villages guaranteed. For Mulele, popular masses were like the river and the partisans were like fish. Wherever there are masses there must be the partisans. With the permission of the Chiefs, Mulele built his camps in the forests, recruited his partisans from children of the peasants. The partisans received, for some months, political and military training.

Due to constant military raking operations in the area, the camps had to be continuously moved. In four to five months, Mulele recruited and trained a considerable number of partisans, estimated at 100,000 by mid 1964, in an area of about 500,000 people.²⁸ The partisans, of course, included both women and men and received the same basic political and military training. They were organized by teams (equipes) that had each from nine to a hundred sixty five members. The average age of members was about twenty years with an average education of about four and a half years of schooling. For the cadres (political commissars, military commissars, secretaries, councillors, trea-

surers, etc.), the average age was about twenty eight years with an average education of about seven years of schooling. Most of the ordinary partisans were recruited from the unemployed or student elements; while cadres were people who have had some profession or were students.

By December 1963, the military terrorism in the area forced the population to take Mulele's side. This created a lot of problems for Mulele's plans. How, for example, in the absence of a vanguard party, were they to take up all the urgent tasks required by the new situation: 1. the political and military training of the partisans; 2. military activities of self-defence and the defence of the masses of people fleeing military assaults in the villages to join Mulele's camps; 3. the political mobilization of the broad masses of people; 4. the organization of production of resistance to satisfy the socio-economic needs of both partisans and the population at large; etc. Definitely there must have been a shift in Mulele's original plan. By the end of 1964, the mere size of the liberated zone posed many problems for its defence and administration. The revolution was ultimately defeated, not militarily — as the case of the Eastern front — but, by the absence of an economy of resistance. How were they to organize a guerrilla economy not open to the enemy's military destruction, when the entire population in an area became partisans, that is, they went to hide in the forest in the absence of enough cadres to deal with the situation? Pierre Mulele himself gives a pertinent analysis of the political reasons for the defeat (see annex).

A truly revolutionary party must emerge from a mass revolutionary movement itself; but the latter, to develop further to victory, requires a well organized and powerful revolutionary party to lead it. Most of the intellectuals were on the side of the bureaucratic rulers; the minority, with some reading knowledge of marxism — especially inside the UGEC (General Union of Congolese Students) — were hostile to (or cut from) the mass movement and its emerging leadership.

Before concluding this introductory study of the struggles for the Second Independence, let me touch on some features of Mulele's ideas. He, like most of the great political leaders, conformed to his political conceptions of truth which give priority of the oral over the written, directives over analyses. Nevertheless, Mulele's ideas²⁹ can be seen in the political lessons he gave, the dire-

ctives given to his partisans and the very important document (see Annex), written by him or under his supervision, summing-up the first three years of armed struggle. Most of his political lessons were centered around the idea that Independence was sold to imperialist powers by the murderers of Lumumba, and that it was necessary to struggle for a second independence. The enemy was clearly identified as imperialism and the bureaucratic bourgeoisie. Mulele classified the social forces into three categories: strangers or imperialists who steal our country's resources; people in the bad government who help strangers or imperialists to steal the country's wealth and who are thus reactionaries. These were said to live on the basis of aid from imperialists and did not care about the rest of their brothers and sisters who starved and lived in misery. The rest of the whole population who live in misery: the poor people, peasants and workers. These were like hunting dogs that catch the kill but eat only bones. In relation to the struggle, the Congolese population was divided into four categories: the reactionaries, the backward people (*arrieres*), the intermediaries and the partisans. The reactionaries were the internal social forces serving imperialists and as such were the principal enemy of the people. No amount of political education could transform them into forces of the revolution. The people who faced daily imperialist pillage and violence and who thus lived in misery, the peasants and the workers, formed the group of the partisans.

Between the reactionaries and the partisans were the backward people and the intermediaries. The backward ones were the marginal people characterized politically by their complete lack of political consciousness. They are not an enemy of the revolution as such, but they must be educated. The intermediaries or intellectuals are characterized by their opportunism, that is, they have one foot inside and another foot outside. Because of that attitude, they are dangerous. They are capable of the best as well as the worst action — from the point of view of the revolution, they therefore; must be led by the partisans. Those are some of the ideas expressing Mulele's understanding of the Congolese neo-colonial society. Although Mulele's experience failed, it is clear that it provided important lessons for any struggles against neo-colonialism in Africa, then and in the future. It is sad that it took about seventeen years after his death for some of his ideas and conclusions to start coming out.

