

CONGOLESE STUDIES ASSOCIATION DES ÉTUDES CONGOLAISES

BIENVENUE! WELCOME! MBOTE! KARIBUNI! SANGAYI!

July 2020 Issue

FROM THE CSA VICE-PRESIDENT, MUADI MUKENGE An Editorial

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

Republic of the Congo. The past year has been one of great expectation as well as challenges for the DRC. The tenure of

President Felix Tshisekedi has seen its share of tense moments while the public faces skyrocketing food prices as well as the advent of COVID-19. We would like this newsletter to be a place of reflection and analysis on various dimensions of life in the Congo, and in particular, its future direction and possibilities. We welcome articles from a range of disciplines, from both academic and non-academic writers. In

particular, we would like to see a younger generation of scholars and practitioners from broad fields including international development, entrepreneurship, non-profit, technology, public health, the humanities, and community organizing. In the same vein, we welcome you as

**WITH COVID-19
AFFECTING ALMOST
EVERYONE, MANY
CONFERENCES ON THE DRC
WERE POSTPONED TO NEXT
YEAR (see Updates Section)**

members of our Association, and as volunteers to support on-going activities. As we walk into the 60th year

of the Congolese republic, we look forward to harnessing the diverse voices of committed individuals working towards a just, stable and productive Congo.

CSA at African Studies
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Africa is intensifying its fight against COVID-19

By Bayavuge E. Sekiyoba

Not surprisingly, the coronavirus pandemic monopolizes the news almost everywhere, every day, and it has caused the loss of human life at an alarming rate worldwide. No continent has been spared by the disease since the first human cases of COVID-19 were reported in Wuhan City, China in December 2019. As of July 30, 2020, there have been 17,109,335 cases reported worldwide, including 912,405 in Africa, according to the World Health Association (WHO). There have been 668,801 deaths attributed to COVID-19 worldwide, with 19,365 in Africa, as of that same date. In the United States, there have been 4,562,610 reported cases of COVID-19 and 154,045 deaths as of July 30th, 2020.

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IN OUR CORNER OF BUTEMBO-BENI: WHILE THE BUSH IS BURNING, EDUCATION IS TAKING ROOT BY: PROFESSOR KASONGO KAPANGA, UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

Topographical accidents can serve metaphorically as a source of knowledge, whether as an elevation—le Mont Amba for *Lovanium*—or a spatial curving to shape individuals through knowledge. With regard to topography, this could be said today about U.C.G. situated in the Graben Rift that runs from Bunia (600,000 people) to Goma (660,000 people). My own high school, the *Minor Seminary of Kabwe* (Central Kasai) was located on a hill came to be referred to as the *Sacred Mount of Kabwe* (*La Colline Sacrée de Kabwe*). In several instances, location becomes a metaphor (synecdoche) of knowledge where it lives, flows and shapes its recipients who immerse completely. Location is secondary, would say *Platonists*, but in this case, it is meaningful because the surrounding, the commodities, actors and feelings of destruction shape the mindset in the region. Aside this metaphorical meandering, people would admit that banking on higher education in these circumstances is utopian as the brutalities of armed conflict in the area suggest an uncertain future. To mention Butembo, Beni even Bunia in one breath with higher education sounds like an oxymoron because the region

brings in its trail stories of unending violence. A modulation of the *heart of darkness* syndrome that has become a convenient label to describe the region. If this is known as the valley of tears with rivers of blood—man-made and natural—flowing since the Rwandan Genocide and several wars that have strangled it, one has nevertheless witnessed for quite some time the birth (only gingerly) of institutions of higher learning.

The title does not intend to emphasize some kind of brave defiance against the brutalities waged against innocent populations in Eastern Congo and pretend that there are no problems in the Beni-Butembo axis. Rather, the focus is on the fact that, even though the region is the victim of malevolent forces, some well-meaning people, Congolese or not, have the courage to look bravely to the future and set up institutions of higher learning. North and South Kivu (Le Grand Kivu) are the sites of four Universities who entrusted them with their future. Those are *l'Université Catholique du Graben* (U.C.G., <https://www.ucgraben.org>), *l'Université Chrétienne Bilingue du Congo* (U.C.B.C., <https://congoinitiative.org/ucbc-info/>), *l'Université Catholique de*

Bukavu (U.C.B., <https://ucbukavu.ac.cd/>) and *l'Université de Kindu* UNIKI, <https://www.univ-kindu.ac.cd/>).

Let us look at the two one in the north.

L'Université Catholique du Graben (U.C.G., 500-1000 students) was founded by the Butembo Catholic Bishop Emanuel Kataliko (1932-2000)—later archbishop of Bukavu—in 1989 at the behest of North Kivu residents who had challenged him to build an institution of higher learning in their own backyard. This explains the way U.C.G. describes itself: “*université au village, du village et pour le village.*” [*The University in the village, of the village and for the village.*] During former president Mobutu's time, all the institutions of higher learning were mostly located in provincial capitals. For the Grand Kivu, Bukavu was the site of ISP/Bukavu, ISDR and later ISTEM. In addition, registration was done at the **Rectorat** (in Kinshasa) that Bishop Tharcisse Tshibangu Tshishiku headed on behalf of the UNAZA (*Université Nationale du Zaïre*). In 2014, this small size university had seven schools (*Facultés*) namely: Agronomy, Business, Medicine, Veterinary, Communication, Political Science, Social and Pharmaceutical Sciences. It offers several bachelor degrees, Master

degrees and PhD in certain disciplines. Its research center O.D.A.G (*Observatoire de la Décentralisation, de l'Administration et de la Gouvernance*) hosts local, regional and international researchers, organizes conferences and acts as partner in several major projects and initiatives. For example, a conference organized in 2011 in partnership with *Université de Liège* and *Louvain-la-Neuve*, led to the publication of a white paper on decentralization and governance.¹ The city, which has strong civil societies dealing with local, provincial, regional, national and international issues relies on the university. The security and the political situation have made of U.C.G. an important partner for issues of public interest arising in the Butembo-Beni region. Abbé Malu Malu, a PhD from the *Université de Grenoble* and former CENI (electoral commission) president, taught in the Department of Political Science for a number of years.

