

# **South Africa and the 'Congo Crisis', 1960-1965**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

On 30 June 1960, the Belgian Congo gained independence. Congo's newfound freedom was soon disrupted by a period of severe socio-political chaos and conflict that became known as the 'Congo crisis'. The exact nature of the relationship between South Africa and the Congo crisis largely remains unknown. The thesis addresses this historiographical omission by asking three main questions. First, how was South Africa involved in the Congo crisis? Secondly, what was the rationale for its involvement? Thirdly, how was the Congo crisis perceived inside South Africa? Besides significantly strengthening and expanding the existing historiography on Pretoria's involvement and South African mercenaries, hitherto neglected aspects of the crisis are also examined. These include an analysis of white refugees who fled from Congo to South Africa; the Pan Africanist Congress' and South West African People's Organisation's involvement in the 'Congo alliance'; and the views and opinions of South Africans from across the racial and political spectrum on the Congo crisis. The primary material used in this study consists of archival sources in South Africa, Belgium, Britain, and the United States. This material is complimented by South African newspapers and periodicals, as well as oral interviews. The Congo was of considerable importance to South Africa. Not only was it a central part of Pretoria's foreign policy, it also influenced the exile politics of South Africa's nationalist movements. In addition, it influenced South African perceptions of its own turbulent socio-political changes, as well as the political transformation of the African continent. The Congo crisis was used and abused by both proponents and opponents of apartheid South Africa in pursuit of their objectives. South Africa's relationship with the Congo crisis altered its internal and external politics during the first half of the 1960s. The scope of this thesis aligns itself with research on Southern African dynamics of the Cold War and African decolonisation, as well as South African foreign policy and Southern African liberation movements. It makes a significant contribution to the historiography on foreign interference in the Congo crisis, particularly the involvement of Southern African states.

Keywords: South Africa, Southern Africa, Congo, Katanga, Cold War, Mercenaries, Refugees, Pan African Congress, South West African People's Organisation

## Opsomming

Op 30 Junie 1960 verwerf die Belgiese Kongo onafhanklikheid. Hierdie nuutgevonde vryheid word egter gou deur 'n tydperk van ernstige sosio-politieke chaos en konflik, wat as the 'Kongo-krisis' bekend word, ontwig. Die presiese aard van die verhouding tussen Suid-Afrika en die Kongo-krisis is steeds grootliks onbekend. Hierdie studie stel drie vrae om hierdie historiografiese leemte aan te spreek. Ten eerste, wat was die aard van Suid-Afrika se betrokkenheid by die Kongo-krisis? Ten tweede, wat was die beweegrede vir hierdie betrokkenheid? Ten derde, hoe is die Kongo-krisis binne Suid-Afrika waargeneem? Naas 'n betekenisvolle uitbreiding van die historiografie, spreek hierdie ondersoek ook aspekte van die krisis aan wat voorheen nagelaat is. Dit sluit in: 'n ontleding van wit vlugtelinge uit die Kongo na Suid-Afrika; die betrokkenheid van die Pan Africanist Congress en South West African People's Organisation in die sogenaamde 'Kongo-bondgenootskap'; en Suid-Afrikaners van alle rasse en politieke oortuigings se sieninge en opinies oor die Kongo-krisis. Hierdie ondersoek maak van primêre materiaal in die vorm van argivale bronne uit Suid-Afrika, België, Brittanje en die Verenigde State van Amerika gebruik. Hierdie materiaal word deur Suid-Afrikaanse koerante en joernale, asook mondelinge onderhoude, aangevul. Die Kongo was geweldig belangrik vir Suid-Afrika. Dit het 'n belangrike komponent van Pretoria se buitelandse beleid gevorm, en het ook die ballingskappolitiek van Suid-Afrika se nasionalistiese bewegings beïnvloed. Daarbenewens het dit ook Suid-Afrika se waarneming van sy eie onstuimige sosio-politieke veranderinge, asook die politieke transformasie van die Afrika-kontinent, help vorm. Die Kongo-krisis is deur voor- en teenstanders van apartheid Suid-Afrika gebruik en misbruik om hulle eie doestellings na te jaag en ideologieë te verdedig. Suid-Afrika se verhouding tot die Kongo-krisis het die land se interne en eksterne politiek gedurende die eerste helfde van die 1960s verander. Hierdie ondersoek sluit aan by navorsing oor die dinamika van die Koue Oorlog in Suider-Afrika en die dekolonisasie van Afrika, asook Suid-Afrikaanse buitelandse beleid en Suider-Afrikaanse vryheidsbewegings. Dit lewer 'n betekenisvolle bydrae tot die historiografie van buitelandse inmenging in die Kongo-krisis, veral met betrekking tot die betrokkenheid van Suider-Afrikaanse state.

Sleutelwoorde: Suid-Afrika, Suider-Afrika, Kongo, Katanga, Koue Oorlog, Huursoldate, Vlugtelinge, Pan African Congress, South West African People's Organisation

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## List of acronyms

African National Congress	ANC
<i>Alliance Des Bakongo</i>	ABAKO
American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations	AFL-CIO
Archive for Contemporary Affairs	ACA
<i>Armée Populaire de la Liberation</i>	APL
<i>Association des Baluba du Katanga</i>	BALUBUKAT
Central Intelligence Agency	CIA
<i>Confederation des Associations Tribales du Katanga</i>	CONAKAT
<i>Conseil National de Libération</i>	CNL
<i>Convention National Congolaise</i>	CONACO
Department of International Relations and Cooperation	DIRCO
<i>Exército de Libertação Nacional de Angola</i>	ELNA
Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs	FPSFA
<i>Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola</i>	FNLA
<i>Front de la Libération Nationale</i>	FLN
<i>Govêrno revolucionário de Angola no exílio</i>	GRAE
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions	ICFTU
<i>Mouvement National Congolais</i>	MNC
<i>Mouvement National Congolais-Kalonji</i>	MNC-K
<i>Mouvement National Congolais-Lumumba</i>	MNC-L
National Archive and Records Administration	NARA
National Archives of South Africa	NASA
National Arts and Heritage Cultural Studies	NAHECS
National Committee for Liberation	NCL
Non-European Unity Movement	NEUM
National Party	NP

National Radio Archive	NRA
<i>Opération des Nations Unies au Congo</i>	ONUC
Organisation of African Unity	OAU
Pan African Congress	PAC
Pan African Freedom Movement for East and Central Africa	PAFMECA
Pan African Freedom Movement for East, Central and Southern Africa	PAFMECSA
<i>Parti Solidaire Africain</i>	PSA
Progressive Party	PP
South African Coloured People's Congress	SACPC
South African Communist Party	SACP
South African Defence Force	SADF
South African Department of Defence	SADoD
South African Institute of Maritime Research	SAIMR
South African Police	SAP
South African United Front	SAUF
South West African National Union	SWANU
South West African Peoples Organisation	SWAPO
The National Archives	TNA
<i>União das Populações de Angola</i>	UPA
<i>União Democrática Nacional de Moçambique</i>	UDENAMO
<i>Union Minière du Haut-Katanga</i>	UMHK
United Nations Archives	UNA
United Nations	UN
United Nations Children's Funds	UNICEF
Zimbabwean African Nationalist Union	ZANU
Zimbabwean African People's Union	ZAPU

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Figure 1: 1960 map of Southern Africa

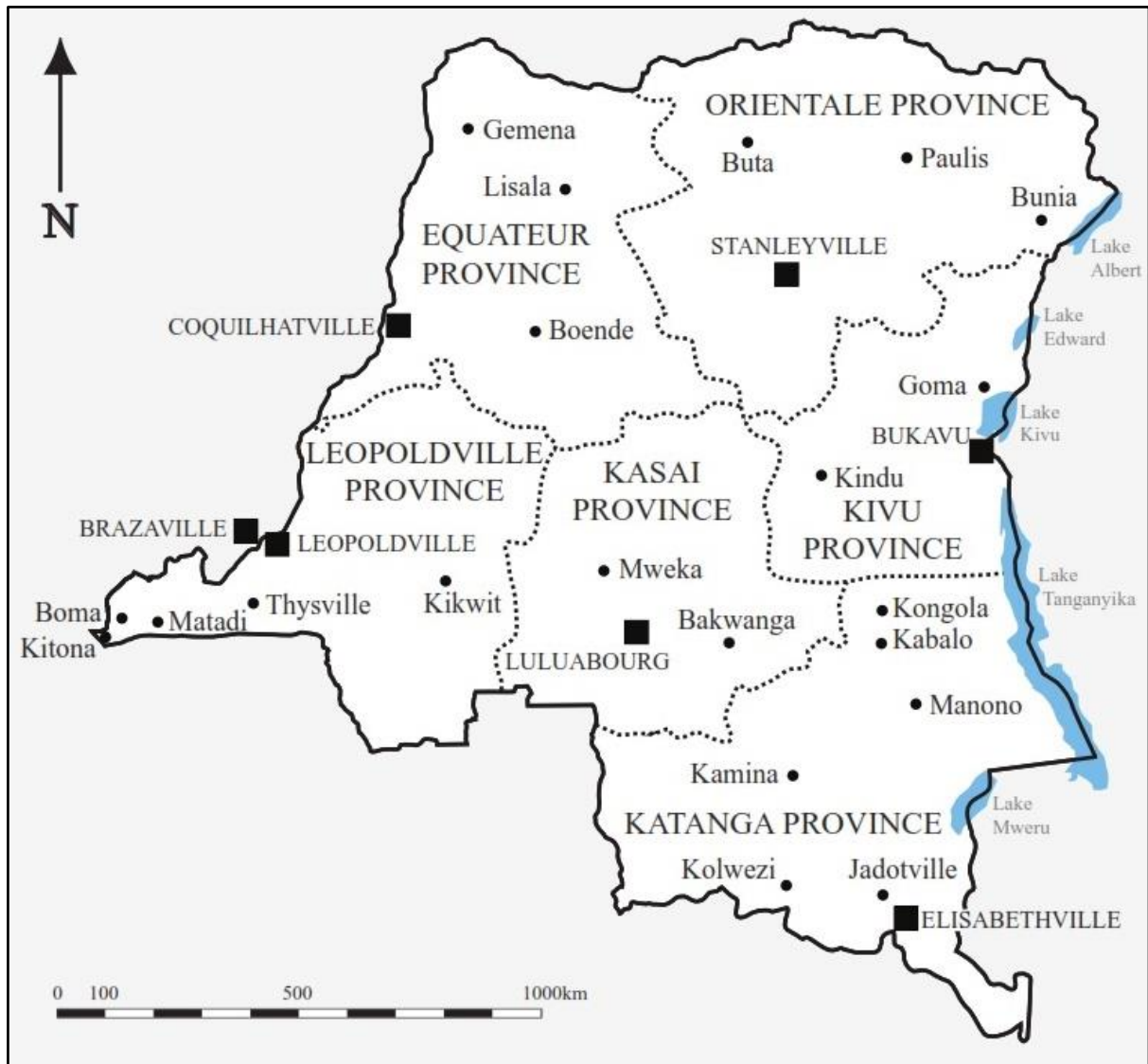


Figure 2: 1960 map of Congo

# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background

On 30 June 1960, the Belgian Congo gained independence, briefly transforming the central African state into a beacon of hope for decolonising Africa. Congo's newfound freedom was, however, quickly disrupted by a period of severe socio-political chaos and conflict that became known as 'the Congo crisis'.<sup>1</sup> This 'crisis' was characterised by a power struggle over who was most suitable and entitled to administer and control Congo, and what political model and ideological trajectory the newly independent state should follow. What started with sporadic bursts of localised violence and protest during the first week of Congolese independence, resulted in the secession of the Katanga Province and South Kasai; a large scale United Nations (UN) 'peacekeeping' operation; the assassination of Congo's first democratically elected prime minister; the emergence of the popular Kwilu and Eastern rebellions; and the enlistment of a large contingent of foreign white mercenaries. This local conflict became entangled in the Cold War politics of the day, resulting in significant international interest and interference.

During the first half of the 1960s, the 'wind of change' eroded the control and presence of colonial administrations and settler populations across the continent, including Congo. This trend was resisted in South Africa, where the National Party (NP) was committed to protecting the dominant position of its white minority population through its policy of apartheid.<sup>2</sup> Apartheid, ironically described by then Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd as 'a policy of good neighbourliness', was fuelled by a longstanding tradition of white anxiety of the *swart gevaar* (black peril).<sup>3</sup> At the start of the 1960s, these anxieties intensified after some -predominantly black- South Africans became more vocal and increasingly militant in their demands for the abolition of apartheid and the implementation of universal suffrage. This included the decision to commence an armed struggle against the apartheid state and resulted in a vigorous crackdown by Pretoria on any form of opposition to South Africa's

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<sup>1</sup> The Belgian Congo became the Republic of Congo on 30 June 1960. On 1 August 1964, the name was changed to the Democratic Republic of Congo. For the sake of convenience, this thesis will refer the country as 'Congo' unless a necessary distinction is made.

<sup>2</sup> From 31 May 1910 until 30 May 1961 South Africa was known as the Union of South Africa. On 31 May 1961, its name was changed to the Republic of South Africa.

<sup>3</sup> David Harrison, *The White Tribe of Africa: South Africa in Perspective* (California: University of California Press, 1982), p. 166.

status quo. Political parties were banned, stricter laws and controls were implemented, and countless individuals were detained. It was during this period of great socio-political change that some in South Africa looked at the events in Congo with concern and anxiety as others watched developments with excitement and hope. The exact nature of the relationship between South Africa and the Congo crisis, however, largely remains unknown. This thesis will address this omission through a thorough examination of South Africa's involvement in, and perceptions of, the Congo crisis.

It is important to note that the term 'Congo crisis' is not clearly defined in the historiography and its contextual boundaries shift according to author and publication. The term often refers to the period between Congo's independence in June 1960 and the end of the Katangese secessions in January 1963.<sup>4</sup> Some studies extend this period to the end of the UN mission in 1964,<sup>5</sup> while others further include the Kwilu and Eastern rebellions.<sup>6</sup> The most appropriate timeframe to demarcate the Congo crisis for this study is from Congo's independence in June 1960 until Joseph Mobutu's coup in November 1965. This period encapsulates the most significant events relating to South African-Congolese relations in the 1960s, and coincides with Joseph Kasavubu's time in office as Congo's first president. It is also known as Congo's 'First Republic'.

The decision to use the term 'Congo crisis' in this study also needs to be clarified as it can conjure up negative connotations tied to the complexities of post-colonial Africa. Kevin Dunn argues that Congo has commonly been used as a conceptual marker in Western demarcations of 'Africa'. The image of Congo as a primitive and chaotic 'heart of darkness', a phrase originally coined by Joseph Conrad in his novel by the same name, has regularly been re-attached to independent Congo.<sup>7</sup> In the case of this thesis, the attachment of the word crisis to Congo is not meant to ascribe any negative connotations to Congo or its people, but

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<sup>4</sup> Alan James, *Britain and the Congo Crisis, 1960-1963* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996); Timothy Scarnecchia, 'The Congo Crisis, the United Nations, and Zimbabwean Nationalism, 1960-1963', *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 11, 1 (2011), pp. 63-86.

<sup>5</sup> Howard Epstein, *Revolt in the Congo, 1960-1964* (New York: Facts on file, 1965); Indarjit Rikhye, *Military Advisor to the Secretary General, U.N. Peacekeeping and the Congo Crisis* (London: Hurst & Company, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Hughes, *The Central African Federation, Katanga and the Congo Crisis, 1958-65*, Vol 2, Working Papers in Military and International History (Salford: University of Salford, 2003); Lise Namikas, *Battleground Africa: Cold War in the Congo, 1960-1965* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2012); Frank Villafana, *Cold War in the Congo: The Confrontation of Cuban Military Forces, 1960-1967* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Kevin Dunn, *Imagining the Congo: The International Relations of Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 5-6; 8; Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (New York: Knopf, 1993).

rather to be reflective of the discourse contemporaneously used to describe the events of Congo's First Republic.

## 1.2 Literature review

The historiography on the Congo crisis is extensive, ranging from broad accounts to specific case studies; from works with extremely detailed insights to inadequate and poorly researched publications. Some of the general histories on Congo that have useful chapters on the First Republic include Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem's *Histoire Générale du Congo: de l'Héritage Ancien à la République Démocratique*, Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja's *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*, and more recently David van Reybrouck's *Congo: Een Geschiedenis*.<sup>8</sup> Another general work on Congo that is of considerable value is Emizet Kisangani and Scott Bobb's *Historical Dictionary of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*,<sup>9</sup> which provides excellent summaries on various individuals and political organisations. Although these publications offer a good overview of the crisis and place the events in the context of Congo's wider history, their in-depth analyses is necessarily limited.

More specialised works on specific aspects of the Congo crisis do go into detail however, and the first three years of Congo's independence dominate much of the historiography on the crisis. Catherine Hoskyns' *The Congo since Independence: January 1960 December 1961*,<sup>10</sup> Herbert Weiss' *Political Protest in the Congo: The Parti Solidaire Africain During the Independance Struggle*,<sup>11</sup> and Crawford Young's *Introduction a la Politique Congolais*,<sup>12</sup> are standard publications that offer a good overview of the period prior to Congo's independence and the build-up of the crisis. One topic that has received significant attention in the literature is the secession of Katanga, which lasted from 1960 to 1963. Jules Gérard-Libois' *Katanga Secession*,<sup>13</sup> Rene Lemarchand's *The Limits of Self-Determination: The Case of the Katanga*

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<sup>8</sup> Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem, *Histoire Générale Du Congo: De l'Héritage Ancien À La République Démocratique* (Paris: De Boeck and Larcier, 1998); Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History* (London: Zed Books, 2002); David van Reybrouck, *Congo: Een Geschiedenis* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> Emizet François Kisangani and F. Scott Bobb, *Historical Dictionary of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, Third Edition (Toronto: The Scarecrow Press, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Catherine Hoskyns, *The Congo since Independence: January 1960 December 1961* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).

<sup>11</sup> Herbert Weiss, *Political Protest in the Congo: The Parti Solidaire Africain During the Independance Struggle* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967).

<sup>12</sup> Crawford Young, *Introduction a La Politique Congolais* (Brussels: Centre de recherche et d'information socio-politiques, 1968).

<sup>13</sup> Jules Gérard-Libois, *Katanga Secession* (Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966).

*Secession*,<sup>14</sup> and Romain Yakemtchouk's *Aux Origines du Séparatisme Katangais*,<sup>15</sup> are key works that explain the causes of the secession and outline its development. Of interest are Smith Hempstone's *Rebels, Mercenaries and Dividends: The Katanga Story*,<sup>16</sup> as well as Ian Colvin's *The Rise and Fall of Moïse Tshombe: A Biography*,<sup>17</sup> which provides insight, albeit somewhat biased, about the Katangese leader's reasoning. The subject of the Katangese secession has recently been revisited by Erik Kennes. Kennes' PhD thesis *Fin du Cycle Post-Colonial au Katanga, RD Congo: Rébellions, Sécession et Leurs Mémoires dans la Dynamique des Articulations Entre l'Etat Central et l'Autonomie Régionale 1960-2007*,<sup>18</sup> and his article with Miles Larmer *Rethinking the Katangese Secession*,<sup>19</sup> have revised historical understandings of the secession. Kennes and Larmer challenge the notion that Katanga was merely a 'puppet state' by outlining the existence of deeply rooted Katangese nationalist sentiments among some of the local population and leadership. As the secession of Katanga dominates much of the literature's discussion about the Congo crisis, South Kasai's secession receives significantly less attention. For a better understanding of this particular event Emizet Kisangani's chapter on the secession of South Kasai in his book *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 1960-2010*,<sup>20</sup> provides an interesting and well-written overview.

A topic closely related to the Katangese secession that has been extensively covered in the historiography, is the UN's intervention in Congo. Publications such as Paul-Henry Gendebien's *L'Intervention des Nations Unies au Congo, 1960-1964*,<sup>21</sup> Indarjit Rikhye's *Military Advisor to the Secretary General, U.N. Peacekeeping and the Congo Crisis*,<sup>22</sup> Conor Cruise O'Brien's *To Katanga and Back: a UN Case History*,<sup>23</sup> Ernest Lefever's *Crisis in the*

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<sup>14</sup> René Lemarchand, 'The Limits of Self-Determination: The Case of the Katanga Secession', *American Political Science Review*, 56, 2 (June 1962), pp. 404–416.

<sup>15</sup> Romain Yakemtchouk, *Aux Origines Du Séparatisme Katangais* (Brussels: Koninklijke Academie voor Overzeese Wetenschappen, 1988).

<sup>16</sup> Smith Hempstone, *Rebels, Mercenaries and Dividends: The Katanga Story* (New York: Frederick A Praeger, 1962).

<sup>17</sup> Ian Colvin, *The Rise and Fall of Moïse Tshombe: A Biography* (London: Frewin, 1968).

<sup>18</sup> Erik Kennes, 'Fin Du Cycle Post-Colonial Au Katanga, RD Congo: Rébellions, Sécession et Leurs Mémoires Dans La Dynamique Des Articulations Entre l'Etat Central et L'Autonomie Régionale 1960-2007', (PhD, Université Laval, 2009).

<sup>19</sup> Miles Larmer and Erik Kennes, 'Rethinking the Katangese Secession', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 42, 4 (August 2014), pp. 741-761.

<sup>20</sup> See Chapter two of: Emizet François Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 1960-2010* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012).

<sup>21</sup> Paul-Henry Gendebien, *L'Intervention Des Nations Unies Au Congo, 1960-1964* (Paris: Mouton, 1967).

<sup>22</sup> Rikhye, *Military Advisor to the Secretary General*.

<sup>23</sup> Conor Cruise O'Brien, *To Katanga and Back: A UN Case History* (London: Hutchinson & Company, 1962).



*Congo: a United Nations Force in Action*,<sup>24</sup> Georges Abi-Saab's *The United Nations Operation in the Congo, 1960-1964*,<sup>25</sup> and David Gibbs' *The United Nations, International Peacekeeping and the Question of 'Impartiality': Revisiting the Congo Operation of 1960*,<sup>26</sup> all, some more critical than others, examine the nature, mandate, and success of the UN's operation. Part of the literature on the UN intervention includes specific studies of the role of UN Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld. Rajeshwar Dayal's *Mission for Hammarskjöld: The Congo Crisis*,<sup>27</sup> and more recently Susan Williams' *Who killed Hammarskjöld?: The UN, the Cold War and White Supremacy in Africa*,<sup>28</sup> are revealing texts in this regard. Williams revises existing theories about Hammarskjöld's mysterious death, and although she does not provide any conclusion on what actually happened to the secretary general, Williams presents a detailed overview of the various possibilities.

The ascent of Patrice Lumumba as Congo's first democratically elected prime minister in June 1960, and his subsequent murder in January 1961, has produced a significant number of publications over the years. Thomas Kanza's *Conflict in the Congo: The Rise and Fall of Lumumba*,<sup>29</sup> Luc de Vos, Emmanuel Gerald, Jules Gérard-Libois and Philippe Raxhon's *Lumumba: De Complotten? De Moord*,<sup>30</sup> Ludo de Witte's *The Assassination of Lumumba*,<sup>31</sup> and more recently Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja's *Patrice Lumumba*,<sup>32</sup> and Emmanuel Gerard and Bruce Kuklick's *Death in the Congo: Murdering Patrice Lumumba*,<sup>33</sup> have extensively covered this subject. Gerard and Kuklick's new and refreshing work is the most illuminating account of Lumumba's murder, and closely examines the involvement of Belgium, the United States, and the UN.

