



TRUSTS AND REVOLUTION IN THE CONGO

IN SPITE of the assassination of Pierre Mulele, the revolution in the Congo has not died. Nor has the war between the powerful US and Belgian trusts.

After nine years of independence, popular forces in this extremely rich country of Equatorial Africa are awakening, at the same time as the Belgian consortia are reacting to the growing economic and political hegemony of the US capitalists.

The world of international finance was delighted with the shock provoked by the ingenious delivery and immediate execution of Pierre Mulele in Kinshasa, formerly Léopoldville.

Naïvely, they believed that by doing away with the man they considered the visible head of popular Congolese resistance to neo-colonialism, they would put an end to the long history of rebellion which stood in the way of total exploitation of the Congo's incredible natural resources.

However, the attack the day Mulele died on the Idiopa military post in the Kwilu region, his birthplace and the scene of his military operations, proved that the call to rebellion has not been silenced.

"Lieutenant General" Mobutu has had to send reinforcements to Guhgu where military clashes have also

been reported. The bombing of Kilembe using Cuban mercenary pilots against the civilian population which was suspected of helping the rebels led by Kafungo, as well as the sending of repressive paratroopers who carried out acts of vandalism in the Kikwit region explain the uneasy state of mind of the Kinshasa president who collaborated with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Most of Mulele's comrades from the West, the East, and the North-east stood firm when the former First Vice-President of the Supreme Council of the Revolution began to waver and consider the possibility of responding to the advances of Mobutu, who was pretending to favor democracy in his regime.

When Mobutu, on his way to Morocco, learned of Mulele's decision to return, he sent back his chancellor and principal accomplice, Justin Bomboko, to complete the plan.

Mobutu seemed to give-in somewhat to the pressures in favor of the national reconciliation of General Malilu, Congolese Minister of Defense. But, in reality, he had already laid out different plans.

Pierre Mulele was traveling three days in Kinshasa with his assistants Mulamba and Kamamba. He attended a reception in his honor and showed his adherence to Mobutu's policy. Few actually knew the secret plan and some high government officials, in an obsequious manner, sought audiences with Mulele. They were among the most surprised when Mobutu, from abroad, ordered Mulele detained. Hopes that this was only a show of force began



... OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE
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to vanish when Mulamba and Kamamba were immediately executed, and disappeared completely when Mulele was burned alive on October 9 in the Binza camp, in Kinshasa, headquarters of Mobutu's guards.

Immediately afterwards, a press campaign was organized to justify the assassination, accusing Mulele of all kinds of offenses and even describing his last hours in a degrading manner.

Even during the most decisive moments of the revolutionary struggle in the Congo the sad truth was that the worker and student movements were not incorporated into it.

The tactic, used first by Kasavubu and later by Mobutu, of drawing students, especially those who were living abroad (as in the case of the current Minister of Foreign Relations, Bomboko) weakened this vanguard.

Mobutu has directed his efforts toward workers' leaders. As a result men such as A. R. Kithima, who became Minister of National Education, betrayed the workers in order to get ministerial posts.

EMERGING FORCES

In accordance with the one-party regime imposed by Mobutu, the CIA's man in the Congo created a single union under tight control. In spite of this, ironworkers and miners put up strong resistance to the so-called "Congolization" of the mines. Mobutu, moreover, was forced to order his repressive forces to confront the workers in Kinshasa and in Katanga, especially during last April's strike. The Congolese teachers have been an important opposition force, creating a serious

problem for the "strongman," since the development of a national consciousness is, to a large extent, in the hands of the teachers.

But the most important constant area of conflict for the regime is now the student movement. As in Latin America, the US, and Europe, students have participated in street demonstrations. The most militant demonstration was organized last January against the former Vice-President of the US, Hubert H. Humphrey. Mobutu unleashed a wave of repression and arrests, publicly denouncing the General Union of Congolese Students (UGEC) and its president, N'Kanza Dolumingu, for organizing the demonstration. The arrests provoked more protest demonstrations and more arrests. Dolumingu and his comrades, Augustin Kayembe and Thibola Kalonji, have been in jail many months. Those students whose participation in the demonstrations was discovered were expelled from the university; others lost their scholarships. Afterwards, the students also took to the streets in Lovanium, which led to the arrest of their president, Hubert Tshumpupu, who was freed after three months of imprisonment.

Mobutu has been forced to negotiate with the students and has issued an appeal for unity with them. The students' response was to publish a manifesto which clearly defined their position with regard to Mobutu's demagogic propaganda and his attempts to buy them off:

The exploitation of our society [they pointed out] is verified historically in the light of these political, economic, and cultural



facts. In 1960-65 the situation was characterized by a battle of little-known national and foreign forces against the Congolese people; the former, unfortunately, achieved a momentary victory... Since the death of the glorious hero Lumumba, all the leaders, by one means or another, have sold out our national independence... The Congolese conservative forces have proved themselves incapable, as of 1968, of making national independence a policy; they look for nothing but benefits through the state apparatus and the modes of exchange and monopoly of the neocolonial system to enrich themselves together with their masters.