U.C.G. has become an important actor in the region. Its central mission is to train specific skilled talents with the objective to open up the landlocked region and unleash the

¹ See the paper from the *Université de Liège* depository at <https://orbi.uliege.be/bitstream/2268/169429/2/CharteBonneGouvernanceODAG.pdf>.

entrepreneurial spirit its inhabitants have so far demonstrated. U.C.G. plays important roles in the Butembo-Beni region in areas such as education, politics and health. Its Department of Medicine continues to play a visible role in the campaign against the ongoing Ebola outbreak. The ground zero **Mangina** lies only 20 miles out of Butembo. U.C.G. faculty members such as communication professor Augustin Kahindo Muhesi have been involved in public hygiene campaigns in an environment of high distrust. The WHO Ebola riposte team whose most visible victim is the Cameroonian epidemiologist Richard Valéry Mouzoko Kiboung (who was killed in April 2019), worked closely with the *Faculté de Médecine*. Its clinics were a frequent target of armed groups.² For whatever it is worth, the laboratory *A Dieu la Gloire de Beni* headed by Dr. Kitoko sought the cover of U.C.G. to announce its newly-discovered therapy (*covigonum*)³ against the

² Andrew Green, Richard Valéry Mouzoko Kiboung, *The Lancet Regional Health*, June 8, DOI:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(19\)31207-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)31207-3)

³ Coronavirus : le laboratoire A Dieu la Gloire de Beni propose un médicament, le *Covigonum*, *Radio Okapi*. <https://www.radiookapi.net/2020/05/16/actualite/sante/coronavirus-le-laboratoire-dieu-la-gloire-de-beni-propose-un-medicament>. consulted May 16, 2020.

respiratory syndrome COVID-19. The university exemplifies the principle that people need to take care of themselves rather than rely on outsiders, and these initiatives are one of several examples. The other node of the axis is U.C.B.C.

Université Chrétienne Bilingue du Congo (U.C.B.C.)—300 student strong—is located in the city of Beni. It was founded in 2006 by Professor David Kasali who until then was the head of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST). U.C.B.C. has five schools (*facultés*): *Faculté des Sciences Appliquées*, *Faculté des Sciences de l'Information et de Communication*, *Faculté des Sciences Economiques et de Gestion*, *Faculté de Droit* and *Faculté de Théologie*.

Likewise, U.C.B.C. is taking the same kind of role as its counterpart in Butembo although gingerly. It gears itself to train skills to match the needs that are apparent in the region. In a country where government institutions went defunct after Mobutu's downfall, there emerged a collective instinct to establish institutions with some credibility to fill the gap and meet the need of people despite a lack of structure, direction and reference. Why does U.C.B.C. want to be a bilingual university? A short answer could be the founder's previous line of work in Nairobi. But when one has

Anglophone countries as neighbors that have an economic and human impact on the region such as Kenya, Uganda with its cities of Kampala and Entebbe, and to some extent Rwanda (that is willfully becoming Anglophone), adding English is pragmatic. Remaining Francophone and within the Congolese fold does not preclude having good relations with the neighbors as *African Union* advocates. After all, the DRC is a multilingual country. The Christian dimension has an integral in implanting Western-style education in the Congo since the earlier days of the docking of missionaries in the Congo river estuary. The role (Christian) religious orders played in the DRC and the region since the Berlin Conference Act has been documented. U.C.B.C. is unapologetic as a Christian-centered undertaking (supported by the United World Vision). Basing itself on Christian principles, it was to involve students and the local leadership in the sectors of education, legal issues, and land areas as elements of peace building.

Through Congo Initiative (CI) which is an NGO that Professor Kasali founded, the University positions itself as an actor of peace in the Great Lakes Region. For example, Jessica Lembelembe, the American-born assistant to the President's Office has participated in international

gatherings geared toward fund raising and peace building in the region such as the [Peace Building Institute](#).



Source :

<https://twitter.com/justindhubbard>

from Congo Initiative:

<https://congoinitiative.org>.

UCBC became an arm to teach the population against the dangers of Ebola infection and how to protect oneself. I imagine that the impact of these 300 messengers would have a multiplier effect in a campaign that encountered so many challenges including distrust of any outsiders considered at times as the perpetrators. This

campaign's main goal still remains to pull oneself from one's bootstraps, and to develop the region.



2016 UCBC graduation. © Jessica Lembelembe. Congo Initiative.

In a sense, this is the swing of the pendulum in the wake of Mobutu's demise whereby the unitary knot that had centralized all the initiatives to the point of making everyone inactive with devastating results – created space for local initiatives. Air-conditioned offices at the *ministères de tutelle* in Kinshasa have become a thing of the past and the weight for solutions is squarely on the shoulders of local leaders.

In the precariousness of these institutions, there has been fierce criticism of the plethora of institutions of higher learning all over the country. Is the creation of higher education institutions in every corner viable and **the** path to solving local problems? I personally do not have a resounding good response, but

my sense is that with time natural selection will kick in and the plethora will size itself down in a Darwin-like fashion. In about four or five generations, maybe a fierce competition will lead to

improvement or trigger a consolidation. That is a large question that goes surely beyond the Butembo-Beni axis. In the next issue, we will focus on the other two in the series, namely U.C.B.

(Université Catholique de Bukavu) and l'UNIKI (Université de Kindu) founded by former prime minister Augustin Matata-Mpoyo.

Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy in the Post-2018 DRC Presidential Election, Roger B. Alfani, Ph.D., Seton Hall University, roger.alfani@shu.edu

Introduction

The influence of state leaders in engineering their foreign policies rests on several factors ranging from their aptitudes, visionary leaderships, and upbringing, to their surrounding environments (e.g., bureaucracy, constituency, etc.). Several scholars have contributed to the argument surrounding the individual choices of policymakers. For instance, Jerel Rosati eloquently points out that “the beliefs and cognitive processes of policymakers affect how they see the world and what actions they take” (2000, 72). For Byman and Pollack (2001), individual decision-makers matter the most under three main conditions: (1) the degree of power one leader possesses; (2) the ambiguous and conflictual setting of institutions; and (3) the fluidity of circumstances (140-143).

First, the degree of power a leader possesses determines the degree of influence of this leader's personality and preferences. That is, the more power in decision-making rests in one leader, the less she or he will need to rely on other factors and actors to determine any course of action, and the more efficient his or her decisions will be. Both the kind of institutions (weak or strong) and the degree of the leader's *charisma* influence the outcome of her or his socio-political and economic actions. For instance, in weak or fragile states, foreign policies rest generally on an individual leader, whereas in strong or developed states the impact of an individual leader in foreign policy is diffused in political institutions like the Congress in the United States of America.