Literature, which critically discusses specific events during the Kwilu and Eastern rebellions, which lasted from 1963 until 1967, is less extensive. Publications such as David Reeds' *III*

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<sup>24</sup> Ernest Lefever, *Crisis in the Congo: A United Nations Force in Action* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1965).

<sup>25</sup> Georges Abi-Saab, *The United Nations Operation in the Congo, 1960-1964* (London: Oxford University Press, 1987).

<sup>26</sup> David Gibbs, 'The United Nations, International Peacekeeping and the Question of 'Impartiality': Revisiting the Congo Operation of 1960', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 38, 3 (2000), pp. 359–382.

<sup>27</sup> Rajeshwar Dayal, *Mission for Hammarskjöld: The Congo Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

<sup>28</sup> Susan Williams, *Who Killed Hammarskjöld?: The UN, the Cold War and White Supremacy in Africa* (London: Hurst & Company, 2011).

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Kanza, *Conflict in the Congo: The Rise and Fall of Lumumba* (London: R Collins, 1978).

<sup>30</sup> Luc de Vos et al., *Lumumba: De Complotten? De Moord* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2004).

<sup>31</sup> Ludo de Witte, *The Assassination of Lumumba* (London: Verso, 2002).

<sup>32</sup> Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, *Patrice Lumumba* (Auckland Park: Jacane Media, 2014).

<sup>33</sup> Emmanuel Gerard and Bruce Kuklick, *Death in the Congo: Murdering Patrice Lumumba* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

*Days in Stanleyville*,<sup>34</sup> Margaret Hayes' *Missing, Believed Killed*,<sup>35</sup> Valeer van Kerkhove and Fons Robberechts' *Simba's en Para's in Stan; Een Dokument over het Drama van de Oost-Provincie van Kongo, November 1964*,<sup>36</sup> Fred Wagoner's *Dragon Rouge: The Rescue of Hostages in the Congo*,<sup>37</sup> and Thomas Odom's *Dragon Operations: Hostage Rescue in the Congo, 1964-1965*,<sup>38</sup> are all concerned with the attacks against Westerners and their subsequent rescue during the Stanleyville offensive in November 1964. These publications generally provide a negative, one-dimensional, and unbalanced representation of the actual rebel movement. There are, however, a number of noteworthy studies that do not follow this trend. Benoit Verhaegen's excellent two volume *Rébellions au Congo*,<sup>39</sup> Georges Nzongola's 'The Bourgeoisie and Revolution in the Congo',<sup>40</sup> Renee Fox, Willy de Craemer and Jean-Marie Ribeaucourt's '"The Second Independence": A Case Study of the Kwilu Rebellion in the Congo',<sup>41</sup> Roger Anstey's 'The Congo Rebellion',<sup>42</sup> Crawford Young's chapter, 'Rebellion in the Congo',<sup>43</sup> as well as chapter three in Kisangani's *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*,<sup>44</sup> offer a balanced account of the rebels, and insight into the causes, evolution, and subsequent failure of their movement. Of some value is also Moïse Tshombe's autobiography *My Fifteen Months in Government*,<sup>45</sup> which discusses his time as Congo's prime minister between 1964 and 1965.

At the time of the crisis, Congo rapidly transformed into a Cold War battleground where the United States and the Soviet Union, operating in the framework of 'communist East' and 'capitalist West', attempted to secure their strategic interests and extend their sphere of

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<sup>34</sup> David Reed, *111 Days in Stanleyville* (New York: Harper Row, 1965).

<sup>35</sup> Margaret Hayes, *Missing, Believed Killed* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1966).

<sup>36</sup> Valeer van Kerkhove and Fons Robberechts, *Simba's En Para's in Stan; Een Dokument over het Drama van de Oost-Provincie van Kongo* (Hasselt: Heideveld, 1965).

<sup>37</sup> Fred Wagoner, *Dragon Rouge: The Rescue of Hostages in the Congo* (Washington: National Defense University, 1980).

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Odom, *Dragon Operations: Hostage Rescue in the Congo, 1964-1965* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 1988).

<sup>39</sup> Benoit Verhaegen and Centre de recherche et d'information socio-politiques, *Rebellions Au Congo, Tome I* (Brussels: Centre de recherche et d'information socio-politiques, 1966); Benoit Verhaegen and Centre de recherche et d'information socio-politiques, *Rebellions Au Congo: Maniema, Tome II* (Brussels: Centre de recherche et d'information socio-politiques, 1966).

<sup>40</sup> Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, 'The Bourgeoisie and Revolution in the Congo', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 8, 4 (December 1970), pp. 511–30.

<sup>41</sup> Renee Fox, Willy de Craemer, and Jean-Marie Ribeaucourt, '"The Second Independence': A Case Study of the Kwilu Rebellion in the Congo', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 8, 1 (October 1965), pp. 78–109.

<sup>42</sup> Roger Anstey, 'The Congo Rebellion', *The World Today*, 21, 4 (April 1964), pp. 169–176.

<sup>43</sup> Crawford Young, 'Rebellion in the Congo', in: Robert Rotberg eds., *Rebellion in Black Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).

<sup>44</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*.

<sup>45</sup> Moïse Tshombe, *My Fifteen Months in Government* (Texas: University of Plano Press, 1967).

influence. This Cold War dimension is specifically examined in Larry Devlin's *Chief of Station, Congo: a Memoir, 1960-1967*,<sup>46</sup> Richard Mahoney's *JFK: Ordeal in Africa*,<sup>47</sup> David Gibbs' *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention: Mines, Money, and US Policy in the Congo crisis*,<sup>48</sup> Stephen Weissman's *American Foreign Policy in the Congo, 1960-1964*,<sup>49</sup> John Kent's *America, the UN and Decolonisation: Cold War conflict in the Congo*,<sup>50</sup> Sergey Mazov's *A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964*,<sup>51</sup> and more recently Lise Namikas' illuminating *Battleground Africa: Cold War in the Congo, 1960-1965*.<sup>52</sup> Their focus is however mainly concerned with the role of the Soviet Union and United States, largely ignoring the intervention of smaller powers.

Alan James' *Britain and the Congo Crisis*,<sup>53</sup> and *Britain, the Cold War, and the Congo Crisis, 1960-1963*,<sup>54</sup> Zach Levey's 'Israel's Involvement in the Congo, 1958–68: Civilian and Military Dimensions',<sup>55</sup> and Frank Villafana's *Cold War in the Congo: The Confrontation of Cuban Military Forces, 1960-1967*,<sup>56</sup> instead provide a good understanding of Britain, Israel, and Cuba's limited interference. Despite individual case studies such as Olivier Boehme's 'The Involvement of the Belgian Central Bank in the Katanga Secession, 1960-1963',<sup>57</sup> and Jules Gérard-Libois's *Le Rôle de la Belgique dans l'Opération des Nations Unies au Congo, 1960-1964*,<sup>58</sup> or broader works such as Guy Vanthemsche's *Belgium and the Congo, 1885–1980*,<sup>59</sup> a concise and comprehensive publication on Belgium's involvement in the Congo crisis is yet to be written. In spite of its geographical proximity, little has also been published about the Congo crisis and the Southern African region. Matthew Hughes' 'Fighting for

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<sup>46</sup> Larry Devlin's, *Chief of Station, Congo: A Memoir, 1960-1967* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2007).

<sup>47</sup> Richard Mahoney, *JFK: Ordeal in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

<sup>48</sup> David Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention: Mines, Money and US Policy in the Congo Crisis* (Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 1991).

<sup>49</sup> Stephen Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo 1960-1964* (London: Cornell University Press, 1974).

<sup>50</sup> John Kent, *America, the UN and Decolonisation: Cold War Conflict in the Congo* (London: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>51</sup> Sergey Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo 1956-1964* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

<sup>52</sup> Namikas, *Battleground Africa*.

<sup>53</sup> James, *Britain and the Congo Crisis*.

<sup>54</sup> Alan James, 'Britain, the Cold War, and the Congo Crisis, 1960–63', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 28, 3 (September 2000), pp. 152–168.

<sup>55</sup> Zach Levey, 'Israel's Involvement in the Congo, 1958-68: Civilian and Military Dimensions', *Civil Wars*, 6, 4 (Winter 2003), pp. 14-36.

<sup>56</sup> Villafana, *Cold War in the Congo*.

<sup>57</sup> Olivier Boehme, 'The Involvement of the Belgian Central Bank in the Katanga Secession, 1960-1963', *African Economic History*, 33 (2005), pp. 1–29.

<sup>58</sup> Jules Gérard-Libois, *Le Rôle de la Belgique dans l'Opération des Nations Unies au Congo* (Brussels: Centre de recherche et d'information socio-politiques, 1967).

<sup>59</sup> Guy Vanthemsche, *Belgium and the Congo, 1885–1980* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

White Rule in Africa: The Central African Federation, Katanga, and the Congo Crisis, 1958-1965',<sup>60</sup> and *The Central African Federation, Katanga and the Congo Crisis, 1958-65*,<sup>61</sup> Timothy Scarnecchia's 'The Congo crisis, the United Nations, and Zimbabwean nationalism, 1960-1963',<sup>62</sup> as well as Rui Manuel Proença Bonita Velez's Masters dissertation 'Salazar e Tchombé O Apoio de Portugal Ao Catanga (1961–1967)',<sup>63</sup> focus on the Central African Federation and Portuguese Angola's relationship with Katanga and Congo and provide some insight into the extent of Southern Africa's regional involvement during the crisis. These studies are useful when examining South Africa's relationship, as some parallels can be drawn across the region.

Although certain aspects of South Africa's involvement are covered in this wider historiography, current understandings of South Africa's relationship with the Congo crisis are severely limited. Available information on this relationship lies scattered across the historiographical landscape. References in English, French, and Dutch publications are mentioned in passing in chapters or sections of broader works. One aspect that has been covered extensively in the literature, albeit often in an un-academic and biased manner, is the role of South African mercenaries during the secession of Katanga and the Kwilu and Eastern rebellions. The majority of work written on South African mercenaries consists of accounts by ex-mercenaries themselves, including Michael Hoare's *The road to Kalamata: A Congo Mercenary's Personal Memoir* and *Congo Mercenary*,<sup>64</sup> Hans Germani's *White Soldiers in Black Africa: Related from his own Experiences*,<sup>65</sup> Jerry Puren's *Mercenary Commander*,<sup>66</sup> and more recently Ivan Smith's *Mad Dog Killers: The Story of a Congo Mercenary*.<sup>67</sup> Although these accounts are hagiographical in nature, containing many questionable assertions, they convey the mercenaries' own perspective on their actions in the Congo. Hoare's *Congo Mercenary*, and Germani's *White Soldiers*, were published fairly soon after

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<sup>60</sup> Matthew Hughes, 'Fighting for White Rule in Africa: The Central African Federation, Katanga, and the Congo Crisis, 1958-1965,' *The International History Review*, 25, 3 (September 2003), pp. 592–615.

<sup>61</sup> Matthew Hughes, *The Central African Federation, Katanga and the Congo Crisis, 1958-65*, Working Papers in Military and International History, Vol 2, (Salford: University of Salford, 2003).

<sup>62</sup> Scarnecchia, 'The Congo Crisis, the United Nations, and Zimbabwean Nationalism'.

<sup>63</sup> Rui Manuel Proença Bonita Velez, 'Salazar E Tchombé O Apoio de Portugal Ao Catanga (1961 – 1967)', (MA, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2010).

<sup>64</sup> Mike Hoare, *The Road to Kalamata: A Congo Mercenary's Personal Memoir* (London: Leo Cooper, 1989); Mike Hoare, *Congo Mercenary* (London: Robert Hale, 1967).

<sup>65</sup> Hans Germani, *White Soldiers in Black Africa: Related from his own Experiences* (Cape Town: Nasionale Boekhandel Bepker, 1967).

<sup>66</sup> Jerry Puren and Brian Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander: Col Jerry Puren as Told by Brian Pottinger* (Alberton: Galago, 1986).

<sup>67</sup> Ivan Smith, *Mad Dog Killers: The Story of a Congo Mercenary* (Solihull: Helion & Company, 2012).

the events in question (1967) and are less likely affected by hindsight. Although Jerry Puren's *Mercenary Commander* was published at a much later stage, it does trace his close connection with Tshombe and self-proclaimed role as liaison officer for the South African government. This places him in a unique position, and despite many doubtful claims, Puren's account contains information about South Africa's involvement that can be triangulated with other secondary and primary sources.

Such accounts should be used in conjunction with other studies that offer a more balanced representation of South African mercenary involvement during the crisis, including Anthony Mockler's *The Mercenaries*,<sup>68</sup> and Piero Gleijeses' "Flee! The White Giants are Coming!": The United States, the Mercenaries, and the Congo, 1964-65'.<sup>69</sup> Of particular interest is Stephen Clarke's *The Congo Mercenary: A History and Analysis*.<sup>70</sup> This short study provides a good overview of the evolution of mercenary activities in Congo, strongly emphasising the South African component. Clarke argues that by allowing South Africans to fight in Katanga, Pretoria wanted to test international reactions as well as its own capacity 'to fill the vacuum which had resulted from the withdrawal of the European powers'.<sup>71</sup> The actions of the white mercenaries also signalled the military might of South Africa's troops to the rest of Africa. Clarke furthermore suggests that Pretoria's support of Katanga was meant to prevent Congo's chaotic conditions spilling into the buffer states of Portuguese Angola and the Central African Federation. He notes that the crisis became a symbolic marker used by the South African government to defend white minority rule.<sup>72</sup> Clarke's research is however based upon secondary sources and newspaper and periodical articles, which significantly limits his ability to understand the rationale behind Pretoria's actions.

According to the secondary literature, Pretoria knew about the South African mercenaries in Congo, and various government departments had covert contact with them.<sup>73</sup> There are also allegations that members of the South African Defence Force infiltrated the mercenary force, and that Pretoria supplied military equipment to the Katangese government and later to the

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<sup>68</sup> Anthony Mockler, *The Mercenaries* (New York: Macmillan, 1969).

<sup>69</sup> Piero Gleijeses, "Flee! The White Giants are Coming!": The United States, the Mercenaries, and the Congo, 1964-65', *Diplomatic History*, 18, 2 (1994), pp. 207-237.

<sup>70</sup> Stephen Clarke, *The Congo Mercenary: A History and Analysis* (Johannesburg: The South African Institute Of International Affairs, 1968).

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, p. 35.

<sup>72</sup> Clarke, *The Congo Mercenary*, p. 35.

<sup>73</sup> Puren and Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander*, p. 196.

Central Congolese government.<sup>74</sup> Such brief references in the literature were never further investigated or corroborated, leaving much of Pretoria's controversial involvement in the Congo crisis shrouded in mystery.

Pretoria's involvement in Congo has also occasionally been attributed to an 'unholy alliance' conspiracy between South Africa, Portugal, and the Central African Federation.<sup>75</sup> This alliance was contemporaneously understood in two distinct ways. First, as a means to protect Southern Africa's white settler societies from the spread of African independence, secondly, as an attempt to safeguard the region's mining interests 'from the Cape to Katanga'.<sup>76</sup> Such accusations of white-ruled Southern Africa's interference were made by Basil Davidson, who in the 1962 pamphlet *The Unholy Alliance: Salazar-Verwoerd-Welensky* wrote that,

Portugal, the Union of South Africa, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the separatist puppet state of the Katanga [...] the governments of all of these, with their wealthy friends abroad, have joined in a conspiracy to hold back the spread of political and economic freedom in central and Southern Africa.<sup>77</sup>

Nzongola-Ntalaja makes use of this unholy alliance hypothesis to describe and explain in passing South Africa's relationship with Katanga.<sup>78</sup> The claim that the South African government formed part of such an unholy alliance has, however, never been substantiated.

A proper summary of Pretoria's involvement in the Congo crisis or analysis of its rationale for its involvement is lacking in the literature on South Africa's foreign policy. One noteworthy study that does, however, mentions South Africa's relationship to the Congo crisis in some detail is Roger Pfister's PhD thesis 'Apartheid South Africa's Foreign Relations with African States, 1961-1994',<sup>79</sup> later published as *Apartheid South Africa and*

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<sup>74</sup> Mockler, *The Mercenaries*, 223; Gleijeses, "Flee! The White Giants are Coming!", p. 224; Andrew Cohen, 'A Difficult, Tedious and Unwanted Task': Representing the Central African Federation in the United Nations, 1960-1963', *Itinerario*, 34, 2 (August 2010), pp. 112-113; Hughes, *The Central African Federation, Katanga and the Congo Crisis*, pp. 2; 34.

<sup>75</sup> See for instance: Rosalynde Ainslie, Basil Davidson, and Coner O'Brien, *The Unholy Alliance, Salazar – Verwoerd – Welensky* (London: Colombia Printers, 1962), pp. 2-3; 5-7; Nelson Mandela, 'Address at the Conference of the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa, Addis Ababa, 12 January 1962'. Retrieved from: <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=4297> (accessed on 4 February 2015); *Fighting Talk*, 2 July 1962, p. 7; 'The Battle for the Congo and the November Aggression', *African Communist*, March 1965, p. 25.

<sup>76</sup> Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila*, pp. 32; 99; 101; 'Some Secrets of the Congo', *African Communist*, Vol 2, No 4, July-September 1963, p. 41.

<sup>77</sup> Ainslie, Davidson, and O'Brien, *The Unholy Alliance*, p. 2.

<sup>78</sup> Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila*, pp. 32; 101.

<sup>79</sup> Roger Pfister, 'Apartheid South Africa's Foreign Relations with African States, 1961-1994', (PhD, Rhodes University, 2004).

*African States: From Pariah to Middle Power, 1961-1994*.<sup>80</sup> Pfister suggests that Pretoria sided with Katanga ‘for ideological reasons’. Although the South African government refrained from providing direct military assistance, it chose to approve the recruitment of South African mercenaries for Katanga. Pfister argues that the South African government’s stance changed when Tshombe became prime minister. As a result, it became ‘comparatively more engaged militarily’ in Congo.<sup>81</sup> Even though Pfister used archival documents for his research, his discussion of South African-Congolese relations is confined to a small section in his study, and an in-depth analysis is missing.

Another useful study is Rodney Warwick’s PhD thesis, ‘White South Africa and Defence 1960-1968: Militarisation, Threat Perceptions and Counter Strategies’, which argues that Pretoria’s perceptions of the Congo crisis were partly responsible for its increased militarisation in the 1960s.<sup>82</sup> Warwick claims that ‘the South African Defence Force assessed a UN or Afro-Asian threat as a reality, especially after the deployment of the ONUC peace-keeping forces in the Congo, where Indian and other Afro-Asian troops were in the forefront of the action’.<sup>83</sup> The UN intervention combined with the violence against white settlers made Pretoria uneasy, and created fears of an African invasion that would overrun South Africa and end white rule.<sup>84</sup> Although he makes use of diverse primary material and provides insight to some of the South African government’s perceptions of the Congo crisis, Warwick’s analysis is restricted to South African militarisation. Warwick also makes occasional reference to white South African perceptions of the Congo crisis that contributed to the NP’s growing support.<sup>85</sup> Thomas Noer makes a similar claim in *Cold War and Black Liberation: The United States and White Rule in Southern Africa, 1948-1968*.<sup>86</sup> Noer argues that the events in Congo gave new credence to Pretoria’s assertion that ‘independence in Sub-Saharan Africa had been premature’ and that white minority control was the ‘only safeguards against violence, tribal warfare and radicalism’.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Roger Pfister, *Apartheid South Africa and African States: From Pariah to Middle Power, 1961-1994* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2005).

<sup>81</sup> Roger Pfister, *Apartheid South Africa and African States*, pp. 33–36.

<sup>82</sup> Rodney Warwick, ‘White South Africa and Defence 1960-1968: Militarization, Threat Perceptions and Counter Strategies’, (PhD, University of Cape Town, 2009).

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, p. 54.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 171; 179; 183; 228.

<sup>86</sup> *Cold War and Black Liberation: The United States and White Rule in Southern Africa, 1948-1968* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1985).

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, p. 58.

The historiography of the anti-apartheid struggle also refers to connections between African nationalist movements and the Congo crisis, the most important of which is the ‘Congo alliance’. This alliance was formed in 1963, and comprised of a select group of Southern African liberation organisations, including the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and South West African People’s Organisation (SWAPO). These organisations were granted permission by the Congolese government to establish their political and military headquarters in Congo. The purpose of this initiative was to transform the newly independent republic into a centre of African nationalism, and provide a base from which Southern African liberation movements could launch a coordinated offensive in their struggle for independence. The historiography on Congo does not make reference to the Congo alliance. Only a few general publications on South Africa’s liberation movements, including the South African Democracy Education Trust’s *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume II 1970-1980*, Tor Sellström’s *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa: Volume I: Formation of a Popular Opinion, 1950 -1970*,<sup>88</sup> Tom Lodge’s *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945*,<sup>89</sup> Kwandiwe Kondlo’s *In the Twilight of the Revolution: The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa) 1959-1994*,<sup>90</sup> and Gregory Houston, Thami Ka Platjje and Thozama April’s ‘Military Training Camps of the Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa, 1961-1981’,<sup>91</sup> mention it briefly. Similarly, Andreas Shipanga’s biography *In Search of Freedom, The Andreas Shipanga Story As Told to Sue Armstrong*,<sup>92</sup> and Sam Nujoma’s autobiography *Where Others Wavered: the Autobiography of Sam Nujoma*,<sup>93</sup> talk about the Congo Alliance in passing but do not provide much detail. Although in *The Road to Democracy: South Africans Telling their Stories, Volume 1, 1960-1970*,<sup>94</sup> Gasson Ndlovu offers a fairly detailed first-hand account of his time in Congo as part of the PAC, its narrative is confusing and seems questionable.

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<sup>88</sup> Tor Sellström, *Sweden and National Liberation in Southern Africa Volume I: Formation of a Popular Opinion, 1950 –1970* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1999), pp. 173; 271.

<sup>89</sup> Tom Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945* (New York: Longman, 1983), pp. 307–310.

<sup>90</sup> Kwandiwe Kondlo, *In the Twilight of the Revolution: The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa) 1959-1994* (Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2009), pp. 12; 112.

<sup>91</sup> Gregory Houston, Thami Ka Platjje and Thozama April, ‘Military Training Camps of the Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa, 1961-1981’, *Historia*, 60, 2 (November 2015), pp. 23-50.

<sup>92</sup> See Chapter 16 in: Andreas Shipanga and Sue Armstrong, *In Search of Freedom: The Andreas Shipanga Story As Told to Sue Armstrong* (Gibraltar: Ashanti Publishing, 1989).

<sup>93</sup> Sam Nujoma, *Where Others Wavered: The Autobiography of Sam Nujoma* (London: Panaf Books, 2001), p. 129.

<sup>94</sup> See Chapter 36 in: South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy: South Africans Telling Their Stories, Volume 1, 1960-1970* (Hollywood: Tsehai Publishers, 2008).