Some students, taken in by Mobutu's promise of jobs, affiliated with the Youth Organization of his party. In fact, in order to get a job in the Congo, a country with a very high unemployment rate, one must carry a card of Mobutu's party; the corruption has reached the point where party members are selling their identification cards. The students who accepted Mobutu's offer were hired during their vacations, but later he refused to pay them. Last October even the students who had made an agreement with Mobutu organized a demonstration at the headquarters of the Youth Organization and fought with its leaders in Kasavubu Avenue. A few days later, at the opening of the school year, after having jeered Kithima, Minister of Education, the Lovanium students held another demonstration, in which they again confronted the police. In high spirits, the students parodied a slogan of the regime, saying that after

Lumumba came not Mobutu, but *mobulu*, which means *chaos* in the Kinshasa language.

The most notable thing about the struggle of the Congolese students is its profoundly political character. This was shown not only in the anti-Humphrey demonstration but also in the analysis of the manifesto published after the interview with Mobutu, in which they stated:

The notion of development as it is known in our country is not the product of a society which is asserting its independence, but rather the logical consequence of imperialist wars. The brief but rich history of the Congo since 1960 shows us the strategic importance of our country in Africa. This position, material as well as spiritual, explains the significance of all the actions of Western Europe and the US in our country. Thus we can understand how a conscious Congolese public can have leaders who act against its interest: because these leaders are produced and supported by a political consortium of international imperialism. Someday political science will prove this.

CONFLICTS AND COEXISTENCE BETWEEN MONOPOLIES

Surely the flamboyant lieutenant general with the dark glasses, Joseph Désiré Mobutu, and, in general, the political and economic situation in the Congo today are products of the struggles among the imperialists and of a political consortium of imperialism.

The apparent contradiction in the analysis which was presented by the delegations from the three Congolese universities and the higher institutes is only just that:

apparent. In fact, the Belgian colonialists historically have had to fight against the French and English empires; for this they have received conditional help from the US empire. More recently, they have had to struggle against the US empire, at the same time receiving its help and making agreements to divide the profits.

The strengthening of Mobutu and US interests in his government has taken place in the face of the challenge of Tshombe and the Belgian interests in the Union Minière du Haut Katanga, in which the minority interests of the Rockefeller consortium are confronting the majority interests of the Société Générale de Belgique. Today it can be said that the US is literally going in the same door by which the Belgians are leaving, without changing the economic status quo or the cold war between these companies. It is truly an "American challenge."

The history of US penetration of the Congo began 85 years ago. As early as 1884, King Leopold II of Belgium won the support of the US against the British colonialists. Three years later the first Belgian-American company was established in Naidi Kwilu under the name of Sanford Exploring Expedition. Belgium, a weak country, entered late into the colonial partitioning of the world and its possession of the Congo was disputed by the rest of the colonial powers. The US Government, carefully calculating, supported the weaker power in anticipation of future advantages, since it had arrived even later in the partitioning of the world. In 1904 relations between England and Bel-



gium reached a point of crisis and the US intervened in favor of Belgium.

Profits grew rapidly. In 1906 Belgium conceded to the US Ryan group two million hectares of land for the cultivation of India rubber and vegetable products. That same year the concession permitted the establishment of a company in New York called the American Congo Company which set up factories in Kimpoco, Kwamouth, and Bolobo; it also became involved in ivory trading. The Ryan group joined with the Guggenheim brothers, who controlled and still control the following powerful mining and mineral enterprises: Kennecott, the American Smelting and Refining Co., and the American Smelting Security Co.; Guggenheim and Ryan formed the American Congo Co. and later the Forminiere for the exploitation of diamonds, petroleum, bauxite, and timber. After this came the United States Plywood Corp., Olin Mathison Corp., the Bell Telephone Co., General Motors Corp., the Ford Motor Co., and the Union Carbide Corp.

Moreover, the Rockefeller interests (through Tanganyika Concessions, Ltd.) play an important role in the Union Miniere du Haut Katanga, the international consortium with major Belgian interests which we mentioned above. The concessions of the Union Miniere cover an area of 34 000 sq. kms., more than the combined land area of Belgium and Luxembourg. Established in 1906 with an initial capital of ten million francs, it now has capital holdings of 8000 million francs. It produces copper and zinc in its mines in Kipushi, and copper and cobalt in those in

Lukuni. In 1960 in copper alone it increased production to 300 000 tons. Thus it is the third largest copper mine in the world. The Union also extracts iron from Kasenga; its mine in Shinkolobwe is extremely rich in uranium and radium. The Kinshasa government wants the US to develop the extraction of these strategic minerals in Shinkolobwe. Finally, the company also possesses copper and cobalt in Ruwe, Kolwezi, Musoni, and Kamoto.