Second, individual decision-makers matter most in ambiguous, uncertain, and conflictual settings. Policy-making processes become more difficult and cumbersome with a greater volume of agencies,

coalitions and/or agreements/pacts on which the leader depends. The post-2018 DRC presidential election, which was a result of several agreements between the current President's party and other political groups, is a clear illustration. Some of these agreements and coalitions include the creation of Lamuka on November 11, 2018 in Geneva; *Cap pour le changement* (CACH) few days later on November 23 in Nairobi; and the agreement between the *Front Commun pour le Congo* (FCC) and CACH (Cach) in Kinshasa. This paper will seek to explore how leaders in DR Congo exercised agency in political decision-making, or were limited in doing so, based on their affiliate obligations.

Lamuka was created as a result of a three-day meeting facilitated by the former DRC Representative to the UN and current president of the Kofi

Annan Foundation, Alan Doss. The coalition was comprised of seven signatory members: (1) Bemba, Gombo Jean-Pierre; (2) Chapwe, Katumbi Moise; (3) Fayulu, Madidi Marfin; (4) Kamerhe, Lwa Kanyinginyi Nkingi Vital; (5) Matungulu, Mbuyamu Freddy; (6) Muzito, Adolphe; and (7) Tshisekedi, Tshilombo Felix. However, in less than 48 hours of their agreement to support a common opposition leader for presidency — Martin Fayulu — two candidates withdrew from the Geneva agreement: Kamerhe and Tshisekedi. Cach was created in Nairobi after the departure of both Kamerhe and Tshisekedi from Lamuka.

One of the questions many are still asking and continue to speculate about is whether these alliances will stand the test of time. If they do, for how long? Otherwise, what would the consequences of a dissolution of any of these alliances be and which group would benefit from it? We have recently witnessed some clashes, on the one hand, between leaders of the two groups (between UNC and UDPS and between CACH and FCC), and on the other hand, the demands of their respective constituencies (the so-called “base”). So far, these clashes

have not led to open and prolonged acts of violence even after two main political events: (1) the impeachment of Jean-Marc Kabund-a-Kabund, interim president of UDPS (Union for Democracy and Social Progress), from his position of First Vice-President of the Congolese National Assembly where FCC holds the majority of seats (more than 250); and (2) the recent sentencing of 20 years forced labor to Vital Kamerhe, co-chair of CACH and Chief of Staff of President Tshisekedi, over embezzlement of public funds designated to the 100-days building program and corruption. While these FCC-CACH tensions over domestic issues may have weakened these coalitions, observers have also pointed out that one-on-one meetings between Tshisekedi and Kabila have ended their bilateral conflicts and preceded key institutional decisions including appointments of political and military officials.

As one of the lenses to interpret foreign policies and/or to predict events, the individual level focuses on personal attributes of leaders; *i.e.*, it is primarily interested in the behaviors of leaders and their decision-making processes which include their cognitive impetus. I agree with observers who argue

that many African leaders have been the sole determining actors of their foreign policies (Khadiagala and Lyons 2001).

In the Great Lakes Region of Africa's context, John Clark, for instance, points out that “personalistic regimes” seem to have been the norm of foreign policy design (2001). In other words, regime security has been the priority in the engineering of the foreign policies of many states of the region including the DRC. The main purpose of this paper is essentially to understand the role of human nature or behavior, as one of the domestic sources of foreign policies, in engineering the DRC's foreign policy whether under Mobutu, the two Kabilas, or Tshisekedi. The emerging question is “how do Congolese heads of state influence the design and implementation of foreign policies?” To put it differently, how do their personalities (background or upbringing) lead to the design and implementation of the state's foreign policies?

Individuals play an important role in international relations in that, according to

Kenneth Waltz, they are the root causes of war partly because they are more concerned about their interests than anything else. In other words, their perceptions, characters, and cognitive nature take precedence over other factors such as the international context. Individuals are the main and not sole actors in international relations, in general, and foreign policy analysis, in particular.

Foreign Policies of African States: Adaptative and Perceptive Forms of Leadership

Studying African foreign policy is not an easy project for several reasons. Some of the explanations of this difficulty could be traced as far back as in the late 1950s. The newness of independent African states has not helped early African leaders formulate their national interests in support of their foreign policies. More than five decades later, the situation in many African states including DRC seems to suffer from the same socio-political and economic challenges. The other common explanation of the difficulty to understand African foreign policies lies in the duplicity between what many African statesmen declare and what

they practically enact (Aluko 1977).

Similar to foreign policies of any other states (especially in the West), African foreign policies are not only shaped from both the international and domestic environments, but they are also designed through the continuous interactions of their actors. Many African foreign policies are more dictated by the domestic context than the international, and precisely by leaders, elites or statesmen. Confronted with internal demands, as well as bureaucratic weaknesses or gaps, African statesmen oftentimes end up making foreign policy decisions by themselves or with a very limited group of trusted officials — also called lieutenants — who are also seeking their own survival. At the same time, both the articulation and implementation of foreign policies suffer from both external and more recently internal constraints, which shape the behaviors of policymakers.

While most African states obtained their independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s, they were still under the influence of colonial powers for at least the first two to three decades after, and many continue to be dependent on them for political legitimacy, internal constraints,

economic stability, and survival. For instance, the countries that adhere to the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU or UEMOA in French) and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), continue to rely on France politically and economically through these monetary unions. It is also important to highlight that leaders do not necessarily abide by constraints. They frequently maneuver around and leverage them to their own benefit (Kaarbo and Ray 2008). McGowan and Gottwald point out that “foreign policy is motivated by elite concerns with domestic tensions and problems generated at least in part by the impact of external demands and changes on the structures of the society” (1975, 470, 472). This paper draws from James Rosenau's (1970) four types of what he calls adaptative foreign policy behavior. This concept of adaptation entails that the state's foreign policy results from the interaction between domestic and external factors.

Contrary to an *acquiescent* form of

adaptive behavior, which basically means that the state responds to both international environment and changes, an *intransigent* behavior refers to the state reaction to domestic demands and changes. A third possibility, *promotive* behavior, is the result of the state failure to act on the demands and changes of both the international and domestic. The fourth and final adaptive behavior to which the state responds is *preservative*. Both demands and changes of this last type of behavior which originated from the domestic and international environments result in the formulation and design of a foreign policy (Rosenau 1970; McGowan and Gottwald 1975).