One work that does consider the formation and evolution of the Congo alliance in detail, and upon which many of these sources base their information, is John Marcum's *The Angolan revolution, Vol II, Exile politics and Guerrilla warfare, 1962-1967*.<sup>95</sup> This seminal publication on the history of the liberation of Portuguese Angola provides a useful, but brief, outline of the Congo alliance, which makes regular reference to the PAC and SWAPO. Marcum suggests that Adoula's decision to form the Congo alliance was an attempt to establish his legitimacy among those African countries that considered Adoula to be a puppet of the West.<sup>96</sup> As Marcum held personal relationships with Cyrille Adoula, Roberto Holden, and Nelson Mahomo, and was closely involved in the Congo alliance, his work can be interpreted as both a primary and secondary source. A close examination of the Congo alliance will also contribute to challenging some of the popular narratives of Southern African liberation movements. These have recently been contested in the *Journal of Southern African Studies*' special issue, 'Mobile Soldiers and the Un-National Liberation of Southern Africa'.<sup>97</sup>

Aside from SWAPO and the PAC's participation in the Congo alliance, the literature on South Africa's anti-apartheid movement mentions another connection linking the Congo crisis to South Africa's resistance movements, namely the Pondoland uprisings of the late 1950s and early 1960s. In her PhD thesis 'Rural Cosmopolitanism and Peasant Insurgency: The Pondoland Revolt, South Africa (1958-1963)',<sup>98</sup> Katherine Fidler notes that Pondoland's rural insurgency movement was also known as *Ikongo* (sometimes written as Congo).<sup>99</sup> Although the origin of the name *Ikongo* is contested, Robin Kayser's Masters thesis 'Land and Liberty!: The Non-European Unity Movement and the Land Question, 1933-1976',<sup>100</sup> suggests that the name was connected to Congo's independence struggles, and according to one insurgent inspired by the 'actions of Patrice Lumumba'.<sup>101</sup> Others have argued that the word *Ikongo* was simply derived from 'Congress' in African National Congress (ANC).<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> John Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol II: Exile Politics and Guerrilla Warfare, 1962-1976* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1978).

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, p. 73.

<sup>97</sup> Luise White and Miles Larmer, eds., 'Mobile Soldiers and the Un-National Liberation of Southern Africa', *Journal of Southern African History*, 40, 6 (November 2014), pp. 1271-1361.

<sup>98</sup> Katherine Fidler, 'Rural Cosmopolitanism and Peasant Insurgency: The Pondoland Revolt, South Africa (1958-1963)', (PhD, Emory University, 2010).

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, p. 36.

<sup>100</sup> Robin Kayser, 'Land and Liberty!: The Non-European Unity Movement and the Land Question, 1933-1976', (MA, University of Cape Town, 2002).

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 31; 101-102.

<sup>102</sup> Fidler, 'Rural Cosmopolitanism and Peasant Insurgency', p. 40.

However, Sukude Matoti and Lungisile Ntsebeza's chapter 'Rural Resistance in Mpondoland and Thembuland, 1960-1963',<sup>103</sup> claims that if there were such a link with the ANC, the word would have been *iKongola* rather than *Ikongo*.<sup>104</sup> Although there is no definite proof for either theory, the possibility that the Congo crisis might have had an association to Pondoland's rural insurgency movement in the late 1950s and early 1960 is an intriguing possibility. Similar links between Zimbabwean nationalist movements and the Congo crisis have been made in Scarnecchia's 'The Congo Crisis, the United Nations, and Zimbabwean Nationalism',<sup>105</sup> and Michael West's *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965*.<sup>106</sup>

One last reference in the historiography of the Congo crisis worth noting is a mooted South African connection to Hammarskjöld's death. Williams' *Who killed Hammarskjöld?*, discusses at length the bizarrely named 'South African Institute of Maritime Research' (SAIMR).<sup>107</sup> SAIMR's implication in the death of Hammarskjöld came about when a set of documents referring to 'Operation Celeste' was accidentally discovered by South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. These documents connect Hammarskjöld's airplane crash to an act of sabotage that was ordered and executed by SAIMR. Although never disproven, this theory is based upon very vague and unauthenticated evidence. The original documents are in the possession of the South African Ministry of Justice, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission only made available copies of eight of the original documents.<sup>108</sup> The latest report on Hammarskjöld's death was published in July 2015, and noted that 'the Panel assigned weak probative value to the SAIMR documents and what they purport to assert'.<sup>109</sup> The Hammarskjöld Commission also investigated a lead about a South African

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<sup>103</sup> Sukude Matoti and Lungisile Ntsebeza, 'Rural Resistance in Mpondoland and Thembuland, 1960-1963', in *South African Democracy Education Trust, The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1, 1960-1970* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2004).

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, p. 181.

<sup>105</sup> Scarnecchia, 'The Congo Crisis, the United Nations, and Zimbabwean Nationalism'.

<sup>106</sup> Michael West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 218.

<sup>107</sup> See Chapters 16, 17, and 18 in: Susan Williams, *Who Killed Hammarskjöld?: The UN, the Cold War and White Supremacy in Africa*.

<sup>108</sup> The Hammarskjöld Commission, 'Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Whether the Evidence Now Available Would Justify the United Nations in Reopening Its Inquiry into the Death of Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 1759 (XVII) of 26 October 1962', (The Hague, 15 September 2013), 30–32. Retrieved from: <http://www.hammarskjoldcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/REPORT.pdf> (accessed on 15 November 2015)

<sup>109</sup> United Nations, 'Report of the Independent Panel of Experts Established pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 69/246,' 2 July 2015, p. 46. Retrieved from: <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/178/07/PDF/N1517807.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed on 20 December 2015)

mercenary named Swanepoel, which according to a testimony by an ex-Katangese mercenary, had proclaimed to have shot and killed Hammarskjöld and one of his bodyguards at the crash site in the bush near Ndola.<sup>110</sup> The latest investigation concluded that due to the accounts' contradictory and imprecise nature, the allegation that Swanepoel 'shot dead Hammarskjöld is of nil probative value'.<sup>111</sup>

Part of this study is concerned with South Africa's role as a regional power. It ties into such works as Raimo Väyrynen's 'Economic and Military Position of the Regional Power Centers',<sup>112</sup> Sandra Destradi's 'Regional Powers and Their Strategies: Empire, Hegemony, and Leadership',<sup>113</sup> Douglas Lemke's *Regions of War and Peace*,<sup>114</sup> Christopher Waters' 'Against the Tide': Australian Government Attitudes to Decolonisation in the South Pacific, 1962–1972',<sup>115</sup> and John Daniel's 'Racism, the Cold War and South Africa's Regional Security Strategies, 1948-1990'.<sup>116</sup> The narratives and frameworks of these studies can be used to understand South Africa's role as regional power during the Congo crisis better.

### 1.3 Problem statement

A close review of the literature reveals the existence of large historiographical gaps that need to be addressed if a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of South Africa's relationship with the Congo crisis is to be constructed. As there is no study that pieces together all of the detached bits of information scattered across the historiographical landscape, the central question asked by this thesis concerns the relationship between South Africa and the Congo crisis. This question is divided into three sub questions. First, how was South Africa involved in the Congo crisis? Secondly, what was the rationale for its involvement? Thirdly, how was the Congo crisis perceived inside South Africa?

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<sup>110</sup> The Hammarskjöld Commission, 'Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Whether the Evidence Now Available Would Justify the United Nations in Reopening Its Inquiry into the Death of Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld', pp. 46–47.

<sup>111</sup> United Nations, 'Report of the Independent Panel of Experts Established pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 69/246,' p. 14.

<sup>112</sup> Raimo Väyrynen, 'Economic and Military Position of the Regional Power Centers', *Journal of Peace Research*, 16, 4 (1979), pp. 349-369.

<sup>113</sup> Sandra Destradi, 'Regional Powers and Their Strategies: Empire, Hegemony, and Leadership', *Review of International Studies*, 36 (2010), pp. 903-930.

<sup>114</sup> Douglas Lemke, *Regions of War and Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>115</sup> Christopher Waters, 'Against the Tide': Australian Government Attitudes to Decolonisation in the South Pacific, 1962–1972', *Journal of Pacific History*, 48, 2 (2013), pp. 194–208.

<sup>116</sup> John Daniel, 'Racism, the Cold War and South Africa's Regional Security Strategies, 1948-1990', in: Sue Onslow, ed., *The Cold War in Southern Africa: White Power, Black Nationalism and External Intervention* (London: Routledge, 2009).

Although aspects of these questions have been partially covered in other publications, they usually form part of broader studies with a different focus. The sources they use are rarely primary, and the exact nature of this relationship overlooked, hastily described, or not substantiated. Consequently, the limited knowledge on South African mercenaries, Pretoria's involvement in, and stance on, the Congo crisis, and the connection between South African nationalist movements and the crisis, are carefully re-examined in this study. This reassessment is strengthened by new primary material that enables the construction of a detailed understanding of the nature of South African-Congolese relations during the Congo crisis.

Besides significantly strengthening and expanding the existing historiography, hitherto neglected aspects of the crisis are also examined. The first concerns white refugees who fled from Congo to South Africa. Their motivation for doing so, their journey to South Africa, and the extent of support they received from the South African government and public, are carefully analysed. South Africa's perceptions of the Congo crisis are investigated, and the thesis includes a comprehensive examination of the views and opinions of South Africans from across the racial and political board.

#### **1.4 Chapter outline**

In order to situate South Africa's relationship with the Congo crisis better, the thesis begins with an outline of the historical trajectory of Congo's First Republic in Chapter two. The chapter starts with a brief overview of the road to Congo's independence in the late 1950s and continues with two separate subsections. The first summarises the period from independence until the end of the Katangese secession 1960-1963, whilst the second sketches the period concerning the rise and fall of the Kwilu and Eastern rebellions, 1963-1965. The chapters that follow discuss South Africa's relationship with the Congo crisis. They are divided into two sections. Section I comprehensively examines South Africa's involvement during the Congo crisis. Section II analyses the rationale behind South Africa's actions, and perceptions throughout the Congo crisis.

Section I is divided into three chronological arranged chapters. Chapter three explores Pretoria's relationship with Congo from the time immediately prior to independence until the end of the Katangese secession, 1960-1963. The chapter's first subsection investigates the period of uncertainty regarding South Africa's future relations with a black Congolese government. The second examines South Africa's aid to the white 'refugees' from Congo, its

third subsection divulges the formation and nature of Pretoria's relationship with the state of Katanga. Chapter four examines the Congo alliance, 1963-1964, and is divided into two subsections, the first of which examines the formation of the Congo alliance whilst the second subsection investigates the reasons for its decline. Due to the emphasis this thesis places on South Africa, the chapter narrows its focus on the PAC and SWAPO's participation in the alliance and does not explore the activities of the other members. Chapter five investigates South Africa's relationship with Congo during the period of the Kwilu and Eastern rebellions, 1964-1965. Its first subsection comprehensively discusses South Africa's mercenary involvement, whilst the second provides a detailed outline of the relationship that developed between Pretoria and Leopoldville during Tshombe's office as prime minister. Although the thesis' time frame spans from 1960 to 1965, Chapter five's narrative is intertwined with the first years of Joseph Mobutu's rule, a historiographical extension that cannot be neglected.

Section II commences with Chapter six, which examines the South African government's motivation for its involvement in the crisis. Its first subsection outlines the government's reasons for supporting the Katangese secession and focuses on the period of 1960 to 1963. The second covers the period between 1964 and 1965 and discusses Pretoria's motivation for aligning itself with the Congolese government during Tshombe's prime ministership. The chapter's third and final subsection examines how Pretoria's involvement in the Congo crisis was shaped by its concerns about South Africa's international standing. Chapter seven examines the different ways in which the crisis was perceived by South Africans more broadly. The chapter's first subsection examines South African perceptions regarding the crisis, focusing on a number of specific developments. There are a number of distinct themes within this South African discourse that require careful individual analysis. In this regard, the second specifically examines South African views of Patrice Lumumba and outlines some of the reactions to his murder. The third and final subsection investigates so-called 'lessons of the Congo' for South Africa, and highlights some of the Congo-related rhetoric used by South Africans.

### **1.5 Sources and methodological challenges**

Each of these chapters utilise specific sources that have particular methodological challenges. Although French and Dutch publications were consulted, the majority of the secondary material used in this thesis is in English. The South African library network catalogue does not hold many French or Dutch publications on Congo. Despite a brief visit to the library of

the Contemporary History Section at the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, access to non-English publications was limited. The primary material used in this study, however, consists of a wide variety of English, Afrikaans, French, and Dutch sources, which have been collected in South Africa, Belgium, Britain, and the United States. This study makes use of both content and discourse analysis to examine these sources.

A significant amount of primary research was conducted at the National Archives of South Africa's (NASA) repository in Pretoria, which houses part of the archive of the South African Department of External Affairs, now known as the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO). The External Affairs files on Congo contain many valuable documents pertaining to South Africa's relationship with Congo and Katanga, Congo refugees in South Africa, as well as reports on Congo's economy and political developments. All of NASA's available files on Congo, however, end in 1963, even though DIRCO - the previous custodian of these files - claims that they have transferred all their archival material for this period to NASA. DIRCO's own archives, fortunately, still houses some files pertaining to post-1963 South African-Congolese relations. However, there are a number of files on Congo that are listed in DIRCO's archival catalogue but that can neither be located at NASA nor DIRCO. These files are either missing, have been misplaced or have not yet been catalogued by NASA. The files that are available at DIRCO contain detailed information on the relationship between Pretoria and Leopoldville, as well as on South African mercenaries fighting in Congo. DIRCO's archive also stores files on Portuguese Angola and Southern Rhodesia that help in obtaining a better understanding of the regional dynamics concerning the crisis.

Another important archive that was consulted in Pretoria was that of the South African Department of Defence (SADoD). SADoD's Military Intelligence Division's files provide insight into South African military interest and South African mercenary activities in Congo. The archive also includes personal files on Tshombe and Mobutu, and on matters of Southern African regional security in relation to the Congo crisis. More importantly, it stores invaluable material compiled by the SADF Military Intelligence Division and the South African Police's Security Branch about the PAC and SWAPO's activities in Congo. These documents are crucial for piecing together the story of the Congo alliance. According to its archivist, the South African Police archive in Pretoria does not store any files assembled by the Security Police, or contain any useful information about the Congo alliance. It is

important to note that researchers cannot access the archival catalogue themselves and have to rely on the services of the archivist.

Other archival repositories across South Africa were also consulted. Of considerable value was the SABC's National Radio Archive (NRA) in Johannesburg, which houses recordings of interviews with Congo refugees, and speeches by Eric Louw and Hendrik Verwoerd that refer to the Congo crisis. The Archive for Contemporary Affairs (ACA) at the University of the Free State contain some of Louw and Verwoerd's private papers and speeches, as well as letters from the public written to them which mention the Congo crisis. The University of Fort Hare's National Arts and Heritage Cultural Studies centre (NAHECS) is the custodian of the archives of the African National Congress, the PAC, and Black Consciousness Movement. Most of the ANC and PAC archival documents at NAHECS were produced post-1960s, and no documents about the Congo alliance were found. The archive does store some useful early PAC publications, as well as revealing ANC statements about the Congo crisis. The Robben Island Museum Mayibuye Archive at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town was not useful, nor was NASA's Cape Town repository, which only contained one thin file on the relief of Congo refugees.

In Belgium, the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs (FPSFA) archives in Brussels contained valuable diplomatic correspondence between the Belgian Embassy and Consulate in South Africa and the Department of External Affairs in Brussels. This communication covers such topics as South African mercenaries, Belgian refugees who moved to South Africa, and protests and criticism in South Africa about the death of Patrice Lumumba. The archive of the Contemporary History section at the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren was also consulted. Its archive houses an impressive collection of Congolese newspapers and periodicals. Although interesting in their own right, these publications unfortunately pay little attention to South Africa's involvement in Congo. According to a member of the research centre, the archive also stores some of Tshombe's papers and *Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado* (Portuguese security agency) documents, however, the archivist in charge of these documents was on leave.

Considerable time was spent at The National Archives (TNA) at Kew Gardens in London. The files that were useful at TNA form part of the Foreign Office collection and were compiled by the British Consulate in Congo, which from July 1960 until the end of 1964 often acted as the South African government's intermediary in Congo. These documents

provide information on South African mercenary activities and military matters, whilst a couple of files contain valuable material on the PAC's presence in Congo. The last overseas repository that was consulted was the National Archive and Records Administration (NARA) at College Park in Maryland. The United States greatly interfered in Congolese politics at the time of the Congo crisis and established an extensive intelligence network in Congo. Though not all of NARA's material relating to Congo has been de-classified, many documents from the American embassies in Congo and South Africa are available. Such files contain detailed information about South African mercenaries and South African perceptions of the Congo crisis. NARA also houses many documents with invaluable information on the Congo alliance.

The above archival material is accompanied by a selection of South African newspapers and periodicals. Most files compiled by the Department of External Affairs contain relevant clippings on the Congo crisis from various newspapers. Furthermore, this study makes use of two popular newspapers to provide insight into the perceptions of white South Africans, namely the Afrikaans, *Die Burger*, and the English, *Cape Times*, which can be consulted at the South African National Library in Cape Town. Besides the limited availability of other newspapers at the National Library in Cape Town, the reason for deciding on these two is that both were published in the same city and rivalled one another, providing a clear opposing view on how the Congo crisis was perceived by mainstream white South Africa. In order to gain a better understanding of such perceptions, the newspaper's editorial section and letters from readers were scrutinised. The National Library also stores a complete range of the periodicals *Huisgenoot* and *Drum*, as well as an incomplete selection of issues of *Contact*, *Fighting Talk*, *African Communist*, and *Azania News*. The electronic archive, Digital Innovation South Africa (DISA), however, features the entire range of these periodicals, as well as the full range of *New Age*, *Africa South*, *Liberal Opinion*, *Indian Opinion*, and *Black Sash*. This variety of South African newspapers and periodicals provide an excellent selection of diverse views and opinions on the Congo crisis by South Africans from across the racial and political divide. Although it is difficult to assess how representative opinions in newspapers and magazines are, they do provide a glimpse of how some South Africans interpreted the Congo crisis, and although limiting, general conclusions can be established from their analysis. It is important to note that the availability of sources containing black South African perceptions is limited. *Drum* magazine cut back on political content from 1962 onwards, whilst the periodicals *New Age* and *Fighting Talk*, published inside South Africa



and critical of the apartheid government, were shut down by 1963 because of new censorship legislation.

The last type of primary source used in this study is the oral structured interview. Via the Belgian Consulate in Cape Town, four white refugees who had fled from Congo to South Africa during the Congo crisis were tracked down and interviewed. The interviewees consisted of one Belgian woman, who had moved to Congo at an early age, one Dutch man who had been born in Congo, and finally a Belgian/French married couple who had relocated to Congo at a later stage in their life. Despite initially not answering any e-mails or phone calls, after a visit to the PAC's head office in Johannesburg, the party's Director General provided the contact details of several PAC members who had been stationed in Congo. Unfortunately only one member on the list agreed to an interview. A second PAC member was later tracked down and interviewed. Similar efforts were made to contact SWAPO members, but all correspondence led to a dead end. Finally, a joint interview was conducted with two South African pilots who signed up as mercenaries in Congo in 1964, and who prefer to remain anonymous. Such interviews were useful in constructing this study's narrative. Some of these accounts corroborated existing evidence from other sources whilst others provided new information that offered a fresh and more nuanced perspective.

# Chapter Two

## Congo's First Republic, 1960-1965

Independence cha-cha, Tozoui,  
O Kimpwanza cha-cha, Tubakidi,  
O Table ronde cha-cha, Tua Gagné o,  
O Dipanda cha-cha, Tozui e e.

Joseph Kabasele, 'indépendance cha-cha', 1960<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

Congo's First Republic spanned a period of extreme socio-political and economic upheaval that significantly shaped the trajectory of the newly independent African state. It is also an episode in Congolese history that was greatly influenced by the involvement and machinations of external forces that each for their own reasons had a stake in interfering in the developments that were taking place in Congo. In order to gain a better understanding of South Africa's relationship with the Congo crisis, an outline of the events that occurred during the First Republic is needed. This chapter is divided into three subsections. The first subsection provides a brief examination of Congo's road to independence. This is followed by a subsection on the Katangese secession and finally one on the Kwilu and Eastern rebellions.

### 2.1 The road to independence

Congo's drive for independence commenced in the 1950s and was led by the colonial-social class known as '*évolués*'. This group significantly grew in the wake of Congo's post Second World War economic boom and was comprised of Congolese who were perceived by the colonial administration as sufficiently Westernised.<sup>2</sup> These black elite typically consisted of civil servants, company personnel, and mission employees. As the Belgian government explicitly forbade the formation of political organisations in Congo, many *évolués* established

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<sup>1</sup> Original Lingala version of Joseph Kabasele's 1960 'indépendance cha-cha', in: Frank Tenaille, *Music is the Weapon of the Future: Fifty Years of African Popular Music* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2002), p. 5. This translates to 'Independence cha-cha declared, Oh freedom cha-cha we've conquered, At the round table cha-cha they won, Oh liberty cha-cha we've conquered'.

<sup>2</sup> Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, pp. 69–70.

fraternal and cultural organisations that usually had strong regional or ethnic connections.<sup>3</sup> Over time, these associations started to express the political aspirations of the Congolese population who demanded social and political change. Such demands formed part of a wider anti-colonial movement that was rapidly spreading across sub-Saharan Africa. Britain granted independence to neighbouring Sudan in January 1956, and a year later in March to Ghana. All over the continent similar calls for independence emerged.<sup>4</sup> The first appeal for Belgian Congo's independence is however not traditionally accredited to its *évolués*, but rather to Jozef (Jef) van Bilsen, a Belgian academic who had been a correspondent for the press agency *Belga* and who at the time worked for the Institute for Colonial Studies. In 1955, Van Bilsen published a thirty-year plan for Congo. He proposed that Belgium should invest in cultivating an intellectual upper class who could eventually efficiently take over control in 1985.<sup>5</sup> Many Belgians considered this vision too radical. It did however appeal to some of Congo's *évolués*.<sup>6</sup>

The first Congolese reaction to van Bilsen's plan came from a group of African Catholic intellectuals led by Joseph Ileo. In July 1956, the group published a manifesto in the newspaper *Conscience Africaine* endorsing van Bilsen's idea of a gradual road to independence.<sup>7</sup> Not all Congolese, however, approved of gently easing into freedom. As a reaction to the manifesto in *Conscience Africaine*, the *Alliance Des Bakongo* (ABAKO) published its *Declaration des Droits Civils*, which demanded immediate emancipation.<sup>8</sup> ABAKO had initially been formed as an organisation that represented the language and culture of the Bakongo people who resided in the Leopoldville Province. However, when Joseph Kasavubu joined ABAKO's central committee in late 1953 and eventually became its leader, he systematically transformed ABAKO into an ethnically aligned political organisation. ABAKO stood in the forefront of Congo's call for independence.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Jeanne Haskin, *The Tragic State of the Congo: From Decolonization to Dictatorship* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2005), p. 13; Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila*, p. 67; Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo 1960-2010*, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Wilson, *African Decolonization*, Contemporary History Series, II (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), pp. 131; 146.

<sup>5</sup> For more information about Jef van Bilsen see: Jef van Bilsen, *Kongo, 1954-1965: Het Einde van Een Kolonie* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 1993); van Reybrouck, *Congo*, 2010, pp. 246–247.

<sup>6</sup> Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, p. 71.

<sup>7</sup> Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila*, pp. 81–82.

<sup>8</sup> Haskin, *The Tragic State of the Congo*, 15; van Reybrouck, *Congo*, pp. 246; 249.

<sup>9</sup> Kisangani and Bobb, *Historical Dictionary of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, pp. 18–19.