NOTES

1. Madeleine G. Kalb, *The Congo Cables*, MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1982. pp. 53-55, 63-66, 101-103, 128-133.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.* p. 101
4. *Ibid.*
5. Thomas Kanza, *The Rise and Fall of Patrice Lumumba*, Schenkman Publishing, Co., Cambridge, Mass, 1977, p. 342.
6. *Ibid.* p. 347.
7. Fred Halliday, *Threat from the East?* Penguin Books, New York, 1982, p. 14
8. Ludo Martens, "Lumumba, cet inconnu", *Solidaire* No. 42 (427), 7 Nov. 1984, pp. 9-12.
9. An attempt to analyze this confrontation has been made by Jacques Depelchin, *Lumumba and history of Zaire* 1980. (unpublished).
10. See June 30th 1960 Lumumba's speech in *Speeches and Writings of Patrice Lumumba*, Little Brown, New York, 1972, pp.
11. Ludo Martens. "L'Ideologie du mouvement revolutionnaire au Congo-Kinshasa 1963-1968: Forces et faiblesses" *Solidaire* No. 2 (437), 16th Jan. 1985, pp. 12-13.
12. Jacques Depelchin, "The Transformations of the Petty Bourgeoisie and the state in Post-Colonial Zaire" *Review of African Political Economy* No. 22, 1981. pp. 27.
13. Fredy Perlman, *The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism* unpublished MS 1984.
14. Jacques Depelchin, *op. cit.* pp. 26
15. I analyzed the main tendencies in these parties in my: "Some Background to Congo-Zaire", *IKWEZI*, No. 8, March 1978, pp. 65-74.
16. This is mainly based on Ludo Martens' analysis of the ideologies of the revolutionary movement in Congo — Kinshasa 1963-1968. See his: "L'ideologie du mouvement revolutionnaire au Congo — Kinshasa 1963-1968: Forces et faiblesses". *op. cit.* pp. 12—13.
17. Idem. Although one should say that L. Kabila was then only tending towards Marxism.
18. Madeleine G. Kalb, *op. cit.* pp. 146.
19. Glenn Adler, Judith Byfield and Marcia Wright, "Going our way: US Policy in Zaire 1963-1965: Documents and Domination", Paper presented at the Paris Conference on Zaire, 1963-1964, December 13-15, 1984.
20. Among them were: Maurice Mpolo, Joseph Okito, Joseph Mbuyi, Emmanuel Nzuzi, Christophe Muzungu, Barthelemy Mujanayi, Jean-Pierre Finant, Pierre Leopold Elengeza.
21. According to C.N'Dom. *op.cit.* pp. 38. This was one on Mulele's initiative; he delegated Mukwidi, G. Yumbu, Mitudidi and Masena to negotiate with other nationalist parties in view of the creation of a Nationalist Front.
22. "Before going to the liberated areas of the East", wrote Ludo Martens, "Gbenye clandestinely passed through Brussels where he had two meetings with Spaak who found him incompetent but manipulatable and well disposed towards Belgian interests. Gbenye also met the CIA official, Mr. Deylin". "L'Ideologie du mouvement revolutionnaire....." *Solidaire* No. 1 (436), Jan. 9, 1985, pp. 14. See also: C. N'Dom, *P. Mulele Assassine la Revolution Congolaise Etranglée*, Hamme-Mille: Ed. resp. Y. Houbankx, 1984, pp. 67-68 and pp. 95-102.

23. Mulele, Benguila, Mukulubundu studied for sometime in the People's Republic of China: Mukwidi and Mitudidi visited Cuba and China.
24. This programme is briefly discussed by Ludo Martens in his "L'Ideologie du mouvement revolutionnaire....." *op. cit.* pp.12-13.
25. See Andree Bluin, *My Country Africa*, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1983
26. Ludo Martens, *L'insurrection Populaire au Congo-Kinshasa 1964-1968*, PTB, 1984, pp. 3.
27. *ibid.*, p. 4 See also B. Verhaegen, *Rebellions au Congo*, Vol. 1, Les Etudes du C.R.I.S.P., Bruzelles, 1969, p. 167.
28. These data are analyzed by Herbert Weiss and Renny Fulco in "Les Partisans au Kwilu: Analyse des origines sociales des membres et cadres des Equipes de Base." Paper presented at the Paris Conference on Zaire, 1963-1964, December, 13-15, 1984.
29. Forthcoming book, *Pierre Mulele ou la Seconde vie de Patrice Lumumba*.