International Expectations and Domestic Demands

At the outset, a key question many observers of the Congolese landscape are struggling to answer is “would Tshisekedi be able to satisfy the demands from the international environment and survive at the same time the Congolese domestic context?” Although his political will can hardly be denied, his capacity to successfully fulfill those demands and peacefully solve internal sociopolitical problems are not

guaranteed. Before the lockdown caused by the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), his constant trips abroad — which earned him the name of an “itinerant President” — were interpreted as a willingness to change and respond to regional and international demands (primarily security and corruption). His returns home reminded him of domestic constraints, especially now in a lockdown context. Could these domestic constraints be ignored and how would that look like?

Choosing that option would mean adopting a promotive policy which is defined as ignoring domestic concerns with a minimal degree of influence and seeking at the same time to change both domestic and external environments.

Independent Variables: Leader, Strategic Geographic Location and Natural Resources

Great powers are in a contest of influence in a given state like the DRC. Two important sets of questions arise — related to the concepts of “inner-directed” and other-directed” : (1) Which great powers are involved in the state and what are their interests? And (2) Who are the (potential) candidates for leadership and where do they stand as far as

great powers and domestic interests are concerned?

The examination of these two questions serves to propose some hypotheses. Let's consider the first one. In the first two to three decades of Mobutu's presidency, the US and Russia were more concerned about spreading their own ideologies in the world and in DRC in particular. The answer to the second question suggests that Joseph Kasa-Vubu, Patrice Lumumba, Joseph-Désiré Mobutu were among the candidates for the country's leadership position. These three leaders are from three different ethnic groups. Political parties that were not allowed were either ethnic organizations or associations like the prominent one that led to the election of the first president, *Alliance des Bakongo* (Alliance of Bakongo, ABAKO). After a parliamentary election and the independence of Belgium-Congo, Joseph Kasa-Vubu, at age 40 in 1960, was chosen as the first president of Congo, while Patrice Lumumba, 35 in the same year, was given a Prime Minister position which he held for about three months.

Out of the three candidates, Lumumba was considered more dangerous to secure Western interests in part because of his nationalistic approach and alleged acquaintance with communism. Mobutu (30 at the time of independence) demonstrated favorable attributes to be handed over the control of the state. He was more externally-directed than the other two candidates (i.e., Lumumba and Kasa-Vubu). Although debatable, Crawford Young and Thomas Turner have described him in their book *The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State* as an "ambitious, charming, keenly intelligent, diversely if not deeply educated" person. They add that "the future president was an extraordinary young man. The diversity of his background was of great value to Mobutu after 1960, and surely helped bring him to power" (Young and Turner 1985, 176).

Many questions remain in regard to the drastic change in foreign policy of many states like the US and France and even international organizations (African Union). Let's consider, for instance, how the US flipped their position in regard to the 2018 election in DR Congo. The

Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) imposed sanctions on members of the Congolese electoral body, CENI, for "undermin[ing] democratic processes or institutions in the DRC."⁴ Prior to these economic sanctions by the OFAC, the State Department did also impose sanctions (e.g., visa restrictions) on CENI officials. One would have expected that the US imposing sanctions on officials of such an important institution as the CENI would have logically led to denouncing its (CENI) results as well. However, the US, particularly through the State Department, chose the opposite logic, i.e., overtly supported the candidate CENI's officials proclaimed as the winner.

The assessment of the DRC presidential elections' results from some US State Department career diplomats opposed that of some non-career and retired ones. "Career Foreign Service Officers with the [African] bureau [of the State Department]," observes Peter Schraeder, "are usually the most willing of any members of the executive branch to place policies

⁴ Cf. <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm633> (accessed on May 1, 2019).

with the aspirations of African nationalist leaders."⁵

Conclusions: 4 Hypotheses

I conclude by proposing four hypotheses related to the source of foreign policies in the DRC and especially in the post-2018 DRC presidential election:

HYPOTHESIS 1: IF GREAT POWERS ARE EXPERIENCING A COLD WAR KIND OF CONFLICT AND THE DRC IS IN A CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP, THE YOUNGEST OF ALL POTENTIAL CANDIDATES, WHO IS GEARED AND CLOSER TO WESTERN VALUES WILL MORE LIKELY BE THE STATE LEADER THAN ANOTHER RELATIVE YOUNG ONE, OUTSPOKEN, WITH AN INNER-ORIENTED VISION (OR NATIONALIST).

Both economic (especially related to natural resources) and ideologic interests of great powers involved in the DRC are so high that they cannot afford to allow an outspoken and inner-directed individual to lead the state. If by some events the latter individual takes power and pursues his or

⁵ Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis, and Change*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 16-17.

her attitude and behaviors against great powers s/he will likely end up leading an unstable state and more likely be eliminated (politically or physically).

HYPOTHESIS 2: THE LEADER OF THE DRC SHAPES THE INTENTIONS OF THE STATE BOTH AT THE REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS.

Although foreign policies are generally governed and influenced by the international and domestic environments, the former (international) is more likely to take precedence over the latter in part because of both the strategic geographic location (e.g., size of the territory and multiple borders) and natural resources (e.g., uranium and coltan) of the DRC. Whether Mobutu, the two Kabilas, or even Felix Tshisekedi, any President does shape the Congolese state's intention by their leadership style. Mobutu, supported by the West, particularly the US and France, presented himself as the regional leader in Central Africa. His charismatic attributes and leadership were recognized both at the regional and international levels. He was able to leverage, at some point, the support of great powers and bargain the

survival of his regime. However, when the DRC (ex-Zaire) was in crisis, hypothesis 1 above fully applied. That is, Laurent-Désiré Kabila astutely seized power until his tragic assassination. Tshisekedi is definitely aware of this leadership role in the region.

HYPOTHESIS 3: THE LEADER OF THE DRC CAN DETERMINE THE DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY OPTIONS OF THE STATE. THE CHOICE OF EITHER TOOL WILL AFFECT THE BEHAVIOR OF THE NEIGHBORING STATES.

One cannot emphasize enough the crucial role of leaders in Africa, in general, and DRC, in particular. As head of state and covering at the same time a leading role in formulating the foreign policy of the country, the leader shapes the response to conflicts against the DRC immediately or any form of balance of power in the region. For instance, Mobutu was able to directly and militarily intervene in conflicts in Juvenal Habyarimana's Rwanda or the conflicts between Jonas Savimbi (UNITA) and Jose Edouard dos Santos (MPLA) of Angola with success. His charismatic approach coupled with his Zaire so-called grand strategy helped him adopt either one of the options, namely military or diplomatic.