Congolese demands for self-rule during the second half of the 1950s put pressure on the Belgian authorities to change their colonial policy, especially in the light of recent violent anti-colonial struggles in Africa. The Mau Mau uprising had commenced in British Kenya in 1952, whilst the *Front de la Libération Nationale* had launched its revolt in French Algeria in November 1954. Both targeted the colonial state with acts of violence.<sup>10</sup> The Belgian government attempted to find a compromise in 1957. It agreed to an arrangement whereby a few African neighbourhoods in a number of Congo's major urban centres would hold special municipal elections where Congolese could vote for their own mayor. However, these Congolese mayors remained under the command of a Belgian mayor. The election of Congolese political representatives contributed to the sudden emergence of political parties as it stimulated competition among contestants running for office.<sup>11</sup> Despite the latter decision by Belgium to appease the masses, discontent remained and major riots occurred in Leopoldville in January 1959.<sup>12</sup> Such unrest, which was mainly led by frustrated unemployed youths in the urban areas, subsequently forced the Belgian government to accept that eventual independence was inevitable. That same month, Belgian King Baudouin made a public statement that the independence of Belgian Congo would be negotiated, but did not specify a date.<sup>13</sup>

At the time of Baudouin's announcement, Patrice Lumumba was leader of the *Mouvement National Congolais* (MNC), a political party formed in Leopoldville in October 1958.<sup>14</sup> The following year in April, Lumumba called on eight of Congo's largest political parties to hold a conference in Luluabourg. It was agreed at the conference that the date for independence was to be 1 January 1961.<sup>15</sup> The Luluabourg Conference was followed by the more important Political Round Table Conference in Brussels, which commenced on 20 January 1960. The conference was attended by the leadership of Congo's main political parties and Belgian government representatives. During the discussions, the outline of Congo's transition into a democracy was determined.<sup>16</sup> Initially the Congolese delegates favoured different strategies to secure their independence. The first group comprised of radical nationalists like the MNC, who called for immediate independence and a centralised state. The second group were

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<sup>10</sup> John Springhall, *Decolonization since 1945* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 150; pp. 160–166.

<sup>11</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, 15; van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 250.

<sup>12</sup> Lefever, *Crisis in the Congo*, 6; For more information about the riots see: Marjory Taylor, 'The Belgian Congo Today: Background to the Leopoldville Riots', *The World Today*, 15, 9 (September 1959), pp. 351–364.

<sup>13</sup> Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, p. 74.

<sup>14</sup> Kisangani and Bobb, *Historical Dictionary of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, p. 372.

<sup>15</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, pp. 270–271.

<sup>16</sup> Kent, *America the UN and Decolonisation*, p. 7.

radical federalists like ABAKO, who called for immediate independence within a federal system. The last two groups were the moderate nationalists who wanted gradual independence and a centralised Congo, and moderate federalists like Moïse Tshombe's *Confederation des Associations Tribales du Katanga* (CONAKAT), who stood for gradual independence and an eventual federal system.<sup>17</sup> Despite the differences in opinion on what the future state should look like, the Congolese delegates unified themselves at the Round Table Conference in a Communal Front.<sup>18</sup>

The Belgian government representatives were badly prepared and were surprised by the unity that was displayed by the Communal Front. During the negotiations, Belgium reluctantly settled on 30 June 1960 as the date for Congolese independence, despite the Belgian delegates' attempts to implement a four-year plan, and despite the initial Congolese agreement at the Luluabourg Conference for 1 January 1961.<sup>19</sup> The Political Round Table Conference ended in February 1960 and was followed three months later by the important, but much smaller, Economic Round Table Conference in Brussels. Here Congo's *Loi Fondamentale* was drafted, which provided Congo with a temporary constitution.<sup>20</sup> The Belgian government was also able to secure most of the state portfolios, burdening future independent Congo with an enormous public debt.<sup>21</sup> The newly established date for independence gave the Congolese very little time to organise and implement all the necessary logistical steps that accompany the formation of an independent state, ranging from conducting elections to printing new currency and creating new car licence plates.<sup>22</sup>

Some 250 political parties took part in Congo's first general legislative elections in May 1960. Most of these parties were usually led by young men who had completed their secondary education, but very few held university degrees.<sup>23</sup> It was estimated that by 1960 the number of Congolese university graduates was no more than 30.<sup>24</sup> The *Mouvement National Congolais-Lumumba* (MNC-L) emerged as the largest party during the election, securing 33 parliamentary seats out of 137.<sup>25</sup> In 1959, Albert Kalonji had decided to form a

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<sup>17</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 273.

<sup>19</sup> Haskin, *The Tragic State of the Congo*, 20; van Reybrouck, *Congo*, pp. 273; 274.

<sup>20</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo 1960-2010*, 2012, pp. 459–460.

<sup>21</sup> Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, pp. 51–23; Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila*, p. 88; van Reybrouck, *Congo*, pp. 277–279.

<sup>22</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo, Een Geschiedenis*, p. 276.

<sup>23</sup> Haskin, *The Tragic State of the Congo*, p. 21.

<sup>24</sup> Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, p. 57.

<sup>25</sup> Haskin, *The Tragic State of the Congo*, p. 21.

separate party known as the *Mouvement National Congolais-Kalonji* (MNC-K) splitting up the former MNC.<sup>26</sup> Congo's first democratically elected government was formed on 23 June 1960. Although ABAKO only won 12 parliamentary seats in the elections, a compromise was reached where ABAKO's leader, Kasavubu, would become head of state, whilst Lumumba, as leader of MNC-L, would become prime minister.<sup>27</sup>

On Thursday 30 June 1960, Congo hosted its independence celebrations during which Belgium officially transferred power to the Congolese people. The festivities did not start well. Baudouin gave a pretentious ill-advised speech declaring that 'independence "crowned the work that the genius of Leopold, a champion of civilization", had initiated'.<sup>28</sup> Lumumba's spirited response was equally undiplomatic, stating that,

We have known ironies, insults, blows that we endured morning, noon and evening, just because we were the negroes. Who will forget that to a black, one said 'tu', certainly not as to a friend, but because the more honourable 'vous' was reserved for whites alone? [...] We have seen that in the towns there were magnificent dwellings for the whites and crumbling shanties for the blacks; that a black was not admitted in the motion picture theatres, in the restaurants, in the stores of the Europeans; that [on boats] a black travelled in the hold, at the feet of the whites in their luxury cabins. [...] All that, my brothers, we have endured.<sup>29</sup>

The unexpected speech left Baudouin infuriated and damaged Lumumba's relationship with Belgium beyond repair.<sup>30</sup> The celebrations in Leopoldville continued throughout the weekend despite this bad start to the day.<sup>31</sup> Congo's independence euphoria was interrupted on 5 July 1960 by a mutiny in Leopoldville among members of Congo's army, then still known as the *Force Publique*. Later that day the mutiny spread to Camp Hardy in Thysville. The Congolese soldiers were disgruntled about their conditions, pay, and rank, and felt that they did not benefit from independence unlike other government representatives.<sup>32</sup> Lumumba, who also held the post of minister of defence, desperately tried to find a solution to stabilise the situation. In the days that followed he: promoted the army's rank and file; dismissed the controversial Belgian Lieutenant-General, Émile Janssens, and replace him with Victor Lundula as commander of the army and Joseph Mobutu as chief of staff; implemented a rapid

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<sup>26</sup> Kisangani and Bobb, *Historical Dictionary of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, p. 372.

<sup>27</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 281.

<sup>28</sup> Gerard and Kucklick, *Death in the Congo*, p. 22.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 26.

<sup>30</sup> Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, p. 81.

<sup>31</sup> Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, p. 63.

<sup>32</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 16.

radicalisation of the African officer core; and changed the name of the *Force Publique* to the *Armée Nationale Congolaise*.<sup>33</sup> Despite Lumumba's best efforts, the mutiny rapidly spread to other army bases. Acts of violence against white civilians took place across Congo in the days that followed.<sup>34</sup> The stories regarding such violence were based on both real and imagined events of humiliation, abuse, and rape.<sup>35</sup> A mass exodus of Congo's white residents took place before even one reported white death had occurred.<sup>36</sup> The first white casualties only occurred on 9 July 1960, when five Europeans including the Italian consul were murdered in Elisabethville.<sup>37</sup> Their sudden departure had resulted in the collapse of Congo's daily functioning as most civil servants, health care workers, plantation owners, and members of the private sector fled.<sup>38</sup> The violence that was seemingly employed against white people in Congo, many of whom were Belgian, was used by Brussels as a reason to send in reinforcements to 'restore' order and 'protect' its citizens.<sup>39</sup> Although Belgium had an agreement with the Congolese government to supply military assistance to Congo, it could only do so if Leopoldville had given clear instructions. No such instructions were received.<sup>40</sup>

## 2.2 The secession of Katanga

On 9 July 1960, while Kasavubu and Lumumba were travelling across Congo in an effort to quell the growing unrest, leader of CONAKAT and Governor of Katanga, Moïse Tshombe, requested of Brussels that troops be sent to restore order in Katanga and disarm the mutineers.<sup>41</sup> The Belgian government sent a large contingent of reinforcements to its military bases in Kitona and Kamina. These troops were deployed across Katanga the next day.<sup>42</sup> The Belgian soldiers quickly gained control of various strategic points across Congo, and the Belgian navy unnecessarily bombarded the port of Matadi.<sup>43</sup> Tshombe used the chaos that was spreading across Congo as an excuse to declare the secession of the Katanga Province on

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<sup>33</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 305.

<sup>34</sup> Young, *Introduction a la Politique Congolais*, pp. 170–171; Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 17.

<sup>35</sup> Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War*, p. 88; van Reybrouck, *Congo*, pp. 306–307.

<sup>36</sup> Lefever, *Crisis in the Congo*, p. 11.

<sup>37</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 311.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 307–308.

<sup>39</sup> Lefever, *Crisis in the Congo*, 1965, p. 11.

<sup>40</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, pp. 311–312.

<sup>41</sup> Gérard-Libois, *Katanga Secession*, 96; van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 312.

<sup>42</sup> Lefever, *Crisis in the Congo*, pp. 11–12.

<sup>43</sup> Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, p. 82.

11 July 1960. He received immediate support from the Katangese mining company *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga* (UMHK) and Belgium.<sup>44</sup>

Katanga was Congo's most industrialised province, and UMHK was of great economic importance to Congo, as well as to the Western world. UMHK produced roughly 60 per cent of the world's cobalt and eight to ten per cent of the world's copper.<sup>45</sup> The company consisted of a complicated network of Belgian, British, South African, and American investment interests.<sup>46</sup> UMHK wielded significant influence over the Katangese government throughout the secession, and greatly financed its endeavours by contributing an estimated \$40 million per year (c. \$301 million in today's currency).<sup>47</sup> Brussels equally considered Katanga to be of great economic importance, and during the first months of its secession provided Elisabethville with significant aid. By the end of July 1960, the Belgian private sector in Katanga cooperated with the secessionist government; the Belgian government provided financial, technical, and material aid to Katanga via a Belgian Technical Mission; the Belgian army provided military assistance to the Katangese state; and Brussels established unofficial diplomatic relations with Elisabethville.<sup>48</sup> Despite supporting Tshombe's government, Belgium never officially recognised the state of Katanga.<sup>49</sup> The aid Katanga received from Belgium and UMHK gave the secession the opportunity to gain momentum and the ability to organise itself militarily.<sup>50</sup>

Besides UMHK's and Belgium's undeniable influence, there was an equally important Katangese nationalist project that drove its political leadership to establish and defend the secession.<sup>51</sup> The province had always led a quasi-independent existence to the rest of Congo. Separatist sentiments amongst white Katangese settlers who called for more autonomy had been around since the 1920s and had grown stronger after the Second World War.<sup>52</sup> Besides the political demands of white settlers, black Katangese nationalism had begun to form in the latter half of the 1950s, and organisations such as *Groupement des Associations de l'empire*

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<sup>44</sup> Gerard and Kucklick, *Death in the Congo*, p. 42; Vanthemsche, *Belgium and the Congo*, p. 210.

<sup>45</sup> Alan James, *Britain, the Cold War, and the Congo Crisis, 1960–63*, p. 145; Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 37.

<sup>46</sup> Hempstone, *Rebels, Mercenaries and Dividends*, pp. 45–47.

<sup>47</sup> Gibbs, 'The United Nations, International Peacekeeping and the Question of 'Impartiality'', p. 369; <http://www.usinflationcalculator.com> (accessed on 15 December 2015)

<sup>48</sup> Gérard-Libois, *Katanga Secession*, pp. 103; 105.

<sup>49</sup> Lemarchand, 'The Limits of Self-Determination', p. 415.

<sup>50</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 42.

<sup>51</sup> For more information see: Larmer and Kennes, 'Rethinking the Katangese Secession'.

<sup>52</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, pp. 38–39.



*Lunda* and eventually CONAKAT were established.<sup>53</sup> During its 1960 electioneering campaign, CONAKAT strongly proposed a Congolese federation that would give autonomy to the different provinces, and would result in 'authentic Katangese' controlling the province of Katanga.<sup>54</sup> The CONAKAT party, however, did not fare as well as it had hoped in the elections.<sup>55</sup> Much to his disgruntlement, Tshombe did not receive a ministerial position and reluctantly had to settle for provincial governor of Katanga in a united Congo.<sup>56</sup> Disagreement exists on whether the Belgian government encouraged and orchestrated the secession of Katanga.<sup>57</sup> What cannot be denied is that after Tshombe's announcement a close relationship began to grow between the Katangese leadership, the Belgian military and UMHK.<sup>58</sup>

The day after Katanga's declaration of independence, Kasavubu and Lumumba sent a telegram to the United Nations (UN). In it, they requested UN assistance to protect Congo against the external aggression of Belgium's military intervention, and protested against Belgium's support of the Katangese secession.<sup>59</sup> The UN did not respond immediately. On the 13 July 1960, Lumumba and Kasavubu made a public appeal to the Premier of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev, asking if the Soviet Union would aid Congo if the West were unable or unwilling to intervene.<sup>60</sup> Lumumba's decision to look towards the communist block for assistance opened up the events in Congo to the Cold War. It also further alienated an already unpopular Lumumba from the West.<sup>61</sup> The Western powers wanted to keep the Soviet Union out of Congo, as they feared a pro-communist Congolese government. They also did not want the possibility of another armed Cold War conflict like Korea breaking out.<sup>62</sup> The Korean war of 1950 to 1953 had seen a Western aligned UN force supporting the South Korean government against an invasion by a communist supported North Korean government. This had resulted in a tense Cold War international conflict.<sup>63</sup> On 13 July 1960,

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<sup>53</sup> For more information on white and black Katangese separatist sentiments see: Romain Yakemtchouk, *Aux Origines Du Séparatisme Katangais*; Larmer and Kennes, 'Rethinking the Katangese Secession', pp. 745–746.

<sup>54</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, 269; Larmer and Kennes, 'Rethinking the Katangese Secession', p. 746.

<sup>55</sup> Larmer and Kennes, 'Rethinking the Katangese Secession', p. 748.

<sup>56</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, pp. 301–302.

<sup>57</sup> Gérard-Libois, *Katanga Secession*, pp. 281–283.

<sup>58</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 313.

<sup>59</sup> Gendebien, *L'Intervention Des Nations Unies Au Congo*, pp. 29–30; Abi-Saab, *The United Nations Operation in the Congo*, p. 9; Lefever, *Crisis in the Congo*, p. 316.

<sup>60</sup> Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War*, p. 95.

<sup>61</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 320.

<sup>62</sup> James, 'Britain, the Cold War, and the Congo Crisis', p. 155.

<sup>63</sup> For more information on the Korean War see: Bruce Cummings, *The Korean War: A History* (New York: Modern Library, 2010).

the UN Security Council passed a resolution calling for the withdrawal of Belgian troops from Congo, and authorising military assistance to aid the Congolese National Army in restoring order.<sup>64</sup> The first troops of its peacekeeping force, known as *Opération des Nations Unies au Congo* (ONUC), arrived in Congo two days later.<sup>65</sup> The strength of the ONUC forces surpassed 14,500 men by the end of the August 1960. It consisted of troops from countries such as Morocco, Ghana, Tunisia, Ethiopia, Ireland, and Sweden.<sup>66</sup> At the height of ONUC's mission in Congo, it 'included almost 20,000 men, officers, and specialised personnel from 35 states'.<sup>67</sup> Lumumba was, however, not content with the UN resolution as it did not make any explicit reference to ending the secession of Katanga and only referred to the removal of Belgian military personnel.<sup>68</sup>

To make matters worse, Kalonji declared the independence of South Kasai on 8 August 1960. The South Kasai region produced roughly 60 per cent of the world's industrial diamonds as well as most of Congo's gem diamonds.<sup>69</sup> Similar to Tshombe, Kalonji had supported the idea of a federalist system before the elections and had not received a ministerial post when the government was formed.<sup>70</sup> Kalonji's state of South Kasai was bankrolled by the *Société Minière du Bécéka*, which like UMHK formed part of *Société Générale de Belgique*.<sup>71</sup> Kalonji justified the secession of South Kasai with the UN Charter's right to self-determination.<sup>72</sup> The Leopoldville government had thus lost control of Congo's two most profitable provinces two months into independence.<sup>73</sup>

Not wanting to wait for a response from the UN, which had previously avoided interfering in the secession of Katanga, Lumumba decided to end the South Kasai secession himself. In late August 1960, he sent in the Congolese National Army to regain control of the region. This botched military offensive resulted in the death of many innocent civilians, and Lumumba

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<sup>64</sup> Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo*, p. 62.

<sup>65</sup> Kent, *America the UN and Decolonisation*, 2010, pp. 20–21; van Reybrouck, *Congo*, pp. 316; 318.

<sup>66</sup> Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, p. 77.

<sup>67</sup> Lefever, *Crisis in the Congo: A United Nations Force in Action*, 1965, p. 15.

<sup>68</sup> Miles Larmer, 'Of Local Identities and Transnational Conflict: The Katangese Gendarmes and Central-Southern Africa's Forty-Years War 1960-99', in: Niri Arielli and Bruce Collins, eds., *Transnational Soldiers, Foreign Military Enlistment in the Modern Era* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 164.

<sup>69</sup> Vanthemsche, *Belgium and the Congo*, p. 202; Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 45.

<sup>70</sup> Weiss, *Political Protest in the Congo*, Appendix to Part One; Haskin, *The Tragic State of the Congo*, p. 19; van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 320.

<sup>71</sup> Gibbs, 'The United Nations, International Peacekeeping and the Question of 'Impartiality'', p. 369; Vanthemsche, *Belgium and the Congo*, pp. 202; 244.

<sup>72</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 44.

<sup>73</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 321.

received significant international criticism for it. It also further deteriorated relations between Lumumba and UN Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld.<sup>74</sup> Lumumba's relationship with Kasavubu had also become increasingly strained over time. On 6 September 1960, President Kasavubu, encouraged by his Western advisors, announced that he deposed Lumumba from his post as Congo's prime minister. Lumumba countered Kasavubu's decision and announced that as prime minister he deposed of Kasavubu from the presidency.<sup>75</sup>

Because of the deadlock between Congo's two most senior politicians, Mobutu declared on 14 September 1960, that he was suspending Congolese politics for six months. Mobutu decided to remedy the dysfunctional situation by temporarily installing the *Collège Des Commissaires Généraux*. This College of Commissioners was headed by Congo's Minister of External Affairs in Lumumba's cabinet, Justin Bomboko, and consisted of young Congolese intellectuals who had studied abroad. They would take over the duties of the Congolese politicians until further notice.<sup>76</sup> Mobutu, who was supported by the US, also expelled the Soviet and Czech embassies from Leopoldville as a means of appeasing the West.<sup>77</sup> During the suspension of Congo's parliament, Kasavubu remained president although his power was ceremonial. Lumumba was put under house arrest.<sup>78</sup> Lumumba, leader of the election's winning party and Congo's first democratically elected prime minister, had been sidelined from the political theatre.

By mid-November 1960, Lumumba's alienated political followers in Leopoldville had begun to head to the city of Stanleyville in the Orientale Province. The group was led by Lumumba's former Vice-Prime Minister Antoine Gizenga, who was president of the *Parti Solidaire Africain* (PSA). The PSA was a left leaning political party that had formed a coalition with the MNC-L before the elections.<sup>79</sup> Both Leopoldville and Stanleyville sent a deputation to the UN to settle the matter of who Congo's legitimate leader was, Kasavubu or Lumumba. Although members of the Afro-Asian block clearly supported Lumumba, the Americans and the West greatly favoured Kasavubu. The UN voted in favour of Kasavubu in

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<sup>74</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 321.

<sup>75</sup> Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, p. 97; James, 'Britain, the Cold War and the Congo Crisis', p. 145; Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>76</sup> Kisangani and Bobb, *Historical Dictionary of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, pp. 89-90; van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 322.

<sup>77</sup> James, 'Britain, the Cold War, and the Congo Crisis', p. 160.

<sup>78</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 322.

<sup>79</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 18; James, 'Britain, the Cold War, and the Congo Crisis', p. 157.

late November 1960.<sup>80</sup> After this decision, the ‘Lumumbaists’ in Stanleyville set up a new government on 12 December 1960 which they believed represented Congo’s true political leadership. By the end of the month, the Stanleyville government controlled most of the Orientale Province.<sup>81</sup>

Lumumba managed to escape from his house arrest in Leopoldville on the night of 27 November 1961, and tried to reach his new support base in Stanleyville.<sup>82</sup> However, four days later, Lumumba was intercepted and arrested by members of the Congolese National Army.<sup>83</sup> Under UN orders, a group of Ghanaian ONUC troops permitted the arrest.<sup>84</sup> Lumumba was eventually transported to Camp Hardy in Thysville where he was kept in a cell. After soldiers at the military base started mutinying, the Leopoldville government, together with its Western advisors and the Belgian authorities in Brussels, decided to transport Lumumba, Joseph Okito and Maurice Mpolo (who both had been arrested later) to Katanga on 17 January 1961. Despite Tshombe’s initial reluctance to receive the high profile prisoners, he eventually agreed.<sup>85</sup> The Katangese leadership decided to kill the prisoners that same day. After having been severely beaten, the three were transported into the bush some 80 kilometres outside of Elisabethville. Here in the middle of the night Tshombe, together with Katanga’s Minister of the Interior Godefroid Munongo and its Minister of Finance Jean-Baptiste Kibwe, watched as members of the Katangese gendarmes and four Belgians executed Lumumba, Okito, and Mpolo and buried them a shallow grave.<sup>86</sup>

Thus, half a year into independence Congo had four different governments. One in Leopoldville, one in Stanleyville, one in Katanga and one in South Kasai.<sup>87</sup> After the news of Lumumba’s murder reached the world in February 1961, Gizenga’s Stanleyville government received increased international support. It was recognised by 21 countries, including: the Soviet Union, the People’s Republic of China, East Germany, Poland, Yugoslavia, Ghana, Guinea, Morocco, and the United Arab Republic (then a political Union between Syria and

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<sup>80</sup> Gerard and Kucklick, *Death in the Congo*, pp. 177-178.

<sup>81</sup> Young, *Introduction a La Politique Congolais*, p. 177.

<sup>82</sup> Gerard and Kucklick, *Death in the Congo*, p. 178.

<sup>83</sup> Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, pp. 118–119; James, ‘Britain, the Cold War, and the Congo Crisis’, p. 157.