The Union Miniere has many subsidiary companies with all types of investments. For example, the Compagnie Fonciere du Katanga owns properties in Jadotville, Kolwezi, etc.; Charbonnages of Luena mines coal; the Société Générale des Forces Hydro-électriques du Katanga (SOGEFOR) as well as the Société Générale Africaine d'Electricité produce electricity; the Société Industrielle et Chimique du Katanga produces chemical products and explosives; Sabena controls the air lines; Foraký in South Africa, Wankie in Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), and fifteen other companies in Africa and Europe complete the commercial network.

After Mobutu took power, the Union Miniere became the most important target for US companies. Mobutu's propaganda about Congolization was no more than a clever means of facilitating US penetration of the Union Miniere. It is estimated that the US owns 40% of the Union through the Société Congolaise de Minéraux, a national (Congolese) front for US capital.

The Union Miniere controls 70% of the Congolese economy. Not satisfied with this, the Rockefeller

group has a monopoly of petroleum through Esso Central Africa and it extends to South Africa, Rhodesia, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, Angola, and Mozambique, extending its range and building a network of political and economic networks throughout that important zone of Africa. The depth and extent of the tentacles of the Union Miniere and its affiliates and subsidiaries can be easily demonstrated by the fact that one of its associates produces standard rifles for NATO, which Portugal uses in its repressive war against the nationalist movements in Angola and Mozambique.

In spite of their common interests, the Belgians have been forced to ask the US (sometimes in a coercive way) to slow down its penetration of the Congolese economy. In its voracity, the US had no qualms in carrying out espionage in Belgium in favor of Mobutu. According to the newspaper account in *La Libre Belgique*, the Minister of Foreign Relations, Mr. Harmel, announced that documents had been copied or stolen from his ministry, to end up in the hands of the Kinshasa government. Mobutu took advantage of the incident of the stolen documents to expel the Belgian head of technical assistance in the Congo, Hollants Van Loocke, and to replace the Belgians with US teachers and technicians. In apparent retaliation, the Belgian parliament passed a law to control US investments of capital in the country.

MILITARY AID

US penetration in the Congo is

not limited to the economic and political spheres. Through the Military Assistance Program (MAP) fifteen C-47 transport planes, twenty-eight F-28 combat planes, and 2608 military vehicles have been delivered to the Mobutu government. Furthermore and most importantly, Washington's influence is guaranteed by a program of military courses in the US for Congolese officers, while military advisers train army officers in the headquarters of Kinshasa, Luluabourg, Kisangani, Lubumbashi, Mbandaka, and Bukavu.

The official objective of MAP is clear: "to assure the internal stability of the Congo."

A note from the American Embassy in Kinshasa about the visit last September of General Benjamin O. Davis, commander attached to the "Strike Command," left no doubt as to US intentions in the Congo. The note explained that the "Strike Command" is the operational military command of all land and air combat forces of the US Army that function in Florida. This note, which could well be called a *threat*, asserts that "It can send forces to the Middle East, to Southeast Asia, or to black Africa as required for the defense of that region," and that "It participated in the Lebanese operation, in the evacuation of Belgians and Northamericans in Stanleyville and Paulis in 1964, and in the invasion of Santo Domingo in 1965."

For its part, the Air Force of the Congo has been almost totally placed in the hands of Cuban counterrevolutionaries based in Kamina. The military assistance is multilat-

eral: Belgian advisers train Mobutu's artillery corps; Israelis train the paratroopers; Italians train the pilots; and the French train the armored units. The police also have US and Belgian advisers.

The objective seems to be to convert Mobutu's Congo into a type of military power for Central and Equatorial Africa, matching the growing repressive and offensive strength of the Republic of South Africa. There have already been military and security agreements uniting the Congo with Chad and the Central African Republic. The agreements permitted Tombalbaye to request aid from Mobutu at the time of the events in Tibesti; although more recently there appear to be certain disagreements among the allies, who are perhaps fearful of Mobutu's ambitions.

Eight years after the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, which was commemorated on February 13, the Congo is becoming more and more an instrument of US global strategy which, in Africa, is concentrated in Equatorial and South Africa. They are trying to build an impenetrable base of operations for their activities as "policemen" of the region, in accordance with McNamara's theories.

In South Africa, nuclear research carried out with the aid of West Germany recalls the fascist schemes to ridicule the German disarmament agreements which put an end to World War I and planted the germs for World War II.

The US strategy, developed secretly, threatens the revolution everywhere and can only be confronted by a truly global strategy that is based on national liberation movements. (*Gabriel Molina*)