However, Laurent-Désiré Kabila's decision to fight his former army sponsors, Rwanda and Uganda, led these sponsors to declare war and invade DRC. This violation of Congo's sovereignty led to a protracted conflict that Congo is yet to recover from and which, according to many, likely precipitated Laurent Kabila's assassination. On the other hand, his successor, Joseph Kabila adopted a different approach which facilitated the end of war, in 2003, and the reunification of the separated country. The issue of identifying whether Joseph Kabila was the sole actor in these successful results will exceed the purpose of this presentation. The next hypothesis can shed some light on this particular debatable and controversial issue.

HYPOTHESIS 4: THE LEADER'S INTERNAL LEGITIMACY OR ILLEGITIMACY WILL SHAPE THE KIND AND DEGREE OF ALLIANCE S/HE CAN BUILD EXTERNALLY.

As rational actors, leaders, including DRC head of states, assess the cost-benefit trade-off when it comes to securing their regimes. As previously discussed, the orientation of

the leader will guide him or her to choose to rely on external supports rather than trusting domestic actors. Securing external supports and building regional alliances, while co-

opting or suppressing domestic contestations seems more likely to be the recipe in DRC. Out of the three presidents, Joseph Mobutu and Joseph Kabila illustrated very well this

approach during their tenures. Furthermore, natural resources serve as a rewarding bargaining asset for a leader in the quest for legitimacy.

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ABOUT A NEW MANIFESTO OF THE AFRICAN CONSCIENCE, Kaseraka Kasomo, PhD

Introduction

In 1956, a group of young African elites, mainly Congolese, prepared a small pamphlet that they entitled "Manifeste de Conscience Africaine." They published it in Belgium and in the D.R. Congo. They were trying to awaken the conscience of Africans to demand independence while

also awakening the conscience of the colonizers to "give" that independence to the Africans, in this case to the Congolese. E Nziem looked at the Manifeste in "two essential parts: the first one intending to be addressed to Belgians and colonial institutions. It ends with a 'call to Europeans... The second one that ends with 'a call to the Congolese [People]...'" The Manifeste

authors were calling their fellow [Congolese]... to give the Manifeste a chance to succeed... and to stay united..." (E Nziem 2006: 131). I will divide the 13 articles of the Manifeste in three sections, according to their objectives.

As mentioned by E Nziem, the first section of several articles, was calling the Congolese Natives to national unity, even though it was an

ethnically diverse country. Under the same section, the Manifeste called for the creation of a united nation that would bring both the Natives and the Europeans on the same legal level, as equal citizens. The second section of articles challenged this hopeful new ethnically and racially diverse society to call for total political, economic and social emancipations as a way of progressively achieving independence. A third section described attitudes that Congolese Natives should adopt toward the Belgian nation. The Manifeste encouraged the Natives to be firm and hold on to a strong position while asking Belgium to give them a real independence, not a superficial one. Since use of force was not to be considered, in reality, they were encouraging Natives to strongly beseech Belgium to help them achieve independence. The Manifeste's authors were hoping for the Belgians' goodwill. Thus, in the same section, the Manifeste is begging Belgians to reject their "despising attitude toward the Natives, the racial segregation, and to stop vexing the Natives..." (Article 10).

As we may already guess, this Manifeste proved to be a utopia, a sweet dream of this

Congolese elite. Isodore Ndaywel E Nziem made an exhaustive critique of the Manifeste in his article "Aux Origines de l'Eveil Politique au Congo Belge: Une Lecture du Manifeste Conscience Africaine (1956) Cinquante Ans Apres'" (2006). We will limit ourselves on mentioning a few points from his article that show how the "Manifeste" was not well received in the Congo and Belgium.

In Belgium, the writers of the Manifeste were assisted by some faculty members of the "Ecole Coloniale D'Anvers," including Professor Jef Van Bilsen. In 1955, Professor Van Bilsen published an article in Flemish (translated into French in 1956) entitled "Plan de Trente Ans pour l'Emancipation du Congo" (E Nziem 132). This article presented the official Belgian position for not giving independence that soon to their colony, the Congo. Even though this article became a precursor to the Manifeste, Bilsen's article assumed that a lot of the governing practices of the new independent nation of the Congo would follow the multiparty Belgian system. Yet, the Manifeste was aiming at a united Congo, not a multiparty nor one party system, but around an African system inspired by the "CSCB, la Confederation des Syndicats Chrétiens de Belgique" (E.

Nziem 131). The model was still yet to be defined in the Congo (E Nziem:135). The CSCB quickly opened a branch in the Congo, to be called "la Confederation des Syndicats Chretien du Congo" (E Nziem 131-132), even though a clear division had been created between Belgian lay people and Catholic clergy. Belgian laics wanted to export multi-parties system while the Catholics wanted to build a Congolese society based on the Belgian Christian Socialist Party (BCSP). At the end, the Laics won with the creation of so many political parties, most of time allied with tribal or ethnic groups (Leslie 1993: 18, 20). They also created a new education system in the Congo (Ecoles Officielles et Athnees) that was not religiously oriented.

In the Congo, the Manifeste was not welcomed due to its alliance with Bilsen's view of securing independence 30 years from 1955, meaning in 1985. The wave of independence movements that was happening in West Africa among French and English colonies was having an impact on the Congolese elite in the Congo. The demand for an imminent independence became a loud voice in the Congo as well, to the point of being too strong for the Belgian Kingdom to resist. The

independence movement quickly took momentum – leading to the way Congo became independent, very unprepared.

In addition, in the Congo, the founders of the Manifeste got an identity of being called the “Liboke Iya Bangala” (E Nziem 133), meaning, “an association of people from the Equateur Province”, who were known as Bangala. Ultimately, the 1958 and 1959 local elections were disappointing to the ideals of the Manifeste, as they followed and even exacerbated ethnic lines. These elections together with the assumption of the “Liboke Iya Bangala,” pushed other ethnic groups to organize along regional lines (E Nziem: 133). In Leopoldville the “ABAKO” led a strong opposition to the Manifeste, while emphasizing a multi-parties’ system (E Nziem 134). This tribalism ended up reaching the whole country and engulfed it into civil unrests. We can mention the conflict between “authentic Katangese and immigrants” – immigrant Kasaiens (E Nziem 133). In the Kasai it was conflict between the “Luluwa and Luba...” (E Nziem 2006: 133).