<sup>84</sup> Gerard and Kucklick, *Death in the Congo*, p. 181.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, p. 196.

<sup>86</sup> Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, pp. 124–125; van Reybrouck, *Congo*, pp. 325–327. For more information on the murder of Lumumba, see: Gerard and Kucklick, *Death in the Congo*; Ludo de Witte, *The Assassination of Lumumba*.

<sup>87</sup> Vanthemsche, *Belgium and the Congo*, p. 203.

Egypt).<sup>88</sup> At the time, the Lumumbaists had extended their sphere of influence and now controlled the entire Oriental and Kivu Provinces, and significant parts of northern Katanga and northern Kasai.<sup>89</sup> Such a development worried Western powers as the leftist aligned Stanleyville government was gaining much ground, threatening the moderate Leopoldville government that was supported by the United States and Belgium.<sup>90</sup> Tshombe's Elisabethville government mainly received its support from UMHK, Belgium, Portugal, the Central African Federation, South Africa, and Congo-Brazzaville.<sup>91</sup> Finally, Kalonji's South Kasai government was supported by Belgian diamond exploiters and the *Société Internationale Forestière et Minière* or *Forminière* mining company. Whilst Leopoldville and Stanleyville both wanted a united Congo, Katanga and South Kasai were defending their right of regional independence.<sup>92</sup> On top of this political calamity, the residents of Northern Katanga had commenced with an insurrection against Tshombe's Katangese government.

The leaders of the *Association des Baluba du Katanga* (BALUBUKAT) who had previously been sidelined by CONAKAT in Katanga's provincial government, proclaimed the autonomous state of Lualaba in North Katanga on the 20 October 1960. The area comprised two thirds of the Katanga Province. Prosper Mwamba-Llunga was elected as president and Jason Sendwe became high commissioner of state.<sup>93</sup> The Lualaba government received significant support from the Stanleyville government.<sup>94</sup> The north Katangese rural youths and Katangese gendarmerie were engaged in a two-year long violent conflict that severely destabilised the province.<sup>95</sup> Tshombe had systematically built up the strength of his Katangese gendarmerie since declaring independence, and from January 1961 had reinforced it with white mercenaries from Belgium, France, South Africa, and Rhodesia.<sup>96</sup> With the violence in Katanga rapidly escalating, the UN decided to direct its attention towards the province of Katanga and try to gain control over the areas under Lualaba control.<sup>97</sup> The UN had become the target of severe criticism after the announcement of Lumumba's death,

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<sup>88</sup> Fox, de Craemer, and Ribeaucourt, "The Second Independence", p. 89; van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 327; James, 'Britain, the Cold War', p. 159.

<sup>89</sup> Young, *Introduction a La Politique Congolais*, p. 177.

<sup>90</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 324.

<sup>91</sup> Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo*, p. 73. For more information on the Central African Federation's relationship with Katanga see: Hughes, *The Central African Federation, Katanga and the Congo Crisis*.

<sup>92</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 324.

<sup>93</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 52.

<sup>94</sup> Young, *Introduction a La Politique Congolais*, p. 178.

<sup>95</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 52.

<sup>96</sup> Larmer, 'Of Local Identities and Transnational Conflict', pp. 165; 166.

<sup>97</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, pp. 53–54.

forcing it to change its position of relative non-interference. As a result, the UN Security Council passed a resolution in February 1961 that authorised ONUC troops to use force if necessary. The resolution furthermore demanded the withdrawal of all mercenaries, foreign troops, paramilitary personnel, and political advisors in Congo that were not under UN command.<sup>98</sup>

Leopoldville's College of Commissioners had been disbanded in January 1961, and the following month Ileo had been appointed as prime minister to a provisional government.<sup>99</sup> Throughout the first half of 1961, the Leopoldville government and the UN took a diplomatic approach to try to end the Katangese secession. Conferences where the future of the Congolese state was discussed were hosted in Tananarive, Coquilhatville, and Leopoldville.<sup>100</sup> Despite Leopoldville's efforts to move away from a unitary model, Tshombe's continuous refusal to come to a compromise resulted in a breakdown of negotiations.<sup>101</sup> Six months later, Cyrille Adoula was elected as prime minister at the political gathering at the University of Lovanium.<sup>102</sup> Adoula was seen as a moderate choice; he was believed to be strongly anti-communist and his appointment was mainly the result of the machinations of the CIA.<sup>103</sup> Congo's new government under Adoula comprised of a careful balance of different political groups. It was tasked with ending the secession and restoring the socio-economic and political order in Congo. Adoula acted promptly and immediately asked the UN to issue a warrant of arrest for the Katangese leadership.<sup>104</sup> Because of Tshombe's continued refusal to come to an agreement with Leopoldville, the UN launched Operation Rumpunch in August 1961 and Operation Morthor the following month. Both operations were an attempt to take control of Katanga, disarm its gendarmerie, and expel the growing number of foreign mercenaries and military advisors.<sup>105</sup> Partly successful in achieving its aims, the offensive gave the UN control of certain strategic positions in Elisabethville and largely secured control over Northern Katanga, successfully ending the insurrection.<sup>106</sup> After the later UN offensives in Katanga, Tshombe was pressured into renewing negotiations and met with the Leopoldville government in Kitona in December 1961. Although Tshombe

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<sup>98</sup> Gérard-Libois, *Katanga Secession*, pp. 195-196.

<sup>99</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 18.

<sup>100</sup> Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, pp. 127-128; van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 333.

<sup>101</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 333.

<sup>102</sup> Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, p. 128.

<sup>103</sup> Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, pp. 146-148.

<sup>104</sup> James, 'Britain, the Cold War, and the Congo Crisis', p. 164.

<sup>105</sup> Lefever, *Crisis in the Congo*, pp. 77-78; 80-81; Kent, *America, the UN and Decolonisation*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>106</sup> Larmer and Kennes, 'Rethinking the Katangese Secession', p. 754; Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, pp. 53-54.

initially came to an agreement with Adoula, in the end he refused to implement any of its resolutions.<sup>107</sup>

Meanwhile, Adoula tried to find a peaceful solution to end the opposing Stanleyville government and invited Gizenga back to Leopoldville. As a token of reconciliation, Gizenga was appointed as Adoula's vice-prime minister, but in October 1961, he resigned and returned to Stanleyville.<sup>108</sup> As a result, the Leopoldville government launched a military offensive in the Oriental Province at the start of 1962, and successfully brought down the parallel government in Stanleyville.<sup>109</sup> Gizenga was arrested and imprisoned on the Bule-Bemba Island.<sup>110</sup> Similarly, Kalonji's South Kasai secession was forcefully ended by the Congolese National Army and ONUC troops on 2 February 1962. Kasai's stability was short-lived, as in October 1962, an insurrection emerged in north-western South Kasai which only ended in April 1964.<sup>111</sup> After thus largely regaining control over the Oriental Province and South Kasai, Katanga remained the last obstacle that stood in the way of a unified Congo. Between March and June 1962, the Adoula government and UN held a new series of negotiations in Leopoldville to broker a peaceful end to the Katangese secession. As in the past these talks faltered, and were followed by a plan of negotiations that was set up by UN General Secretary U Thant.<sup>112</sup> U Thant had replaced Hammarskjöld as UN secretary general, after the latter had died in a mysterious aeroplane crash near the Northern Rhodesian town of Ndola in September 1961.<sup>113</sup>

The U Thant Plan aimed to reintegrate Katanga into Congo and called for a federal and representative government.<sup>114</sup> Despite Tshombe's acceptance of the plan, Katanga's leadership did not show any indication that it would end the secession.<sup>115</sup> By the end of November 1962, the Adoula government was extremely fragile and a solution to stop the secession of Katanga needed to be found before the Leopoldville government would topple

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<sup>107</sup> Young, *Introduction a La Politique Congolais*, 185-186; Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>108</sup> Kisangani and Bobb, *Historical Dictionary of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, 202; Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, p. 131.

<sup>109</sup> Hoskyns, *The Congo Since Independence*, p. 459; James, 'Britain, the Cold War, and the Congo Crisis', p. 160.

<sup>110</sup> Kisangani and Bobb, *Historical Dictionary of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, p. 131.

<sup>111</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, pp. 18; 37.

<sup>112</sup> Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Cong*, pp. 178-179; Kisangani and Bobb, *Historical Dictionary of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, p. 308.

<sup>113</sup> For a detailed summery on Hammarskjöld's death see: Williams, *Who Killed Hammarskjöld?*.

<sup>114</sup> Gérard-Libois, *Katanga Secession*, pp. 255-256.

<sup>115</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 44.

because of opposing political forces.<sup>116</sup> Tshombe's continued unwillingness to cooperate resulted in the launch of Operation Grand Slam in December 1962.<sup>117</sup> ONUC forces pushed down to southern Katanga with a large contingency of 13,500 men and moved against the Katangese army. The UN had captured most of the strategic locations in Katanga by early January 1963. On 14 January 1963, after 917 days of 'independence', Tshombe announced the end of the secession.<sup>118</sup> Large contingents of Katangese gendarmes subsequently crossed the border into Portuguese Angola, while Tshombe went into self-imposed exile in Europe.<sup>119</sup> The number of ONUC forces stationed in Congo dropped to about 7,700 in August 1963, and the UN mission eventually ended the following year in June.<sup>120</sup>

### **2.3 The Second Independence Movement**

Despite ending the Katangese secession and unifying Congo, Adoula's political position remained extremely unstable. The violent insurgency in Kasai continued to destabilise the region, and Adoula was constantly being challenged by the opposition.<sup>121</sup> In the meantime, the Congolese government tried to attend to some of the urgent matters it had been unable to resolve after independence due to the ensuing chaos of the past three years. A new constitution was written which implemented a federalist system transforming Congo into a decentralised state. Between 1960 and 1963, Congo's inflation had also risen by more than 20 per cent and the budget deficit had more than doubled. This had resulted in major macro-economic imbalances that needed to be attended to as unemployment was rampant and the country's economy and infrastructure lay in shambles.<sup>122</sup> Two-thirds of Leopoldville's population was unemployed by October 1963, and the following month the Congolese government introduced an austerity programme that was designed by the International Monetary Fund. As a result, however, consumer prices increased and living standards continued to drop.<sup>123</sup>

Congo's civilian population had become increasingly frustrated with their deteriorating conditions and a sense of deprivation began to develop among many citizens.<sup>124</sup> Most of

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<sup>116</sup> Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo*, p. 184.

<sup>117</sup> Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, p. 173.

<sup>118</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 44.

<sup>119</sup> Tshombe, *My Fifteen Months in Government*, p. 13; Larmer and Kennes, 'Rethinking the Katangese Secession', p. 756.

<sup>120</sup> Young, 'Rebellion in the Congo', p. 211; Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 63.

<sup>121</sup> Kent, *America the UN and Decolonisation*, p. 166; Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, p. 175.

<sup>122</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 62; Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, p. 181.

<sup>123</sup> Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, p. 146.

<sup>124</sup> Fox, de Craemer, and Ribeaucourt, "'The Second Independence'", pp. 90–91.



Congo's rural and urban areas had been badly affected by the three years of instability and violence, and a large socio-economic divide had emerged between the new administrative and political elite, and the masses of labourers, peasantry, and unemployed. Such a sense of deprivation was particularly present among the growing number of young men who migrated to Congo's urban areas.<sup>125</sup> These feelings of discontent and disillusionment with the political leadership gave rise to a new movement of radical opposition that translated itself into the popular Kwilu and Eastern rebellions, also sometimes referred to as the Second Independence Movement.<sup>126</sup>

Ever since Mobutu's political intervention in September 1960, Congo's nationalist block had been sidelined, and by mid-1963 had lost all of its political influence in government.<sup>127</sup> Many of these alienated nationalists decided that the pro-Western Leopoldville government needed to be overthrown. Two opposition groups emerged; one in the Kwilu region of the Leopoldville Province, and one in eastern Congo in the Kivu and Orientale Provinces.<sup>128</sup> Both movements mobilised the rural masses and both did not want to establish separate states, but instead wanted to gain control over the existing state apparatus.<sup>129</sup> Despite sharing the same objective and implementing similar methods of resistance, the two rebellions were not connected as they did not have a joint organisational structure and were geographically and culturally different.<sup>130</sup> The greatest difference was that the Kwilu rebellion was more radical, and had a clear and compressive programme of social transformation in contrast to the Eastern rebellion, which was mainly based on narrow class interests.<sup>131</sup>

The Kwilu rebellion was organised by Pierre Mulele. Mulele had initially entered Congolese politics as leader of the PSA. Just before independence, the PSA departed from their previous federalist position and joined Lumumba's nationalist coalition where Mulele became minister of education.<sup>132</sup> After the collapse of Lumumba's government, Mulele joined Gizenga's Stanleyville government, and he was appointed as its ambassador to Egypt. On his travels abroad, Mulele visited the People's Republic of China where he is believed to have received

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<sup>125</sup> Young, 'Rebellion in the Congo', pp. 216; 218-219.

<sup>126</sup> Nzongola-Ntalaja, 'The Bourgeoisie and Revolution in the Congo', p. 511.

<sup>127</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 70.

<sup>128</sup> Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, p. 182; Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 65.

<sup>129</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 66.

<sup>130</sup> Young, 'Rebellion in the Congo', p. 210; Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 66.

<sup>131</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 66.

<sup>132</sup> Kisangani and Bobb, *Historical Dictionary of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, p. 376.

training in guerrilla tactics.<sup>133</sup> He returned to the Kwilu District sometime in July 1963, and visited training camps that had been established according to his instructions from abroad. At these camps, young men were trained in elements of guerrilla warfare. They also received ideological instruction that was vaguely based upon Marxist-Leninism.<sup>134</sup> By the end of 1963, Mulele had roughly 10,000 followers whose typical age was fifteen to twenty.<sup>135</sup> To his followers, he was their saviour who possessed magical powers and would lead them to victory in achieving a new and equal Congo.<sup>136</sup> Some of the qualities and characteristics associated with Mulele can be link to messianic religious movements that had been popular in the Kwilu region before and around the time of Congolese independence.<sup>137</sup>

Mulele's rural guerrillas launched their offensive against the Leopoldville government in early January 1964.<sup>138</sup> Insurgents armed with rudimentary weapons attacked government outposts, mission stations, and palm oil mills. In less than a month, Mulele's guerrillas had gained control over large parts of the Kwilu region. The Congolese National Army was sent in to suppress the rebellion. By April 1964, it had contained most of the area. It took significantly longer to isolate and overthrow all of the partisan groups, and required extra support from Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) employed Cuban pilots.<sup>139</sup> Operating through a Lichtenstein front company called Western International Ground Maintenance Operation (WIGMO) the CIA had organised an 'instant Air Force' for the Congolese government.<sup>140</sup> Mulele's men had been fairly disciplined during the early stages of the rebellion and followed the strict rules they had been taught during their training.<sup>141</sup> However, as the rebellion developed the actions of the men spiralled out of control and violence against regular citizens increased.<sup>142</sup>

At the time Mulele was training his guerrilla army, another group of nationalists begun to congregate in Congo-Brazzaville just across the river from Leopoldville. In October 1963,

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<sup>133</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 338; Fox, de Craemer, and Ribeaucourt, "'The Second Independence'", p. 89; Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 69.

<sup>134</sup> Fox, de Craemer, and Ribeaucourt, "'The Second Independence'", p. 97.

<sup>135</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, pp. 94; 69.

<sup>136</sup> Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, p. 182.

<sup>137</sup> Verhaegen and Centre de recherche et d'information socio-politiques, *Rebellions Au Congo, Tome I*, pp. 47-50. Fox, de Craemer, and Ribeaucourt, "'The Second Independence'", pp. 89-99.

<sup>138</sup> Verhaegen and Centre de recherche et d'information socio-politiques, *Rebellions Au Congo, Tome I*, pp. 141-142.

<sup>139</sup> Kent, *America the UN and Decolonisation*, p. 172; Young, 'Rebellion in the Congo', p. 211.

<sup>140</sup> Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, p. 156.

<sup>141</sup> Fox, de Craemer, and Ribeaucourt, "'The Second Independence'", p. 100.

<sup>142</sup> Kent, *America the UN and Decolonisation*, pp. 170-171; Fox, de Craemer, and Ribeaucourt, "'The Second Independence'", p. 107.

they formed the *Conseil National de Libération* (CNL).<sup>143</sup> The CNL was headed by Christophe Gbenye and predominantly comprised of former MNC-L and PSA members.<sup>144</sup> Congo-Brazzaville's new socialist orientated President, Alphonse Massamba-Débat, allowed the CNL to establish training camps in Brazzaville.<sup>145</sup> In May 1964, the CNL launched a campaign of urban attacks against the Congolese government, infiltrating small groups of trained CNL members into Congo.<sup>146</sup> These early attacks consisted of public bombings in Leopoldville, and at a later stage a small armed insurrection that took control of some towns. However, such early campaigns by the CNL were ineffective, and the Congolese National Army and Congolese security services were able to contain their impact easily.<sup>147</sup>

What was considerably more successful was the CNL's eastern offensive in the Kivu Province. In February 1964, rebel leader Gaston Soumialot arrived in Burundi's capital city, Bujumbura, to establish a CNL office and set up training camps.<sup>148</sup> The CNL also created camps in neighbouring Uganda and Tanzania.<sup>149</sup> The CNL's eastern offensive commenced in mid-May 1964, when rebels attacked Uvira on the Congolese side of Lake Tanganyika and moved westwards through the Kivu Province, as well as southwards into north Katanga where they linked up with a local uprising.<sup>150</sup> The Congolese National Army troops that were caught in the path of the CNL abandoned their post, and the rapidly advancing rebel army picked up support along the way among the rural population.<sup>151</sup> When taking over a new town or city the rebel army executed all individuals whom they felt represented the new exploitative elite.<sup>152</sup> The badly equipped but highly successful rebel army had reached Stanleyville on 5 August 1964. The former Lumumbaists capital became the base from where the CNL would launch further offensives across Congo.<sup>153</sup> One month later, the CNL announced the formation of the *République Populaire du Congo*, with Stanleyville as the seat of government. Gbenye became its president, Soumialot minister of defence, and Nicolas Olenga commander in chief of its army, which was known as the *Armée Populaire de la*

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<sup>143</sup> Young, *Introduction a La Politique Congolais*, p. 190; van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 338.

<sup>144</sup> Young, 'Post-Independence Politics in the Congo', *Transition*, 26 (1966), p. 39.

<sup>145</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 70; Young, 'Rebellion in the Congo', p. 211; Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, p. 182.

<sup>146</sup> Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, p. 148.

<sup>147</sup> Young, 'Rebellion in the Congo', p. 211.

<sup>148</sup> van Reybrouck, p. 340; Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 70; Young, 'Rebellion in the Congo', p. 211.

<sup>149</sup> Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, p. 182.

<sup>150</sup> Kent, *America the UN and Decolonisation*, pp. 175–176.

<sup>151</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 342.

<sup>152</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 86.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid*, p. 69.

*Liberation* (APL).<sup>154</sup> Unlike Mulele's rural guerrilla movement, the APL was organised like a regular army and mimicked the structure of the Congolese National Army.<sup>155</sup>

By the first half of 1964, the Leopoldville government's control over Congo was severely threatened as a result of the popular Kwilu and Eastern rebellions.<sup>156</sup> Due to the growing instability in Congo, Belgium convinced Kasavubu to remove the increasingly unpopular Adoula and replace him with Tshombe.<sup>157</sup> Tshombe returned from exile on 24 June 1964, and early the following month was sworn in as prime minister.<sup>158</sup> He was tasked with forming a transitional government and ending the local rebellions, which at the time controlled approximately three-fifths of Congo.<sup>159</sup> Tshombe initially attempted to come to a negotiated agreement with the rebels. Besides establishing contact with rebel leaders, he nominated CNL member, André Lubaya, to his cabinet, and freed Gizenga.<sup>160</sup> Despite Tshombe's efforts to end the rebellion peacefully, it became increasingly clear to the Leopoldville government that military action needed to be taken if it wanted to maintain control of Congo. Fearing communist infiltration, the United States provided the Congolese government with military hardware, whilst the CIA's WIGMO pilots flew for the Congolese Air Force.<sup>161</sup> The United States and Belgium also sent in military advisors to train and coordinate the disorganised Congolese National Army.<sup>162</sup> Furthermore, Tshombe agreed to recall his former Katangese gendarmes and mercenaries, who had been waiting across the border in Portuguese Angola since January 1963, to assist the Congolese National Army.<sup>163</sup> New mercenaries were also recruited, at first in South Africa and Rhodesia, and later in Belgium and France.<sup>164</sup> Tshombe appointed Belgian Colonel Frederic Vandewalle as a technical military advisor. Vandewalle was a former administrator-general of the *Sûreté* in Leopoldville who had been sent to Katanga in early 1961 and who later had run the Belgian Consulate in Elisabethville.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, pp. 342–343.

<sup>155</sup> Young, 'Post-Independence Politics in the Congo', p. 40.

<sup>156</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 70.

<sup>157</sup> Kent, *America the UN and Decolonisation*, p. 167; Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, pp. 86–87; Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, p. 191.

<sup>158</sup> Tshombe, *My Fifteen Months in Government*, p. 13.

<sup>159</sup> Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, p. 191.

<sup>160</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 88.

<sup>161</sup> For more information on the Cuban pilots see: Villafana, *Cold War in the Congo*.

<sup>162</sup> Gleijeses, "'Flee! The White Giants are Coming!'", p. 213; Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 87.

<sup>163</sup> Colvin, *The Rise and Fall of Moïse Tshombe*, pp. 176–177.

<sup>164</sup> Hughes, *The Central African Federation, Katanga and the Congo Crisis*, pp. 2; 35; Larmer, 'Of Local Identities and Transnational Conflict', p. 168; Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 20.

<sup>165</sup> Gérard-Libois, *Katanga Secession*, p. 163.

Vandewalle's new task was organising the 5th Mechanised Brigade, a force that consisted of Congolese National Army soldiers, Katangese gendarmes, and mercenary forces.<sup>166</sup>

The recruitment of white mercenaries, especially from South African and Rhodesia, was not Tshombe's first choice. Tshombe was aware that this decision would damage his fragile image and threaten his uncertain political position. The United States government had initially approached the Belgian government to see if they were willing to provide troops to pacify the situation in Congo. Although Brussels declined to send in forces, it promised to increase its number of technical military advisors.<sup>167</sup> Throughout July and August 1964, Tshombe had requested the governments of Senegal, Ethiopia, and Nigeria to send troops to assist the Congolese National Army. The approached countries were, however, reluctant to assist Leopoldville and Tshombe was forced to rely on a white mercenary force. Brussels and Washington supplied the necessary finances and equipment to make this force operational.<sup>168</sup>

The tide of the CNL's eastern rebellion began to turn as the Central Congolese government launched its offensive in August 1964. In desperation the rebel army decided to hold white civilians hostage, using them as a shield against the increased aerial bombardments by the Congolese Air Force, and as a bargaining chip that could halt the Western backed offensive.<sup>169</sup> On 24 November 1964, after a series of negotiations to free these hostages, the Central Congolese government launched Operation Dragon Rouge. The offensive was a joint initiative that was comprised of a Belgian-US air offensive, and a Congolese National Army and mercenary ground offensive on Stanleyville. It successfully freed c. 2,000 hostages that were held captive by the rebels.<sup>170</sup> The CNL's loss of its capital forced its leadership into exile, marking the turning point of the rebellion.<sup>171</sup>

The foreign dimension of Operation Dragon Rouge sparked severe criticism across much of Africa, Asia and the communist world. This resulted in a sudden increase in aid to the CNL by amongst others the Soviet Union, Egypt, Algeria, and the People's Republic of China, which neighbouring countries like Sudan, Uganda, and Tanzania allowed passing through

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<sup>166</sup> Tshombe, *My Fifteen Months in Government*, p. 38.