We cannot look at the Manifeste as a total failure. In his article, E Nziem demonstrated that the Manifeste had a positive

impact on the Congolese who attended the “table ronde” in Belgium in 1960, as they worked together harmoniously on political questions and forced Belgium to agree on a much closer independence date of June 30, 1960 rather than 1985 (E Nziem 2006: 134). It is believed that with the help of the founders of the Manifeste, the “commission dite ‘compromissoire’” managed to bring Lumumba and Kasavubu to an agreement, which unfortunately was rejected by Americans and Belgians (E Nziem: 137). It is also believed that the Manifeste heavily influenced Mobutu to create the “Mouvement Populaire de la Revolution, MPR” as a unification movement (E Nziem: 141).

In concluding this part of the paper on the “Manifesto of African Conscience,” we find that neither the unity of Congolese people happened, nor did the goodwill of Belgians to give total independence to the Congolese materialize.

The New Manifesto of African Conscience: Awakening the African Conscience in the Face of Diverse Challenges

I have come to conclude that oppressed people need to be “awakened” by shaking their conscience and pushing it to action. This paper intends to

give a certain guideline toward writing a manifesto that will help achieve this goal. Like the original Manifeste, through “A New Manifesto of African Conscience,” I hope that this goal can be achieved through non-violent means, while helping Africans to first claim and believe in their humanity that had been stripped away from them over several centuries. After learning from the lessons of the original Manifeste, this “New Manifesto of African Conscience” has a unique goal of “awakening” the African Conscience that faces multiple challenges, many times exacerbated by globalization from which Africans can’t compete and usually come out losers. This paper will discuss just three of these challenges, namely: socio-political, socio-economic, religious and spiritual challenges. The scope of this manifesto will not be limited to the DR Congo but includes some French-speaking countries of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Sociopolitical Challenges

Certain parts of Africa have become battle fields for years, where poor populations are being killed without a worry from the political leaders of those countries. For almost six years, civilians have been slaughtered in the northeastern parts of the Democratic

Republic of the Congo. Until today, the perpetrators have never been identified by the Congolese government, although local people have been pointing their fingers to former President Kabila's army. This army is a result of mixing some Congolese soldiers with over 12,000 former rebel soldiers -- Rwandese soldiers -- as a result of Presidents Kabila and Kagame secret treaties in 2008 and 2010 (www.benilubero.com 2010). It is commonly stated by the civilian population of Eastern Congo that the absence of Congolese governing power is very noticeable in the region. Yet the region is overpopulated with members of the national army -- Congolese Army Forces (FARDC) -- and the highest UN contingent in the world, numbered to over 20,000 troops. Similar situations are experienced in some Central and Western African countries. In all cases, the so-called central governments of those countries don't have an upper hand on the situations.

Many Central Africans had or are still experiencing extreme inter-ethnic and sexual violence. For some countries like the Rwanda, it looks as it is just a matter of time before it explodes due to the hardline dictatorship. Even other countries that seems to

be relatively peaceful are just ready to fall back into violence, since bases for former rebel movements have not been disarmed. This includes Ivory Coast and Tchad.

I can speak with authority when I confirm that there is no Sub-Saharan French speaking country that can claim to be a "Nation State," even though Senegal seems to be on a good track. Some social scientists misplace the reality of these countries by developing academic nomenclature and concepts that do not work for Africa. They may be talking about "failed states" or "weak states" or something else. I argue that those countries had never been "nation-states". Instead, these countries have been under strong neo-colonialism from certain Western countries and their multinationals, using African elites to dominate and exploit their own people.

Socio economic Situation

When the sociopolitical situation is chaotic, the economic situation is terrible for Africans, yet booming for the multinationals and their countries of origin. Africa is the continent where people cannot afford two dollars per day to survive. Consequently, for most countries, life expectancy does not go beyond 50 years. In some

countries, unemployment reaches 80% of their active population. Misery becomes institutionalized, in the way that their social classes formed from the unjust distribution of wealth. A few weeks ago, the Chief of Staff of the Congolese President, Mr. Vital Kamerhe, was arrested for misappropriation of public funds estimated at more than \$304 million, according to election-net.com (6 mai 2020). This theft may be an indication that African nationals play a big role in creating economic problems that do not all stem from the West or multinationals.

Yet in most cases, multinationals, while helped by certain elites and warlords, are savagely looting Africa of its natural resources. The big paradox in Africa is that it is the poorest continent, yet produces most of the raw materials used to make the key industries around the world thrive. There is no justification for countries like the Central African Republic or the DR Congo, to have their populations live in extreme poverty as they do. Meanwhile, 14 different Californian companies are trading with warlords who are violently killing Congolese people in Eastern Congo. The multinational companies are trading with warlords, sometimes directly, and some

other times through some neighboring countries. In the past, when the DR Congo did not hold the greatest reserve of certain minerals, it was the first seller of those minerals on the market for a certain number of years in the early 2000s. Just to mention a few, these minerals include Coltan, Niobium, and Cobalt.

Religious and spiritual challenges

While Emile Durkheim found that "religion" was central to non-western cultures, Malinowski found religion to be essential for social cohesion of the same cultures. An American working for Jewish World Watch was surprised during her trip to Eastern Congo to see victims of sexual violence expressing their joy in church services. We recognize that sub-Sahara Africans are very spiritual people, and still tied to their traditional religions and spirituality. My understanding is that in trying to practice them all, Africans end up in total confusion. It becomes even worse when they try to get themselves in line with modernity. It is sad to see how the so-called revival churches are just exploiting the poor Africans while promising them prosperity of all kinds.

Result of these challenges

The result of these multifaced challenges has been what a Christian anthropologist called "demoralization" of the people living in a challenged culture (Tippett: 163-167). Colonization and neo-colonization had left many Africans in a stage that they don't believe in themselves. They have reached a level of social low-self-esteem, of desperation -- social because of its magnitude going from individuals to affecting whole societies within challenged cultures. This demoralization happens when people within a culture look down at their culture, at the time their culture is colliding with another culture that seems more appealing than their own. In this case, Africans aspire to the Western culture or Western lifestyle.

Question

After seeing the failure of the Manifeste, and the false hope that we find in internationally led development projects and programs, what can be done to help our dear continent of Africa?

As a response, I have come to agree with people who believe that "people are not developed, but people develop themselves." I also have come to conclude that

oppressed people need to be "awakened" by shaking their conscience and pushing them to actions. This paper intends to give a certain guideline toward writing a manifesto that will help achieve this goal.