<sup>167</sup> Gleijeses, "Flee! The White Giants are Coming!", p. 213.

<sup>168</sup> Tshombe, *My Fifteen Months in Government*, p. 38; Gleijeses, "Flee! The White Giants are Coming!", pp. 215-216.

<sup>169</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 87; Young, 'Rebellion in the Congo', p. 214.

<sup>170</sup> Young, 'Rebellion in the Congo', p. 214.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

their territory.<sup>172</sup> Cuba was the only country that decided to send troops to aid the CNL. In late April 1965, a group of Cuban fighters led by Ernesto 'Che' Guevara arrived in Congo; only to return home eight months later, greatly disappointed in the rebel forces' lack of morale and revolutionary capabilities.<sup>173</sup> The rebellion lost its momentum despite the initial increase in external support. Factionalism emerged among the exiled leadership, and demoralisation and loss of direction set in among the rank and file.<sup>174</sup> By July 1966, the Eastern rebellion no longer posed a serious threat to the Leopoldville government, although localised pockets of resistance required continuous intervention by Congolese National Army and mercenary forces.<sup>175</sup> Such scattered groups of rebels remained active across the region until 1970, targeting the inhabitants of isolated regions.<sup>176</sup>

By the second half of 1965, relative stability had returned to Congo and the nation prepared itself for its second democratic elections, held from 18 March to 30 April 1965. Tshombe renewed his CONAKAT party. In the run up to elections, CONAKAT established a coalition with some 49 other tribal organisations, forming the *Convention National Congolaise* (CONACO). Tshombe, who besides pacifying the rebellions had also managed to negotiate with Belgium the transfer of the important colonial portfolio back to Congo, had become increasingly popular among the Congolese population.<sup>177</sup> During Congo's second legislative elections the CONACO coalition secured 122 of the 167 seats in parliament.<sup>178</sup> Kasavubu felt threatened by Tshombe's increased popularity and support, and a rivalry for power between Tshombe and Kasavubu grew throughout 1965.<sup>179</sup> In October 1965, Kasavubu made use of his new constitutional powers to dispose of Tshombe as prime minister and replaced him with Évariste Kimba. One month later, parliament contested Kimba's nomination, and in a similar fashion as in September 1960, the Congolese government was headed towards a deadlock.<sup>180</sup> As a result, Mobutu once again staged a coup on 24 November 1965. He banned all political parties for the next five years and appointed himself as head of state in an attempt to restore

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<sup>172</sup> Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, p. 210; Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 87; Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, pp. 150; 157.

<sup>173</sup> For more information on Che Guevara's time in Congo see: Che Guevara, *Congo Diary: Episodes of the Revolutionary war in Cuba* (New York: Ocean Press, 2011); Gleijeses, "'Flee! The White Giants are Coming!'", pp. 220–221.

<sup>174</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 87; Young, 'Rebellion in the Congo', p. 214.

<sup>175</sup> Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, pp. 215–216; Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 20.

<sup>176</sup> Gibbs, *Political Economy of Third World Intervention*, p. 157.

<sup>177</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 347; Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 20.

<sup>178</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 20.

<sup>179</sup> Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, pp. 218–219.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid*, p. 219.

order. This decision ushered Congo into its Second Republic, which was characterised by Mobutu's dictatorship.<sup>181</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The story of Congo's First Republic is unfortunate. What began as a beacon of hope for decolonising Africa quickly turned into a grim episode in its history. Besides the murder of Congo's first democratically elected prime minister, the various secessions, insurrections, and rebellions resulted in a combined estimate 138,045 - 264,800 deaths and left c. 534,000 - 617,000 people internally displaced.<sup>182</sup> Congo's emancipation from 75 years of oppressive Belgian colonial rule had been replaced by five years of political turmoil during its First Republic, only to be followed by 32 years of dictatorship by Mobutu. Much of the misfortune during Congo's First Republic can be attributed to the interference of international actors. It is within this turbulent period in Congolese history that South Africa's relationship with the Congo crisis will be examined in the following chapters.

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<sup>181</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 353.

<sup>182</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 2.

## **Section I**

### **South African involvement**



## Chapter Three

### Congo's independence, white refugees, and the secession of Katanga, 1960-1963

In my lifetime, I have never seen so many male-tears than during the recent times in my office. There, they often sit because of helpless rage and cry because overnight they have lost everything that they have built-up in a lifespan.

Regional secretary of the *Inmigrante-Komitee* for Cape Town, 29 September 1960<sup>1</sup>

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#### Introduction

On 30 June 1960, Congo celebrated its emancipation from Belgian colonial rule in Leopoldville with state representatives from across the world. South Africa was curiously missing from the list of foreign delegates at the capital city. Pretoria's only representation in Congo that day was its consular staff in Elisabethville attending a number of ceremonies organised by Katanga's provincial executive and led by Moïse Tshombe. Their attendance is a symbolic marker of the start of South Africa's relationship with the new republic, as the narrative of South African-Congolese relations during Congo's first three years into independence is dominated by Katanga. This chapter investigates Pretoria's relationship from the period prior to Congo's independence until the end of the secession of Katanga. The chapter's first subsection examines Pretoria's uncertainty regarding South Africa's future relations with a black Congolese government. The second discusses South Africa's aid to Congo's white 'refugees'. The final subsection divulges the formation and nature of Pretoria's relationship with the state of Katanga.

#### 3.1 Congo's independence

During the time that Congo was under Belgian colonial administration, Brussels was wary of 'so-called South African imperialism'.<sup>2</sup> British control of Southern and Central Africa, and attempts to extend London's influence over the mineral-rich Katanga Province through the British Tanganyika Concessions Company, were of particular concern to the Belgian government.<sup>3</sup> Despite such trepidation, Pretoria had managed to establish good diplomatic and economic relations with Congo over the years, especially with the southern province of

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<sup>1</sup> National Archives of South Africa (hereafter NASA), Cape Town Archives Repository (hereafter KAB), ao/172, 'Local Authorities: Aid to Congo Refugees', letter from: R Menkveld, Streeksekretaris Afrikaanse Inmigrante-Komitee vir Kaapstad, Cape Town, Hulp aan Vluchtelingen uit die Kongo, 29 September 1960, no page (hereafter np).

<sup>2</sup> Vanthemsche, *Belgium and the Congo 1885–1980*, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*; Hughes, *The Central African Federation, Katanga and the Congo Crisis*, p. 5.

Katanga, which comprised part of the wider Copperbelt. Katanga was Congo's most industrialised province and contained its largest white settler community numbering 32,143, which made up 29 per cent of the Congo's entire white population in 1958-59.<sup>4</sup> Economically, Katanga had always been South Africa's most important trading province in Congo, especially the Kipushi-Elisabethville-Jadotville-Kolwezi area that was connected to the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt.<sup>5</sup> Its infrastructure and economy was greatly dependent on its southern neighbours.<sup>6</sup> According to *Die Transvaler*, by the late 1950s three quarters of South Africa's trade with Congo was with Katanga. This reportedly amounted to an annual average of £3.5 million (c. £74 million in today's currency).<sup>7</sup> Its biggest export product to Congo was food products. In contrast, South Africa imports amounted to an average of £10 million from Congo per year during that period.<sup>8</sup> Besides minerals, metals and metal products, a big part of this import figure was made up of industrial diamonds from the Kasai Province, which according to *Cape Times*, averaged £7-8 million annually.<sup>9</sup> South Africa's Customs and Excise, however, indicated that these pro rata import statistics were misleading. The department's statistician explained that 'not all diamonds brought into the Union in a particular year are re-exported' to Antwerp and London 'during the same year, and in consequence the statistics become unreliable'.<sup>10</sup> South Africa had also established a consulate in Leopoldville and Elisabethville and appointed a trade commissioner.

However, the future of South Africa's relations with Congo began to be questioned by Pretoria in early 1960 as independence loomed for the Belgian Congo. The topic of official relations between apartheid South Africa and a future black Congolese state was extensively discussed by members of South Africa's Department of External Affairs during the months that followed. Pretoria did not want to withdraw its diplomatic representation from Congo, but it was uncertain if the new Congolese government would allow South African diplomats

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<sup>4</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> NASA, Public Records of Central Government since 1910 (hereafter SAB), Secretary of Foreign Affairs (hereafter BTS) 34/5/112, 'Belgian Congo-Union of South Africa Commercial Relations Between', Vol 2, *Report on the Unions' Trade with the Katanga*, by: Department of Commerce and Industries, Pretoria, March 1961, pp. 1-2.

<sup>6</sup> Larmer and Kennes, 'Rethinking the Katangese Secession', p. 752.

<sup>7</sup> 'Boikotpraatjies Teen S.A. Nie Gewild in Katanga', *Die Transvaler*, 22 June 1960; <http://inflation.stephenmorley.org> (accessed on 15 December 2015).

<sup>8</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, 'Belgian Congo Relations with South Africa', Vol 1, *Die Onafhanklikwording van die Belgiese Kongo en Unie se Sendings te Leopoldstad en Elisabethstad*, Pretoria, 18 February 1960, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> 'Mission in SA – Bid To Save Kasai Diamonds', *Sunday Times*, 11 September 1960.

<sup>10</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1, *The Union's Trade Statistics: Belgian Congo*, nd, np.

to retain their posts.<sup>11</sup> To complicate matters, if the Congolese government did decide to maintain its diplomatic relations with Pretoria it would send its own black diplomatic representatives to apartheid South Africa's racially segregated society.<sup>12</sup> The Department of External Affairs argued that what had 'for long been an academic matter had now suddenly become a reality', declaring that 'it would seem as if we have now reached our Rubicon!'<sup>13</sup> The South African government was theoretically not opposed to having diplomatic ties with independent African states, but believed that they should be based upon a policy of non-interference in each other's domestic affairs.<sup>14</sup>

Pretoria was confronted with the dilemma of retaining or closing down its consulates in Congo. Both decisions had potentially significant consequences, and the Department of External Affairs deliberated which strategy was best to follow. If Pretoria were to end its diplomatic representation, the Congolese government could interpret this decision as 'a slap in the face', seeing that the South African government had been more than willing to have official relations when Congo was under Belgian administration. Such a decision would also entail the Congolese government becoming more than likely eager to limit trade with South Africa, or even to agree to implement sanctions.<sup>15</sup> An economic boycott of South Africa had previously been proposed by members of the Afro-Asian block in the United Nations (UN), who increasingly condemned South Africa for its apartheid policy and its controversial custodianship over South West Africa.<sup>16</sup>

If, however, Pretoria decided to keep its consulates open, then it would eventually have to accept black Congolese diplomats. Although South Africa had previously received an Indian high commissioner and 'non-white' consuls from Japan and China, it had not yet been confronted by black African diplomatic representatives.<sup>17</sup> According to the Department of External Affairs, allowing independent Congo to send over its own diplomats would likely inspire other black states such as Ghana to pressure Pretoria into forging official diplomatic

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<sup>11</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1, Letter from: Consulate-General of the Union of South Africa, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *South African Representation in the Congo*, 18 February 1960, pp. 1-2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, Die Minister, Kaapstad, 26 January 1960, np.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, Vol 1, AJ Oxley, Pretoria, 22 February 1960, pp. 4-5.

<sup>14</sup> Deon Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation, South Africa Foreign Policy Making* (Johannesburg: Macmillan South Africa, 1984), p. 13.

<sup>15</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1, *Die Onafhanklikwording van die Belgiese Kongo en Unie se Sendings te Leopoldstad en Elisabethstad*, Pretoria, 18 February 1960, pp. 1-2.

<sup>16</sup> Cohen, "A Difficult, Tedious and Unwanted Task", p. 108.

<sup>17</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1, AJ Oxley, Pretoria, 22 February 1960, p. 4.

relations with them.<sup>18</sup> If this would occur, the South African government would be confronted by a group of black diplomats for whom special housing arrangements and treatment would have to be provided.<sup>19</sup> Such provisions would have to exempt these diplomats from ‘the existing racial apartheid legislation’ and black diplomats ‘would have to get the same immunity as white diplomats’.<sup>20</sup> In such a situation the South African government believed that it could not guarantee that white citizens would treat these diplomats any differently than they would treat ‘non-white’ members of the public.<sup>21</sup> The possibility of such an incident occurring could place the South African government in an obviously embarrassing position. One proposed way to counter such a situation was to ‘educate the population about the essential need for co-operation in Africa’, as ‘South Africa’s survival surely depended on it’.<sup>22</sup> Pretoria also feared that black diplomats would liaise with South African nationalist movements, which could result in increased political militancy in the country.<sup>23</sup> Despite these qualms, the South Africa government decided to wait and see how Congolese independence would unfold before it made a decision. Pretoria did not want to jeopardise its future relations with Congo or further harm its already fragile international reputation.

Pretoria was not, however, optimistic. The South African Consul in Leopoldville declared In February 1960, that he had ‘no doubt that once the Congo has gotten over its teething problems, which they undoubtedly will, and the Congolese leaders have more time to devote to world affairs, the spotlight will move in the direction of the Union’.<sup>24</sup> Such condemnation of South Africa by Congolese leaders came sooner than expected. In early March 1960, Patrice Lumumba, then president of the *Mouvement National Congolais-Lumumba* (MNC-L), made the first reference to the possible future of South African-Congolese relations by stating that,

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<sup>18</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1, *Die Onafhanklikwording van die Belgiese Kongo en Unie se Sendings te Leopoldstad en Elisabethstad*, Pretoria, 18 February 1960, p. 5. ‘Diplomatic links between South Africa and Ghana had been under mutual consideration since 1957’, but Ghana became increasingly hostile towards the South African government. See: Deon Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation*, 13.

<sup>19</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1, *Die Onafhanklikwording van die Belgiese Kongo en Unie se Sendings te Leopoldstad en Elisabethstad*, Pretoria, 18 February 1960, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, pp. 5-6.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, AJ Oxley, Pretoria, 22 February 1960, pp. 4-5.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, *Die Onafhanklikwording van die Belgiese Kongo en Unie se Sendings te Leopoldstad en Elisabethstad*, Pretoria, 18 February 1960, pp. 6-7.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, Letter from: SA Consul-General, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, *South African Representation in the Congo*, Cape Town, 18 February 1960, p. 2.

Congo's people will not fall for manoeuvres of separatists and segregationists [...] we are open about the policy of apartheid practiced in these Southern African states, and we are determined to boycott their goods if necessary. Our government will only have commercial relations with truly democratic countries.<sup>25</sup>

This statement was soon followed by an editorial written by Philip Kanza, son of the Vice President of the *Alliance des Bakongo* (ABAKO) Daniel Kanza, criticising South Africa for its attitude of 'superiority', as well as 'the racialism they employ against the black populations of their territories which would put them in a very uncertain position for their future'.<sup>26</sup>

On 26 March 1960, about 140 students of Lovanium University in Leopoldville staged a noisy but peaceful two-hour protest in front of the South African Consulate condemning the Sharpeville massacre and criticizing South Africa's apartheid policy.<sup>27</sup> The consul had been tipped-off beforehand and had 'arranged to be absent, but near enough to watch what went on'.<sup>28</sup> On their way to the consulate the demonstrators carried placards with slogans such as 'down with apartheid; down with African colonialism' and 'respect and liberation of the black man in South Africa', whilst chanting 'down with apartheid; Africa for Africans'.<sup>29</sup> The group of protesters halted in front of the consulate and their leader proceeded to read a manifesto that lashed out against apartheid South Africa, exclaiming that,

The South African drama has revolted us for a long time. Millions of human souls suffocate under the barbarous oppression of a minority impervious to all notions of the equality of races or of liberty. My Consul General, you are not unaware that the Congo is at the eve of its independence. Of course, we have no mandate to take up a position in the name of the future Congolese government. But the African spirit springs from a single source [...] if your government does not revise its political system and

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<sup>25</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, 'Belgian Congo Political Situation and Development', Vol 6, Immediate Cypher OTP Telegram, From: SA Consul-General, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Cape Town, 11 March 1960, np.

<sup>26</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1, Letter from Consulate-General of the Union of South Africa, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Congolese Attitude Towards the Union*, 30 March 1960, pp. 1; 2.

<sup>27</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, Vol 6, Letter from: Consulate-General of the Union of South Africa, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *After the Round Table Conference*, 29 March 1960, p. 6; NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1, Letter from: Consulate-General of the Union of South Africa, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Congolese Attitude Towards the Union*, 30 March 1960, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1, Letter from: Consulate-General of the Union of South Africa, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Congolese Attitude Towards the Union*, 30 March 1960, p. 2.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, pp. 1-2.

persists in its blindness, we will not be party to a policy of fraternisation with the Union of South Africa.<sup>30</sup>

The South African Consulate in Elisabethville reported that it had received information that Moïse Tshombe's *Confederation des Associations Tribales du Katanga* (CONAKAT) wanted to arrange a similar protest in front of its building on 30 March 1960. Apparently, the plan was abandoned by CONAKAT's leadership after they were persuaded by certain Europeans that a public protest would not serve the party well in Congo's tense political atmosphere. The demonstration could turn violent and CONAKAT would be held responsible. It was alleged that the party's leaders instead decided to stage a protest in one of Elisabethville's townships, but it is unclear if this demonstration took place.<sup>31</sup>

Although CONAKAT did not stage a protest, a group of 30 to 40 students from the local Elisabethville University and Institute of Solvay gathered in front of the consulate in Elisabethville on 3 April 1960.<sup>32</sup> Whilst marching through the city on their way to the consulate, protesters wore ropes around their necks and carried boards with various slogans. Once in front of the South African Consulate the protesters and a hundred or so spectators listened to their leader, criticising the apartheid government and the Sharpeville massacre.<sup>33</sup> The leader lamented that,

We have followed [...] the shameful expeditions of the armoured cars that in South Africa have gone to the assault of unarmed black crowds; Bren guns have spat out their deadly power and many Africans have bitten the dust. What evil had these unfortunates done? Is it a crime to demand a little social justice and the recognition of human dignity? How can we remain unmoved before such acts of slaughter and brigandery by men with hearts of stone, who think they are installed for good in command of the black world? [...] African comrades, you all know the basis of the drama that is shaking South Africa. The profound cause that is making for the death of thousands of our black brothers is the outrageous 'RACISM' of the white man.<sup>34</sup>

Although the protest was specifically organised to condemn the apartheid government and its actions in Sharpeville, the speech highlighting the plight of black people across the globe.

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<sup>30</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1, Letter from: Consulate-General of the Union of South Africa, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Congolese Attitude Towards the Union*, 30 March 1960, pp. 1-2.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, Letter from: Consulate of the Union of South Africa, Elisabethville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Reaction to Disorders in Union*, 1 April 1960, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, letter from: Consulate of the Union of South Africa, Elisabethville, to: Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria, *Demonstration in Front of Consulate*, 7 April 1960, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, pp. 1-2.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, *Echo Du Katanga: 6 April 1960, To the Memory of Blacks Killed in South Africa, Discourse Pronounced by Black Students in Elisabethville During their Demonstration Against the Policy of South Africa*, pp. 1-2.

According to a contact of the South African Consulate in Elisabethville, some of the students who participated ‘spoke about the event without rancour in terms of a student rag rather than as a serious political exercise’.<sup>35</sup> However, it is not clear if this was indeed true. Both the Leopoldville and Elisabethville protest were reported in the local media.<sup>36</sup> The Sharpeville massacre also sparked direct condemnation from Congo’s political parties. On 31 March 1960, CONAKAT released a communiqué signed by the party’s President, Tshombe, in the popular Congolese newspaper *Le Courrier d’Afrique*.<sup>37</sup> Although cautious in its rebuke, the text declared that

... Conakat protests against the policy of racial segregation applied in South Africa at a time when almost all the other countries of Africa are being liberated from the yoke of colonialism. The Conakat pays homage to the victims of the recent events at Vereeniging, who died for the good of a people subjected to a regime inadmissible in the world of today.<sup>38</sup>

The South African consul in Elizabethville, however, reported there was every reason to believe that ‘Tshombe chose the path of public comment [...] for reasons of domestic party politics’. The Consul was of the opinion that this was an attempt by Tshombe to get rid of his ‘puppet of the West’ image by showing how ‘anti-European imperialist’ he really was.<sup>39</sup> In late May 1960, the *Parti Solidaire Africaine* printed pamphlets that appealed to ‘rally the support of the South African Bantu’.<sup>40</sup> On 5 April 1960, the MNC-L held its congress at Luluabourg. One of the adopted resolutions at the congress was the party’s official condemnation of the oppressive policies of South Africa, Algeria, and Kenya. The MNC-L urged the governments of ‘these imperialist nations’ to follow in the footsteps of Belgium and ‘put an end to their policy of domination and oppression immediately’. It argued that ‘the hour of domination having passed in Africa- Africa for the Africans, France for the French, Algeria for the Algerians, Great Britain for the English’.<sup>41</sup> The resolution did not however elaborate a solution for the complexities of South Africa’s more deeply rooted settler society.

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<sup>35</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1, Letter from: Consulate of the Union of South Africa, Elisabethville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Information Services in Eastern Congo*, 22 April 1960, np.

<sup>36</sup> For examples of such newspaper articles see: NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1.

<sup>37</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1, Letter from: Consulate-General of the Union of South Africa, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Relations Between the Belgian Congo and the Union*, 1 April 1960, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, Letter from: Consulate of the Union of South Africa, Elisabethville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Reaction to Disorders in Union*, 1 April 1960, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, 'Belgian Congo Political Situation and Development', Vol 7, Letter from: Consulate of the Union of South Africa, Elisabethville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, *Possible Smuggling of Arms to the Union*, 3 June 1960, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1, Letter from: Consulate-General of the Union of South Africa, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Congolese Attitude Towards the Union*, 8 April 1960, np.

South Africa's diplomatic future with the new Congolese leadership who would take over from the Belgians thus looked extremely uncertain, as political parties and various Congolese newspapers continued to criticise South Africa and its apartheid policy.<sup>42</sup>

Despite such criticism, the South African government was initially invited to send a representative to Congo's independence celebrations. The decision had been made by a mixed Belgian-Congolese commission who organised the arrangements for the festivities, and the message had been relayed to Pretoria by the Belgian ambassador to South Africa.<sup>43</sup> This decision was not extraordinary. Invitations had been sent to, all independent states who were members of the UN; members of special institutions; independent countries of Africa; and all those African countries whose date of independence had been fixed.<sup>44</sup> Pretoria was wary of accepting the invitation and much deliberation took place over whether or not to attend the festivities. If the South African government decided to attend, it would send its Minister of Economic Affairs, Nicolaas Diederichs, together with the under-secretary in charge of the African Division of the Department of External Affairs, Robert Jones.<sup>45</sup> Despite the fact that South Africa's initial invitation had been approved by the Executive College (which consisted of the Belgian governor general and six Congolese members who were responsible for Congo's transition to independence) the issue of South Africa's attendance became highly contested.<sup>46</sup>

During its inaugural session on 17 June 1960, the Congolese Senate unanimously adopted a resolution proposed by Cyrille Adoula that protested against the presence of South African representatives at the independence celebrations, 'because of the hateful policy being conducted in South Africa against persons of colour'.<sup>47</sup> The proposed resolutions read,

The Senate unanimously protests against the presence of delegations from countries where colonialism continues at full tide, and where radical discrimination is basic to the structure of the State. The Senate protests especially against the presence at the national festivities of a delegation from the Union of

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<sup>42</sup> For examples of such newspaper articles see: NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1.

<sup>43</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1, Pretoria, 6 June 1960, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, *Belgian Congo: Independence Celebrations 30 June 1960*, Pretoria, 2 June 1960, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, 'Belgian Congo Relations with South Africa', Vol 2, Letter from: Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs, To: All Heads of Mission Abroad, *Independence Celebrations in the Congo*, 18 June 1960, np.

<sup>46</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1, *Kongo: Onafhankheidsplegtighede*, Pretoria, 14 June 1960, np.

<sup>47</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 2, *Congo Senate, Extraordinary Session 1960, Analytical Report ( Summary) Inaugural Session, Friday 17 June 1960*, p. 1.



South Africa, whose policy of apartheid it condemns as being incompatible with the respect due to human dignity.<sup>48</sup>

The declaration of the latter resolution was followed by a standing moment of silence for the ‘victims in South Africa’.<sup>49</sup> On 20 June 1960, various members of Congo’s Chamber of Representatives also protested. The session commenced with a statement by a member who proposed to pass a motion expressing the Chamber’s opposition to South Africa’s invitation to attend the festivities. This request was received with a unanimous applause. Anicet Kashamura, co-founder of the political party *Centre du Regroupement Africain* (CEREA), told the executive-general that South Africa’s invitation was a disgrace. Similarly, Albert Kalonji, then leader of the *Mouvement National Congolais-Kalonji* (MNC-K), declared that ‘Portugal and South Africa should be shoved aside’. One member proposed closing down the South African Consulate before the independence celebrations, whilst another suggested that the Congolese government should not just demand the closure of the South African Consulates but also additionally boycott all exchanges with South Africa.<sup>50</sup>

At a latter sitting that day, the president of the Chamber of Representatives announced the drawing-up of the resolution that,

The House of Representatives deeming the political liberty of Africans is not respected in South Africa, Angola and the Federation of the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland; protests strongly against the presence at the Congo festivities of a representative, whoever he may be, of these countries.<sup>51</sup>

Such a proposed resolution was however not favoured by all members of the chamber. A delegate announced that ‘one does not catch flies with vinegar, but rather with honey’, and believed that the proposed resolution was more driven by emotion than wisdom. He further noted that ‘the closing of the South African Consulate would entail consequences in our relations with this country’, and asked the assembly to ponder this. His request was met with widespread protest.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, leader of the *Association des Baluba du Katanga* (BALUBAKAT), Jason Sendwe, pointed out that ‘the minerals of the Katanga were exported

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<sup>48</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 2, *Congo Senate, Analytical Report (Summary) Session, Wednesday, 22 June 1960*, p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, Priority Cypher OTP Telegram from: SA Consul-General, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 17 June 1960, np.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, *Chambre des Representants du Congo, Analytical Report (summary) Public Session, Monday, 20 June 1960, Morning*, pp. 1-3.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, *Chambre des Representants du Congo, Analytical Report (Summary), Public session, Monday 20 June 1960, Afternoon*, p. 2.

through Angola, and that the relations of the Congo with that country will be damaged if ever the assembly explicitly refused Angola the right to be present at the Congolese independence festivities'.<sup>53</sup> Kalonji finished off the session by explaining that 'we cannot claim to be really independent if by our silence we endorse the doings of the others which enslave our African brothers'.<sup>54</sup> The South African consul in Leopoldville reported that a private source had informed him that the Czechoslovakian Consulate was supporting this anti-South African campaign.<sup>55</sup> Even though there was clear, widespread resentment towards South Africa's participation at Congo's independence celebrations, no vote was taken on the issue.<sup>56</sup>

Two days before the independence celebrations, the Congolese government finally agreed to allow the South African representatives to attend the festivities.<sup>57</sup> Ironically, earlier that day Pretoria had decided not to attend. The Department of External Affairs had sent a telegram to the South African consul in Leopoldville instructing him to inform the Congolese government of their decision.<sup>58</sup> Despite having already purchased a golden cigarette case as a present for the occasion, South Africa's delegation, like its Portuguese Angolan and Central African Federation counterpart, did not travel to Leopoldville.<sup>59</sup> Pretoria decided to send a letter of congratulations instead that offer good wishes to the Congolese government, explaining that 'the Union in earnest desire wants to foster the good relations which have always existed between it and the Congo. It therefore looks forward to continued cooperation with the republic of Congo in all fields of common interest'.<sup>60</sup>

South Africa's diplomatic relations with the Congolese government deteriorated further when five days into independence, Prime Minister Lumumba communicated that he could not ignore the views of the two Houses of Parliament. Although he recognised the desirability of developing commercial and diplomatic relations with South Africa, Lumumba could not

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<sup>53</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 2, *Chambre des Représentants du Congo, Analytical Report (Summary), Public session, Monday 20 June 1960, Afternoon*, p. 3.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, p. 4.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, Emergency Cypher OTP Telegram, from: SA Consul-General, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 21 June 1960, np.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, Cypher OTP Telegram from: SA Embassy, Brussels, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 20 June 1960, np.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, *Congo Independence Celebrations*, Pretoria, 28 June 1960, p. 1.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, Emergency Cypher Telegram from: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, To: SA Consul-General, Leopoldville, 28 June 1960, np.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, *Kongo Onafhankheidsviering, Pretoria*, 23 June 1960, p. 3; '80 Lande by Kongo Fees', *Die Transvaler*, 29 June 1960.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, En Clair Telegram from: Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, Pretoria, To: Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo, Leopoldville, 30 June 1960, np.

agree to its diplomatic missions remaining open.<sup>61</sup> He did however send a telegram the next day to Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd to state that his government hoped ‘to establish cordial relations with all African countries that share their ideal of freedom and prosperity’.<sup>62</sup> Thus, on 7 July 1960, the South African government decided to close down its consulates in Leopoldville and Elisabethville. Although Pretoria hoped to ‘reopen the Union’s missions when a calmer atmosphere prevailed’, it became increasingly clear that such a day would likely never come.<sup>63</sup> Whilst South Africa’s diplomatic representation ended and Pretoria instructed its representatives to return home, Congo’s white population had begun to flee the new republic in panic.

### **3.2 Congo’s white refugees**

The mutiny by the Congolese army and the public unrest that followed a few days after the independence celebrations resulted in the hasty departure of the majority of Congo’s white population.<sup>64</sup> Many of these refugees eventually ended up in South Africa. The origins of Congo’s white exodus can be traced back to 1959 when the Belgian government announced its decision to grant independence to its colonial subjects. In February 1959, *The Star* reported that a number of Belgians in Congo were enquiring with South African employment agencies about the possibility of immigrating to South Africa.<sup>65</sup> Some South Africans residing in Congo had also shown signs of uncertainty about their future after independence. In October 1959, the head of the Africa Evangelistic Band missionaries in northern Kasai, wrote to the South African Consulate in Elisabethville that they were unsure if they should remain in Congo. The missionary group wanted to enquire what the Union government’s thoughts and plans were in case of an emergency.<sup>66</sup> Such early uncertainty among Congo’s white population did not dissipate. In April 1960, the South African consul in Leopoldville noted that due to an increase of organised political activity, which was often perceived as anti-European, many white people were ‘extremely concerned about their future’ in Congo,

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<sup>61</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 2, *Record of Telephonic Conversation with Mr Hewitson, South African Consul-General in Leopoldville – at 12 Noon on 6 July, 1960*, np.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, Telegram from: Premier Ministre, Patrice Lumumba, To: Premier Ministre Union Sud Afrique, 7 July 1960, np.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, Immediate En Clair Telegram from: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, To: SA Consul-General-General, Leopoldville, SA Consul, Elisabethville, SA Embassy, Brussels, 7 July 1960, np.

<sup>64</sup> See, p. 27.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Congo People Want to Come Here’, *The Star*, 16 February 1959.

<sup>66</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, ‘Belgian Congo Political Situation and Development’, Vol 2, Letter from: HS Coetzee of the (Afrika Evangeliese Bond), Bolendo, To: Konsulaat van die Unie van Suid Afrika, Elisabethville, 4 October 1959, p. 1.

and many seriously considered South Africa 'as a possible haven'.<sup>67</sup> With the date of Congo's independence celebrations looming closer, the South African Consulate in Leopoldville discussed proposed arrangements with the South African Defence Force (SADF) in case the need arose to evacuate its citizens.<sup>68</sup> The consulate also distributed letters to South African citizens residing in Congo advising them on what to do 'in event of serious disturbances'.<sup>69</sup>

Despite such early concerns and arrangements, the South African Consulate in Leopoldville did not believe that there would be 'any violent anti-European activity', but instead expected 'shows of arrogance and insulting behaviour'.<sup>70</sup> In May 1960, the consulate reported that,

There is undoubtedly a feeling of uncertainty, many Europeans have left for good, and many are sending their wives and children out of the Congo for the time being, or in anticipation of leave. But departures are normally fairly heavy this time of the year, and this accounts for at least part of the exodus.<sup>71</sup>

It furthermore pointed out that although airplanes traveling to Europe were full. South African Airways flight from Leopoldville to Johannesburg had over 100 seats free, and Sabena, UAT and KLM were 'carrying less than one third of its capacity on south-bound flights'.<sup>72</sup> However, after the signs of unrest during the first week of independence, the South African Consulates received a significant increase in visa applications. This surge reached its peak on 8 and 9 July 1960, just after the official announcement that South Africa's diplomatic representation in Congo would end.<sup>73</sup> As reports of attacks against Europeans in Congo spread, the European population began to flee in haste and a large-scale airlift to fly white

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<sup>67</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, Vol 2, Letter from: Consul General from the Union of South Africa, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Developments in the Congo*, 17 April 1959, pp. 19-20.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, *Evacuation South African Citizens in Emergency*, nd, np.

<sup>69</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, Vol 7, Letter from: Consulate of the Union of South Africa, Elisabethville, *Letter Sent to South Africans Living in the Congo*, 1 June 1960, p. 1.

<sup>70</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, 'Belgian Congo Political Situation and Development', Vol 5, Letter from: Consulate General of the Union of South Africa, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Independence for Congo*, 12 February 1960, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, Vol 6, Letter from: Consulat-General of the Union of South Africa, Leopoldville, To: Secretariat for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Situation in Leopoldville*, 19 May 1960, p. 2.

<sup>72</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, Vol 7, Letter from: Consulate-General of the Union of South Africa, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Situation of Europeans in the Congo*, 8 June 1960, p. 2.

<sup>73</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, 'Belgian Congo Political Situation and Development', Vol 10, Letter from: PR Killen, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Recent Events in the Congo*, 1 August 1960, p. 2.

refugees to safety was immediately set up by Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, and France.<sup>74</sup>

Congo's white population rapidly fled into the neighbouring territories.<sup>75</sup> For those living in Leopoldville the safety of Congo-Brazzaville lay just across the Congo River, as the South African consul in Leopoldville demonstrated by taking the ferry from Leopoldville to Brazzaville.<sup>76</sup> Similarly, Christiane Michaux recalled how she ferried herself and her two horses, cat and dog to Brazzaville wherefrom she took a train to the port city of Point Noir and embarked on a ship to Cape Town.<sup>77</sup> Those who lived in the Leopoldville Province nearer to Thysville crossed the border with Portuguese Angola and fled to Luanda.<sup>78</sup> Many white people who resided in the eastern Kivu or Oriental Provinces moved to Uganda, or Ruanda-Urundi.<sup>79</sup> Wessel Van Leeuwen explained how he and his family left Bukavu and crossed into Ruanda-Urundi, driving to Tanganyika, continuing their journey through Northern and then Southern Rhodesia to arrive in Pretoria and finally settle in Cape Town.<sup>80</sup> Those living in Katanga, including the South African consul in Elisabethville, fled to Northern Rhodesia.<sup>81</sup> Across the borders, hasty arrangements were made for incoming refugees. In Congo-Brazzaville, a large refugee centre was set up at a local technical college, whilst makeshift camps were opened along the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt at Bancroft, Chingola, Kitwe, Ndola, Broken Hill, and Lusaka.<sup>82</sup>

As a reaction to the above chaos, the South African Immigration Trust was formed. The trust was an organisation that was created to aid and coordinate the expected flow of refugees to South Africa, and assist them with permanently settling in the country. It consisted of

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<sup>74</sup> 'World Aid in Congo Airlift', *Cape Times*, 12 July 1960; 'Kongo Loop Leeg van Blankes: Lugbrug Ingestel', *Die Burger*, 12 July 1960.

<sup>75</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 122/27, 'Belgian Congo Refugees, Aid To', Vol 1, Letter from: South African Commission, Nairobi, To: Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs, *Refugees ex Congo*, 31 August 1960, p. 1.

<sup>76</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, 'Belgian Congo Relations with South Africa', Vol 3, *Notes on the Departure of the South African Consular Staff from Leopoldville*, Pretoria, 19 July 1960, p. 6.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Christiane Michaux, 28 March 2014.

<sup>78</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, 'Belgian Congo Political Situation and Development', Vol 11, Letter from: Consular General of the Union of South Africa, Luanda, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Die Gewese Belgiese Kongo*, 31 August 1960, p. 1.

<sup>79</sup> Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs (hereafter FPSFA), Afrika-archief (hereafter AA), Portefeuille Nr 14586 (1961), Lias Nr 1514, 'Union de L'Afrique Du Sud Janvier à Février 1961', Letter from: Ambassadeur de Belgique dans l'Union de l'Afrique de sud, Cape Town, To: Ministre des Affaires Etrangère, Bruxelles, *Rapport Annuel sur l'Activité du Poste*, 14 Janvier 1961, p. 10.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Wessel van Leeuwen, 31 March 2014.

<sup>81</sup> 'The Congo Crisis', *Cape Times*, 12 July 1960; NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, Vol 10, Letter from: PR Killen, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Recent Events in the Congo*, 1 August 1960, pp. 3; 6.

<sup>82</sup> National Radio Archives (hereafter NRA), R65/266, 'Kongoverslag', 23 July 1960; NASA, SAB, BTS 122/27, Vol 1, Memorandum from: First Secretary, Salisbury, *Refugees from the Congo*, 14 July 1960, pp. 1; 3.

representatives of South Africa's three largest recruiting organisations, namely the *Maatskappy vir Europese Immigrasie*, the 1820 Settlers Association, and the South African Immigration Organisation.<sup>83</sup> On 13 July 1960, the South African government announced that it wanted to intervene in the matter of the Congo refugees and decided to provide aid and administrative assistance for prospective immigrants. Verwoerd ordered the formation of a specialised coordination committee, consisting of representatives of different government departments that would work together with the South African Immigration Trust.<sup>84</sup> The South African government also set up a relief fund to the value of £50,000 (c. £ 1 million in today's currency) to finance the proposed aid for Congo refugees who came to South Africa.<sup>85</sup> Pretoria furthermore sent representatives to Salisbury, Nairobi, Luanda, and Brazzaville, and ordered all South African emissaries in neighbouring territories to assist and convince refugees to immigrate to South Africa.<sup>86</sup>

The most common route for refugees that ended up in South Africa was via the Rhodesias. In order to avoid a bottleneck situation on the Copperbelt, the Northern Rhodesian authorities systematically moved the incoming refugees to Southern Rhodesia's urban centres of Salisbury and Bulawayo.<sup>87</sup> On 12 July 1960, the first groups arrived in Salisbury where the authorities had organised a refugee centre at the local showground. They were interviewed upon their arrival, and if the refugees needed anything, they received required assistance.<sup>88</sup> The British South African Police and various volunteer organisations such as the Red Cross, St John's Brigade and, Women's Voluntary Service offered assistance where needed. Members of the public also answered the call by providing lodging and donating food.<sup>89</sup> When describing his arrival in Northern Rhodesia, Ralph Bradshaw recalled that 'people would rush to you, [would] take you, [would] bring you to their home [...] nothing was

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<sup>83</sup> 'SA Move to Get Refugees as Immigrants', *Sunday Times*, 10 July, 1960.

<sup>84</sup> 'SA Sal Geld Skenk', *Die Transvaler*, 13 July 1960; 'Regering Gereed vir Vlughtelinge uit die Kongo', *Die Transvaler*, 14 July 1960.

<sup>85</sup> NASA, SAB, Decisions of the Executive Council (hereafter URU) 4071, 1830, 'Governor-General's Special Warrant No 7 of 1960/61: Refugees from the Belgian Congo', np; <http://inflation.stephenmorley.org>

<sup>86</sup> FPSFA, AA, Portefeuille Nr 14586 (1961), Lias Nr 1514, 'Union de L'Afrique Du Sud, Union Janvier à Février 1961', Letter from: Ambassadeur de Belgique dans l'Union de l'Afrique de Sud, Cape Town, To: Ministre des Affaires Etrangère, Bruxelles, *Rapport Annuel sur l'Activité du Poste*, 14 Janvier 1961, p. 10; 'SA Slaggereed vir Vlughtelinge uit die Kongo', *Die Burger*, 16 July 1960.

<sup>87</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 122/27, Vol 1, Letter from: High Commissioner HLT Taswell, Salisbury, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Exodus from the Congo*, 12 July 1960, p. 1.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, The High Commissioner, Salisbury, 13 July 1960, p. 1.

impossible. Hairdressers would open up at night to help the ladies [...] in one word it was comfort, comfort, comfort all the way'.<sup>90</sup>

Rough estimates suggest that during the first few days 10,000 refugees had entered the Central African Federation, the majority of which were women and children.<sup>91</sup> Despite the media reports about the abusive and gruesome treatment of white people in Congo who left their homes in a hurry, a South African representative who was visiting Ndola noted that all of the refugees 'are all travelling in rather swanky motor cars and do not give the impression of a dishevelled crowd'.<sup>92</sup> According to a newspaper correspondent of *The Observer*, many of the terrifying stories of destruction, molestation, rape, and murder turned out to be unsubstantiated rumours. These stories caused an exodus that was a product of mass hysteria.<sup>93</sup> This was not to say that all reports were untrue. Cases of damage to property were common and many people did leave in a hurry. Rioting soldiers and civilians attacked the house of one South African, whilst 'a family of South African farmers was surrounded on their farm by about 90 mutineers who eventually dispersed'.<sup>94</sup> Ralph and Danièle Bradshaw, who lived in Katanga, recalled how they hastily filled up their car and left Elisabethville in the middle of the night for the Rhodesian border.<sup>95</sup>

South Africa's High Commissioner in Salisbury, Harold Taswell, mentioned that a 'considerable number' of refugees on the Copperbelt would want to immigrate to South Africa, but warned that many of them were 'not of the most desirable type'.<sup>96</sup> These undesirable refugees were 'mostly Greek, Maltese, Cypriot and Italians', noting that many of 'them look like the real ducktail type'.<sup>97</sup> In order to accommodate for the migration of more 'desirable' immigrants, South African representatives set up offices in Bulawayo and Salisbury. The insurance company Sanlam donated three furnished offices free of charge for this purpose. When refugees arrived at these office two volunteer translators met with them and enquired as to how they wanted to proceed to South Africa. Their passports would be

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<sup>90</sup> Interview with Danièle and Ralph Bradshaw, 3 March 2014.

<sup>91</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 122/27, Vol 1, The Acting Secretary Mr Pakendorf, Pretoria, 14 July 1960, p. 1

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, Memorandum from: First Secretary, Salisbury, *refugees from the Congo*, 14 July 1960, p. 2.

<sup>93</sup> 'Katanga Exodus: Was It Really Necessary?', *Rand Daily Mail*, 19 July 1960.

<sup>94</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, Vol 10, Letter from: PR Killen, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Recent Events in the Congo*, 1 August 1960, pp. 5; 7.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Danièle and Ralph Bradshaw.

<sup>96</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 122/27, Vol 1, Letter from: High Commissioner HLT Taswell, Salisbury, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Exodus from the Congo*, 12 July 1960, p. 1.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, Memorandum from: First Secretary, Salisbury, *Refugees from the Congo*, 14 July 1960, p. 2.

examined, and if all were in order, a visa would be issued.<sup>98</sup> If the refugees wanted to drive from Bulawayo to Pretoria, they received a petrol and oil allowance that ranged between £4-7 depending on the car's horsepower.<sup>99</sup> Financial assistance was also provided for essential mechanical repairs to vehicles that would enable them to complete the journey to South Africa.<sup>100</sup> Additionally, a food allowance was accommodated for, and adults received an allowance of £2 and children under the age of ten £1. For those refugees who wished to travel to South Africa but did not have a car, second class train and bus tickets were organised and paid for.<sup>101</sup>

In order to inform refugees of the above opportunities Bulawayo's newspaper, *The Chronicle*, published a front page announcement in both English and French. At the headquarters of the Bulawayo refugee centres at the local showground and the Catholic centre, volunteers distributed publicity material and pamphlets that clarified South Africa's aid.<sup>102</sup> Despite their best efforts, there was little initial response from refugees.<sup>103</sup> Instead of an expected 200 refugees from Bulawayo signing up to come to South Africa, the offices had only processed 48 adults and 18 children by late June 1960. A possible reason for this lukewarm interest was that many refugees arriving in Bulawayo were sent back to Belgium or Katanga because of contractual obligations.<sup>104</sup> Another reason is that not all refugees knew of the available services, or were aware of the services but decided not to make use of them. Van Leeuwen explained that his father who had led his family convoy 'was an extremely proud man; he did not want to take a cent. We paid for the hotel. We paid for everything'.<sup>105</sup>

On 12 July 1960, the first reported Congo refugees arrived at Jan Smuts International Airport in Johannesburg from Brazzaville.<sup>106</sup> Members of the coordination committee were present at Jan Smuts, ready to assist the incoming refugees. Upon their arrival, they gave the refugees coffee and sandwiches, provided them with blankets and warm clothes, and transported them to Johannesburg's refugee centre in Braamfontein.<sup>107</sup> The first group of refugees traveling to

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<sup>98</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 122/27, Vol 1, Memorandum from, Eerste Sekretaris, Salisbury, *Kongo-Vluchtelingen: Bulawayo*, 28 July 1960, p. 1.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, Letter from: South African High Commissioner, Salisbury, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Salisbury, *Congo Refugees*, 16 August 1960, p. 2.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, Memorandum from: Eerste Sekretaris, Salisbury, *Kongo-Vluchtelingen: Bulawayo*, 28 July 1960, p. 2.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, The Acting Secretary Mr Pakendorf, Pretoria, 14 July 1960, p. 1.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, Memorandum from: Eerste Sekretaris, Salisbury, *Kongo-Vluchtelingen: Bulawayo*, 28 July 1960, p. 3.

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Wessel van Leeuwen.

<sup>106</sup> 'Mr Hewitson Kom in SA Aan Uit Kongo', *Die Burger*, 12 July 1960.

<sup>107</sup> NRA, R65/269, 'Sendelinge uit die Kongo', 20 July 1960.