Conscience

Some dictionaries define "conscience" as "an inner feeling or voice viewed as acting as a guide to the righteous or wrongness of one's behavior," or "the inner sense of what is right or wrong in one's conduct or motives, impelling one toward right action: to follow the dictates of conscience" (Dictionary.com). Although not considered to be scientifically appropriated to quote Wikipedia, I found a summary of details in there. It defines conscience as "a cognitive process that elicits emotion and rational associations based on an individual's moral philosophy or value system" (Wikipedia).

In this paper we are based on Christian value system, which, in principle, doesn't seem to contradict other philosophical and religious systems that I am aware of, even though values might differ. I am therefore getting most of my understanding of conscience from two theologians who simplified its study in Christianity: Andrew David Naselli and J. D.

Crowley. They wrote an interesting book intitled Conscience: What it is, How to train it and Loving those who Differ (2016). They stated that "to be human is to have conscience. Animals don't have conscience... conscience is a capacity. Like other human capacities such as speech and reason, it's possible for a person never to actualize or achieve the capacity of conscience. A child..." (Naselli & Crowley: 22). From their belief that humans were created by God, they went on writing that "conscience reflects the moral aspect of God's Image" (23).

I am here below stating some of conscience's characteristics mentioned by Naselli and Crowley. They wrote that:

The conscience can be good in the sense of blameless, clear, and pure... The conscience can be cleansed, that is, cleared, perfected, purified, washed, purged, and sprinkled clean... The conscience can be weak... The conscience can be wounded... The conscience can be defiled... The conscience can be encouraged... The conscience can be evil or guilty... The conscience can be seared as with a hot iron..." (Naselli and Crowley: 40,41).

They also mention some of the things that the conscience can do. They wrote that "conscience can bear witness or confirm... The conscience can judge or try to determine

another person's freedom... The conscience can lead one to act a certain way..." (Naselli & Crowley: 41,42). Another important element that they mentioned is that "conscience can change" (Naselli & Crowley: 43). This change is what we are pursuing in this paper.

Consciousness and Scientization

In their detailed study of culture, hegemony and ideology, Jean and John Comaroff developed the concept of consciousness. In today's African context, I would say that her culture is that liminal one that situates itself between the traditional and the modern, in which "signs and practices, relations and distinctions, images and epistemologies..." are drawn from both traditional and modern, and while the power of decision and action are situated much more in the modern side that was imported from the West. On behavioral level, it may look like a melting pot of cultures, when on a deeper level they are still distinct, with the leading power being on the modern side. This is why Africans will want to identify with hospitals, as modern, rather than the witchdoctor who is traditional. Yet, the allegiance may be more skewed toward the

traditional. It would be the same in exteriorizing the belief in Christianity while having a higher commitment to traditional beliefs. Being a hegemony, the power that dictates the behavior resides in the modern that draws its power from the West and the multinationals. This position may explain the reason why African Presidents voted to scarify one of their own, Libya's President Kadhafi, while knowing very well that Kadhafi had an Africanization agenda for the continent. When I am not trying to mend with Libyan's politique, but I can understand why African Presidents gave him up, from the powerful demand of Western powers. The same idea with the scarifying of Lumumba by his own --Moise Tshombe, Munongo Musiri, A. Kalonji and others.

This reality mentioned above, may explain the reasons why African Presidents sit on hot seats and may choose to scarify their own people to remain alive and on power.

Scientization

In their detailed study of culture, hegemony and ideology, Jean and John Comaroff developed the concept of consciousness. From their analyses, they wrote:

This is why its power has so often been seen to lie in what it silences, what it prevents people from thinking and saying, what it puts beyond the limits of the rational and the credible. In a quite literal sense, hegemony is habit forming. For these reasons, it is rarely contested directly, save perhaps in the roseate dreams of revolutionaries. For once its contradictions are revealed, when what seemed natural comes to be negotiable, when the ineffable is put in words—then hegemony becomes something other than itself. It turns into ideology and counter ideology, into the 'orthodoxy' and 'heterodoxy' of Bourdieu's (1977) formulation (Comaroff 1991: 23-24).

Part of the goal of this New Manifesto is to break that silence. In addition, we must accomplish the conscientization of Africans about the blatant injustice they are experiencing today. Africans' conscience needs to be awakened, to be start jumped from amorphism and sometimes from ignorance. Africans need to stop killing each other for personal gains even though pressured by foreign powers. It is sad to know that Patrice Lumumba was given up to be killed by his Congolese brothers. A similar fate was given to President Kadhafi. African conscience needs to be awakened to the problem of tribalism and ethnicism. On the top of it all, Africans' conscience needs to be awakened to self-awareness as equal human

beings like any other human being in the world.

That awakening is done through conscientization. This is to be taken beyond consciousness to actions. In other words, Africans need to be helped to overcome their "demoralized" stage to "revitalization." One consequence of demoralization is the lost of creativity for people. Revitalization, on another side, is when people within a demoralized culture decide to borrow some "forms and their meanings" from other cultures and "adopt" them in their own culture and through innovations create a new culture stable (Kasomo 2014:76). A few steps might be needed to reach this level.

For me the first step from this bondage is the self-discovery of who they are. Christian theologians have a clear answer to this need. They teach and believe that we were all equally created in the image of God, with the same capacity called conscience (Naselli & Crowley: 22). Africans need to understand that there is nothing they are missing in their humanity. They are equally human as all other people are.

A second step would be to counter the idea of being handed development manufactured in New York,

London, and Beijing. Instead, Africans can trade and borrow from those cities and countries' cultures.

A third step would be the need to help the oppressed Africans to know that relations of "oppressed-oppressors, rich-poor, north-south..." are not fatal, even though that hegemony will try to keep the oppressed people to continue believing those lies. Those relations can change and need to change toward deliverance from the oppressors.

A fourth step would be the acquisition of knowledge Africans need to hold on their place in the global economy. They need to know that the world industries are functioning with the raw material from Africa. Africans can organize to require a share of benefits from their natural resources.

A fifth step is to help Africans understand the critical need of unity. Tribes and ethnic groups should be regarded as divine assets that can boost the continent to go forward. African leaders should work more on "national legitimacy" than "international legitimacy." With national legitimacy, African leaders will have the support of their people to resist outside threats from multinationals and their governments.

Means to be used

Establishing new systems of informal education must be an objective of all African leaders and institutions of learning. Beginning with the different clergies, preaching and teaching their flocks will help them re-establish their natural right of being humans like any other humans. Seminars must be held to help Africans recapture their sense of humanity which the colonial and neocolonial history deprived them.

Second, methods and knowledge of the "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" must be learned by all African educators (cf. Paulo Freire). According to Freire, for their liberation, students must "be actuated by their own 'conscientization' and be an active 'subject' of their own liberation and not an 'object' to be liberated."

A third and last but not least method, is to organize. Without actions, and taking initiative to organize, the New Manifesto will remain an unrealized dream. Organizing can take many forms, and must be intentional across all sectors of society in order to reach the level of social transformation needed to bring about systemic change in Africa.

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COVID-19, continued from page 1

Many countries implemented front-line defense against the spread of the disease with mandatory confinement at home and social distancing. Across the world, governments ordered closings of schools and non-essential businesses. Public gatherings of more than 10 people, including worship services, sporting events, weddings, and funerals, were all temporarily outlawed. Wearing masks have become necessary, often mandatory, in public, and distance learning became the new norm for just about every student.

A recurring question has emerged --how is it possible for Africa to maintain a lower number of COVID-19 cases than other continents? The answer to the question lies in many factors. Among them are, the average age of the population, the use of herbal medicine and social media, and government actions.

Let us begin by looking at the average age of the population. According to Afridi the human immune system varies with age. In normal conditions, young people have the tendency of getting sick less frequently than older people. In 2006, the majority of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa had median ages of less than 20 years, indicating that these countries had a very young population, (Victoria A et al). In 2020, the median age in Africa is 19.7 years of age, making Africans the youngest population on the planet. According to the United Nations (U.N.), although all age groups are at risk of contracting COVID-19, older persons (over 60 years) are at a significantly higher risk of mortality and severe disease following infection. The U.N. continues that, an estimated 66% of people aged 70 and over have at least one underlying condition, placing them at increased risk of a severe impact from COVID-19.

Based on this information, we can infer that the age characteristic of the African population is a key element that contributes to the low impact of Covid-19 to date.

What about nature's endowment of plants? Africa's forests are home to many plants with known medicinal properties that may hold promises for potential success in treating COVID-19. Among the species, we will look at a sample of two: The *Artemisia Annu* and the *Tetradenia Riparia*. The choice of the two is led by two facts. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends artemisinin-based combination therapy (ACT) for the treatment of uncomplicated malaria due to *Plasmodium falciparum*. For WHO, medicinal plants such as *Artemisia annua* are being considered as possible treatments for COVID-19 and should be tested for efficacy and adverse side effects.

Covid-19 is linked to chest pain. Indeed, according to Kevin and all, a report from the National Health Commission of China comments that a subset of patients presented with palpitations and chest pain. According to Ndamane and al, the *Tetradenia Riparia* plant has antibacterial properties. The same authors state that it (*Tetradenia*) is the most frequently used plant by

traditional healers for the treatment of chest and cough related infections. Based on the literature available, we aim to believe that the Medicinal plants such as *Artemisia annua* and *Tetradenia Riparia* hold some promising results in the fight against the virus.

Last but not least is the role of the media and leadership actions. During this pandemic, the cellular telephone helped to disseminate important information on how to reduce the spread of the virus. Facebook and WhatsApp are the applications people use the most due to their low cost. Last, in explaining Africa's lowest COVID-19 prevalence rate are the additional measures taken by government authorities to ban international and domestic travels as soon as the virus saw a spike in prevalence and became a major problem in Europe.

African countries must remain vigilant and apply a comprehensive approach in order to keep COVID-19 to a minimum. Already, 10,000 health-workers in Africa have been lost to COVID-19. Similar to developed countries, if the prevalence of COVID-19 increases, in addition to human lives lost, the economic impact is of great concern and would have devastating impacts across the African continent.

UPDATES

CASA (Central African Studies Association ou Association sur les Études d'Afrique Centrale) notre association sœur, a reporté le colloque international qui devait avoir lieu à Kinshasa au CEPAS en collaboration avec l'UNIKIN du 6 au 9 juillet, 2020, à l'année prochaine, soit au mois de juin ou juillet 2021. Pour plus d'information, contacter le Président de l'Association, le Professeur Charles T. Tshimanga à l'adresse suivante : tshimanga1@hotmail.com.

Le colloque international sur « La littérature et les violences » qui devait avoir lieu au mois d'octobre 2020 sous l'égide de l'UNILU à Lubumbashi a été reporté à l'année prochaine à une date qui sera fixée par les organisateurs de l'UNILU et leurs partenaires internationaux.

M. Crawford Young (1931-2020) longtemps professeur de science politique à l'Université de Wisconsin-Madison, spécialiste du Zaïre/RDC, a rejoint les ancêtres. Il a enseigné au Campus de Lubumbashi de 1973 à 1975.

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

Congolese Studies Association welcomes articles for future issues of the newsletter. Please send articles to Muadi Mukenge, Editor, at mmukenge@juno.com. The next deadline is January 10, 2021.

October 2020

Breaking the Silence: Congo Week

Breaking the Silence Congo Week is a week of activities that commemorates the millions of lives lost in the Congo conflict, while celebrating the enormous human and natural potential that exists in the country. Congo Week takes place every third week of October. In 2020, it will take place from October 18 - 24, 2020.

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

Students and community organizers initiated Congo Week in 2008. Religious leaders, scholars, artists, and ordinary people throughout the globe also got involved to acknowledge the lives of the Congolese people and their pursuit for human dignity.

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

Visit <https://congoweek.org> to sign up for Congo Week or participate in events near you.

Congo in Harlem

Launched in 2009, Congo in Harlem is an annual series of Congo-related films and events at the Maysles Cinema in New York's historic Harlem neighborhood. It takes place during Congo Week, every third week of October. The series showcases a wide range of

films by Congolese and international directors, representing the most important issues facing the Democratic Republic of Congo today.

Congo in Harlem aims to provide audiences with more than the traditional movie-going experience; it offers opportunities to celebrate Congolese culture, learn about current issues, engage in dialogue, and get involved. Presented by Maysles Documentary Center, Friends of the Congo and True Walker Productions, Congo in Harlem is a volunteer-run, non-profit series funded entirely by grants and individual contributions.

For more information, email: congoinharlem@gmail.com or visit <http://congoinharlem.org>