South Africa by car reportedly arrived in Pretoria five days later.<sup>108</sup> A network of support structures and committees were set up in Pretoria, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, and Port Elizabeth. The country's biggest refugee centre, and the first stop for most refugees travelling by car, was located at Pretoria's City Hall. It provided a 24 hour service during its most busy period.<sup>109</sup> The centre processed 94 men, 70 women, and 82 children between 19 and 23 July 1960.<sup>110</sup> It was reported that an average of 60 people arrived in Pretoria daily by the end of July 1960.<sup>111</sup> As a way of showing South African solidarity and hospitality, Prime Minister Verwoerd had asked the public for assistance.<sup>112</sup> Similar to Rhodesians, many South Africans offered to help and support refugees, and various newspapers reported on different acts of kindness. People offered up their homes to house refugees, or donated clothing, blankets, money, and groceries. In the Cape Province, the mayors of Worcester and Cradock launched relief funds, whilst in the eastern Transvaal, the Standerton Rotary society offered up their vacation destinations in Badplaats.<sup>113</sup> Even students from the University of Stellenbosch collected £120 on campus to help Congo refugees.<sup>114</sup>

Once in South Africa, those refugees who knew or wanted to make use of the support structures in place received various forms of aid.<sup>115</sup> Durban's local Red Cross society paid out more than £800 to or on behalf of refugees.<sup>116</sup> Danièle and Ralph Bradshaw recall that for their trip from Pretoria to Cape Town 'the fuel was paid, the hotel was paid, we had nothing everything was given to us'.<sup>117</sup> Van Leeuwen received lodging with a couple in Claremont in Cape Town, whilst his brother-in-law was housed at a hotel in St James.<sup>118</sup> Refugees were also given an allowance to be able to cover basic living expenses. The initial allowance was £7.10 for the first eight to ten days, after which every adult would get an allowance of £1 a week and every child 5 shillings, until employment had been found.<sup>119</sup> Those who wanted to

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<sup>108</sup> 'Vlugtelinge in Unie', *Die Burger*, 18 July 1960.

<sup>109</sup> NASA, SAB, Secretary of the Treasury (hereafter TES) 20/1102, 'Miscellaneous: Belgian Congo: Relief to Distressed Belgian Congo Refugees', Vol 1, Letter from: Departement van Binnelandse Sake, Pretoria: To: Sekretaris van die Tesourie, Pretoria, *Noodleniging van Vlugtelinge uit die Kongo-Pretoriase Inmigrante Komitee*, nd, p. 1.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*, *Uitgawe deur Pretoria-Kantoor op Noodleniging - Vlugtelinge uit die Belgiese Kongo 19-23.7.1960*, np.

<sup>111</sup> 'Meer as 400 uit Kongo Deur Pretoria', *Die Transvaler*, 23 July 1960.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>113</sup> 'Hele Unie Wil Vlugtelinge Help', *Die Burger*, 18 July 18 1960.

<sup>114</sup> 'Afrikaanse Sakekamer Vra Hulp vir Vlugtelinge', *Die Burger*, 13 August 1960.

<sup>115</sup> NASA, SAB, TES 20/1102, Vol 1, Letter from: Departement van Binnelandse Sake, Pretoria: To: Sekretaris van die Tesourie, Pretoria, *Noodleniging van Vlugtelinge uit die Kongo-Pretoriase Inmigrante Komitee*, nd, p. 1.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, Die Sekretaris, nd, p. 3.

<sup>117</sup> Interview with Danièle and Ralph Bradshaw.

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Wessel van Leeuwen.

<sup>119</sup> NASA, SAB, TES 20/1102, Vol 1, *Rekord van Besluite van Uitvoerende Komitee en Optredes*, nd, p. 2.

stay in South Africa were also assisted with finding employment. In the beginning of October 1960, the coordination committee announced that they had successfully found employment for 486 refugees, whilst 122 were still waiting for a job.<sup>120</sup> Such assistance to help refugees was not limited to the necessities of transport, housing, allowances, or employment. In Pretoria, the committee paid for: driver's licenses; marriage licenses; glasses; linen; cloths and blankets; furniture; medical costs; tools; dictionaries; and even champagne for weddings.<sup>121</sup> Despite these efforts by the South African government and public, the Belgian consul in Cape Town complained that the overall organisation was largely a failure as nothing was seriously planned and remained largely improvised.<sup>122</sup>

The experiences of refugees in South Africa were certainly not uniform. Many Belgian refugees who ended up in South Africa did not necessarily find their new home and life comfortable, generally as a result of employment issues. Although plantation owners and workers from Congo were being encouraged by the South African government to settle in South Africa, they were unable to apply their specialised tropical agricultural skills in South Africa. Nor could they find suitable agricultural land, except against major capital investment. Established medical doctors and engineers needed to return to university to gain a South African degree so that they could be employed in their previous occupation. In the meantime, they could only find employment opportunities that hardly related to their qualifications or past work experiences.<sup>123</sup> A good example was Michaux who had acquired a law degree in Belgium and on her arrival in Cape Town realised that she needed at least one year of university to validate her degree. Instead, she started working in a fashion boutique.<sup>124</sup> Other sectors of the economy such as trade, insurance, or banking were difficult to penetrate for refugees. Hairdressers in Cape Town could only find 'decent' employment with French and Belgian proprietors.<sup>125</sup> Another big hurdle for many was the communication barrier. Many Belgian refugees only spoke French, whilst the Flemish speaking ones could

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<sup>120</sup> NASA, SAB, TES 20/1102, Vol 1, *Notule van die Uitvoerende Komitee oor Vlughtelinge uit die Belgiese Kongo Gehou op 23 Oktober 1960*, nd, p. 5.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, *Staat van Verligtings deur die Pretoriase Inmigrante-Kommittee ten Opsigte van Vlughtelinge uit die Kongo, Aangegaan –Julie 1960-Februarie 1961*, nd, pp. 1-2.

<sup>122</sup> FPSFA, AA, No Portefeuille Nr, Lias Nr 1514, 'Union de L'Afrique Du Sud Juin à Décembre 1960', Letter from: Consul Général de Belgique à Cape Town, To: Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, Bruxelles, *Problème d'Immigration en Union Sud-Africaine*, 30 Septembre 1960, pp. 4-5.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Interview with Christian Michaux.

<sup>125</sup> FPSFA, AA, No Portefeuille Nr, Lias Nr 1514, Letter from: Consul Général de Belgique à Cape Town, To: Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, Bruxelles, *Problème d'Immigration en Union Sud-Africaine*, 30 Septembre 1960, pp. 3-4.

understand Afrikaans but often not English. A lot of refugees were also elderly and because of their age were no longer economically desirable.<sup>126</sup>

One particular point of contestation for many Belgian refugees who tried to find employment was that the South African wages were not equivalent to those in Congo. Even though the wages offered were on par with the wages of other white South Africans, or in the case of one mechanic who was employed in a Cape Town garage even higher, a lot of refugees found them insufficient.<sup>127</sup> This discontent resulted in many Belgians deciding to be repatriated to Belgium or Congo. From the estimated 1,500 Belgians who moved from Congo to South Africa only 1/5 decided to stay, and of those who did decide to stay many did so in the hope of returning to Congo in the near future.<sup>128</sup>

Despite the genuine enthusiasm of the South African public and government to assist refugees, reports of refugees abusing the system were common. Van Leeuwen recalled that ‘you had people who took advantage. [...] A lot of people [...] took a lot of advantage [...]. Whatever they could milk from the cow’.<sup>129</sup> It was pointed out by the chairperson of the coordination committee that in Cape Town many refugees had only one goal, which was to have a holiday. He explained that ‘women are staying in Cape Town while their husbands are still in Katanga’.<sup>130</sup> In Durban the local committee decided not to assist with car repairs, as had been the case in Pretoria. Since Durban was the final port of call for several refugees who wanted to return to Belgium, the committee was concerned that the cars would hardly be used for transportation and fixing them would only improve the market price of the vehicles when sold.<sup>131</sup> According to the Belgian Consulate in Cape Town, a lot of of the Belgian refugees also used the existing credit system before returning to Belgium and Congo, leaving behind large amounts of debt.<sup>132</sup> One reported case even mentions a refugee who had received

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<sup>126</sup> 'Kongo-Vluchtelingen Sukkel in Kaap met Werk', *Die Burger*, 20 August 1960.

<sup>127</sup> FPSFA, AA, No Portefeuille NR, Lias Nr 1514, Consul Général de Belgique à Cape Town, To: Ministre de la coordination Economique remplaçant le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, absent, Bruxelles, *Immigration Belge en Afrique du Sud*, 26 Octobre 1960, pp. 1-2; 4.

<sup>128</sup> FPSFA, AA, Portefeuille Nr 14586 (1961), Ambassadeur de Belgique dans l'Union de l'Afrique de sud, Cape Town, To: Ministre des Affaires Etrangère, Bruxelles, *Rapport Annuel sur l'Activité du Poste*, 14 Janvier 1961, p. 10.

<sup>129</sup> Interview with Wessel van Leeuwen.

<sup>130</sup> NASA, SAB, TES 20/1102, Vol 1, *Notule van die Uitvoerende Komitee oor Vluchtelingen uit die Belgiese Kongo Gehou op 23 Oktober 1960*, nd, p. 4.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, Die Sekretaris, np, p. 4.

<sup>132</sup> FPSFA, AA, Portefeuille Nr 14586 (1962), Lias Nr 1514, 'Union de l'Afrique Du Sud Juillet à Décembre 1962', *Bericht over de Politieke Toestand in de Republiek van Zuid-Afrika, Tweede Halfjaar 1962*, nd, p. 29.

assistance but one hour after being placed in employment was fired as he had consumed an entire bottle of rum at work.<sup>133</sup>

Whilst refugees from eastern Congo were still arriving in Nairobi in early September 1960, South Africa's aid had reached its climax.<sup>134</sup> The South African government announced that after 31 August 1961 it would stop its financial contribution to the emergency relief. The spontaneous enthusiasm of many South Africans had also started to diminish as homeowners became tired of housing refugees, and the organisations whose spaces were transformed into refugee centres wanted them returned.<sup>135</sup> One solution to house refugees in future had emerged in late August 1960 when Johannesburg's Brakpan municipality proposed to make available some of its infrastructure. The municipality wanted to attract new residents as the recent closure of two mines had been a considerable loss to the town's economy.<sup>136</sup> The mayor proposed to transform Brakpan into an urban centre where refugees could be accommodated, settle down, and start up a new life. The government mines training school and certain vacant houses at New State Area were made available.<sup>137</sup> It is not clear if this proposition ever took form.

Although it is difficult to calculate the exact number of refugees that entered South Africa, the Minister of the Interior, Jozua Naudé, reported that by the end of December 1960, 2,342 refugees came to South Africa, 748 of which applied for residence.<sup>138</sup> By 28 May 1961, R71,486 (c. R 5.5 million in today's currency) had been spent against the initial budget of R80,000.<sup>139</sup> The stream of white Congo refugees who ended up in South Africa had thus been met by a brief but intense period of support by the government and members of the public. Both anxiously waited to see how the crisis in Congo would develop.

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<sup>133</sup> NASA, SAB, TES 20/1102, Vol 1, *Vergadering van die Uitvoerende Komitee oor Vlughtelinge uit die Belgiese Kongo Gehou op 15 Augustus 1960*, nd, p. 5.

<sup>134</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 122/27, Vol 1, Code Telegram from: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, To: SA Commissioner, Nairobi, 23 September 1960, np.

<sup>135</sup> NASA, SAB, TES 20/1102, Vol 1, *Notule van die Vergadering van die Uitvoerende Komitee oor Vlughtelinge uit die Belgiese Kongo Gehou op 6 September 1960*, nd, p. 1.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid; NASA, SAB, Municipality, Brakpan (hereafter MBP) 3/8/44, 'Council: Refugees from Belgian Congo', *Extracts from Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting*, 14 July 1960, p. 1.

<sup>138</sup> '2342 Het na SA Gevlug', *Die Transvaler*, 1 February 1961.

<sup>139</sup> NASA, SAB, TES 20/1102, Vol 1, Letter from: Department of the Interior, Pretoria, To: Sekretaris van die Tesourie, Pretoria, *Noodleniging van Vlughtelinge uit die Kongo- Pretoriase Inmigrante komitee*, 28 May 1961, p. 1; <http://www.inflationcalc.co.za> (accessed on 15 December 2015)

### 3.3 South African-Katangese relations

Whilst the exodus of white refugees leaving Congo was taking place, Tshombe declared the secession of the Katanga Province on 11 July 1960. The South African government had begun to follow the rumours that Katanga would secede from Congo. These reports had been doing the rounds several months before the general elections in May 1960.<sup>140</sup> They either referred to the formation of some type of alliance with the white controlled Central African Federation,<sup>141</sup> or quite contradictorily, to an alliance with a future black independent Northern Rhodesia.<sup>142</sup> Even though CONAKAT had publically condemned South Africa's apartheid policy in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre, all members of the South African Consulate in Elisabethville had been invited to attend the independence celebrations that were controlled and organised by Katanga's provincial executive. Whilst no South African representatives were thus present at the celebrations in Leopoldville, the consular staff in Elisabethville attended a gathering of the provincial assembly, a mass in the cathedral, and a service in the Methodist church.<sup>143</sup> Only when Congo entered its first week of independence and South Africa's relationship with Leopoldville further deteriorated, did the South African government's gaze truly turn towards Tshombe's CONAKAT party and the province of Katanga.<sup>144</sup>

Three days after the declaration of the Katangese secession, President Tshombe sent a telegram to various states around the world, including South Africa, requesting recognition of the independence of Katanga.<sup>145</sup> Pretoria did not respond as it was waiting to see how other nations would react to Tshombe's request and first wanted more clarity about how the secession would develop. Whilst Pretoria continued to mull over their options, a second request was sent to the South African government via the British Consul in Elisabethville. The message asked the South African government to forge diplomatic ties with Katanga, and

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<sup>140</sup> 'Plans Ready for Separate Katanga', *The Star*, 6 April 1960.

<sup>141</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, Vol 5, letter from: van Schalkwyk, to: Secretary for External Affairs, *Katanga and the Rhodesian Federation*, 4 March 1960, pp. 1; 3.

<sup>142</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, Vol 6, letter from: Consulate of the Union of South Africa, Elisabethville, to: Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria, *Separatist Tendencies in the Katanga*, 15 April 1960, p. 1.

<sup>143</sup> NASA, SAB, 1/112/3, Vol 2, Letter from: Consulate of the Union of South Africa, Elisabethville, *Independence Celebrations*, 28 June 1960, p. 1.

<sup>144</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, 'Republic of the Congo Secession of the Katanga', Vol 1, Letter from: Consulate of the Union of South Africa, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Political Developments*, 7 July 1960, p. 1.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*, En Clair Telegram, transmitted in French, from: Tshombe, Elisabethville, To: Minister of Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 14 July 1960, np.

recognise the new state.<sup>146</sup> Two weeks later, and after much consideration by the South African government, Tshombe was notified that it would consider the request and hoped to maintain good relations with Katanga.<sup>147</sup> Pretoria was reluctant to recognise Katanga officially, and did not want to be the first but also not the last to do so.<sup>148</sup> Despite continued requests from Elisabethville to recognise Katanga as an independent state, the South African government did not change its position. Taswell argued that recognising Katanga might cause South Africa more embarrassment than good.<sup>149</sup> South Africa's recognition of Katanga would also possibly have negative consequences for the secessionist state due to South Africa's unpopularity among black states.<sup>150</sup> In February 1961, Minister of External Affairs, Eric Louw, added that although it would be difficult and even dangerous to have formal official relations with Tshombe, it would nevertheless be preferable that South Africa increased and strengthened its relations with him.<sup>151</sup> This cautious stance was further explained in August 1961, by the Department of External Affairs who were of the opinion that,

To openly support is out of the question because this will result in allegations of interference in the conflict and put our own security in danger. This will more than eagerly be seized by the enemies of the Union to let the Union be convicted by the United Nations.<sup>152</sup>

The South African government's unwillingness to recognise Katanga formally resulted in Elisabethville sending various representatives to Pretoria. Such agents included amongst others, white political advisors of the Katangese government. These were mostly Belgian who had lived in Katanga, such as former CONAKAT adviser George Thysens who visited Prime Minister Verwoerd in September 1960. Two months later Joseph Onckelinx, who acted as the *chef de cabinet* to the Katangese minister of trade, also visited Verwoerd.<sup>153</sup> Another Belgian was Carlo Huyghé, who frequently travelled to South Africa as a representative of

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<sup>146</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, Vol 1, Mnr Viljoen, 16 July 1960, p. 1.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, *Suggested Terms of Message*, nd, np.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, Mnr Viljoen, 16 July 1960, p. 1.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid, Letter from: HLT Taswell, High Commissioner, Salisbury, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Recognition of Tshombe's Government*, 16 July 1960, p. 1.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, Letter from: HLT Taswell, High Commissioner, Salisbury, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, *Recognition of Katanga's Independence*, 19 July 1960, p. 2.

<sup>151</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, 'Republic of the Congo Secession of the Katanga', PL Vol 1, Die Minister, Kaapstad, 14 April 1961, np.

<sup>152</sup> South African Department of Defence (hereafter SADO), Afdeling Militêre Inligting (hereafter AMI), Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, 'Intelligence Republiek Kongo', Top Secret, *Die Katanga se Beroep om Hulp uit die Unie*, 5 August 1961, pp. 6-7.

<sup>153</sup> Gérard-Libois, *Katanga Secession*, pp. 87; 166; NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, *Betrekkinge met Katanga*, nd, 2; NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, 'Republic of the Congo Secession of the Katanga', Vol 2, *Assistance to the Congo*, Pretoria, 11 February 1961, p. 7.

Tshombe.<sup>154</sup> Huyghé was the *chef de cabinet* of the Katangese minister of defence, and was present when the arrested and imprisoned Lumumba, Maurice Mpolo, and Joseph Okito were executed on 17 January 1961.<sup>155</sup>

Tshombe also sent black Katangese ministers to negotiate with Pretoria, a delicate situation for the South African government due to its uncertainty over how to deal with black diplomats in apartheid's racially divided environment.<sup>156</sup> The Department of External Affairs had to make special arrangements for their accommodation and had to supply the visiting ministers and their entourage with official documentation that indicated that they were not affected by the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act.<sup>157</sup> The first black Congolese representatives to visit South Africa had however not been from Katanga but from Kalonji's Autonomous State of South Kasai.<sup>158</sup> Despite Kalonji's earlier attack against South Africa in the Congolese Senate and Chamber of Representatives, a three man delegation from South Kasai was sent to South Africa on 9 September 1960. The delegation met with the Head of the Department of External Affairs' Africa Division, and handed over a letter from the Prime Minister of South Kasai, Joseph Ngalula, which was addressed to Prime Minister Verwoerd. The delegates requested military materials and thanked the South African government in advance for the aid it would give them 'to save Africa'.<sup>159</sup> The Head of the Africa Division responded that although Pretoria could not fulfil their request for military material, they were allowed to make normal purchases via regular trading channels in South Africa.<sup>160</sup> South African industrialist Harry Oppenheimer was also approached by Kalonji's representatives. Besides Anglo American's links to UMHK, its subsidiary De Beers had significant diamond mining interests in the Kasai Province. Although Oppenheimer indicated support for their cause, he allegedly abstained from assisting them.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, Kommandant-generaal, SAW, Pretoria, *Katanga*, 17 January 1962, p. 11; SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, 'Republic of the Congo Secession of the Katanga', Vol 3, *Mnr Huyghe: Elisabethstad: Onderhoud met mnr. Fuchs van die Suid-Afrikaanse Uitsaaikorporasie*, 21 June 1960, p. 2.

<sup>155</sup> For more information see: De Witte, *The Assassination of Lumumba*.

<sup>156</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 22/1/112/1, 'Katanga: Visits to South Africa', Vol 1, Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 4 August 1961, np.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*, Letter from: Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 6 August 1961, np.

<sup>158</sup> See, p. 30.

<sup>159</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 22/1/112/1, Vol 1, Letter from: Prime Minister of the Autonomous State of South Kasai, Jos Ngalula, Elisabethville, To: Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa, Pretoria, 6 September 1960, p. 1; NASA, SAB, BTS 34/5/112, Vol 2, *Assistance to the Congo*, nd, p. 3.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid*, *Hulp aan die Kongo: Voedselvoorrade vir Vluchtelingen in die Kasai*, nd, p. 2.

<sup>161</sup> Pfister, *Apartheid South Africa and African States*, p. 35.

The first Katangese delegation visited South Africa in August 1961, and consisted of Minister of Works, Gabriel Kitenga, together with Minister of Finance, Jean Kibwe, and Kibwe's personal secretary. Officially, this visit was meant to investigate South Africa's road construction systems.<sup>162</sup> A South African civil engineering firm that had contracts in Katanga was in touch with the Katangese government, which had stated that they wanted to visit Rhodesia and South Africa to investigate their road construction.<sup>163</sup> The delegation had an extensive two day tour across the Transvaal Province inspecting its road construction and development.<sup>164</sup> It even had a night out at the Colosseum Theatre in Johannesburg to watch the popular Western 'The Magnificent Seven' starring Steven McQueen.<sup>165</sup> Unofficially, however, the delegation also established contact with the South African government and asked for aid and support.<sup>166</sup> This visit was swiftly followed by another meeting in September 1961, when Katangese Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Paul Muhona, and his personal secretary made a short stop in South Africa en route to Europe.<sup>167</sup> Later that month, a three day visit by Katanga's Minister of Health, Jean Mwewa, also took place, during which he met with various government representatives.<sup>168</sup> A number of other visits by black Katangese state officials to South Africa occurred throughout the secession period, but were less formal and important.

A further form of contact was made by various liaison agents that came to South Africa with letters of accreditation from Tshombe to plead with South African officials to assist Katanga. Some of these individuals were surprisingly random. On the 24 August 1960, a South African refrigerator manufacturer's representative in Elisabethville, named Joe Khalil, contacted the Department of External Affairs and attempted to transform himself into a self-appointed liaison agent between South Africa and Katanga.<sup>169</sup> From its side, Pretoria also decided to maintain relations with the Katangese government, the first being made by a former member of the South African Consulate in Elisabethville named Killen. Killen met with Tshombe in

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<sup>162</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, *Betrekkinge met Katanga*, nd, p. 11.

<sup>163</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 22/1/112/1, Vol 1, Letter from: V Ledochowski, To: Secretary for the Interior, 19 July 1961, p. 1.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid*, *Programme visit to Transvaal Roads Department by the Honourable Mr J Kibwe (Minister of Finance) of Katanga and the Honourable Mr G Kitenga (Minister of Works on Sunday 6 August 1961 and Monday 7 August 1961*, no date (hereafter nd), np.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid*, Letter from: PR Lindhorst, To: AH Stodel, Pretoria, nd, np.

<sup>166</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, 'Republic of the Congo Secession of the Katanga', Vol 5, *Request from the Katanga for War Material*, Pretoria, 24 October 1961, p. 1.

<sup>167</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 22/1/112/1, Vol 1, *Memorandum, Deurreis-besoek van die Minister van Arbeid en Volkswelsyn van Katanga*, 19 September 1961, np.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid*, *Besoek van Katanga Minister van Gesondheid M. Jean Mwewa*, nd, np.

<sup>169</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, Vol 1, *Extract of letter 24 August 1960, from Mr Killen, Kitwe*, pp. 1-2.



late July 1960 to convey Pretoria's position concerning Katanga. During this meeting, he reiterated to Tshombe that the South African government did not see a possibility of having future relations with the Leopoldville government under Lumumba. Killen declared that the South African government wanted to wait for further clarity before recognising Katanga as an independent state.<sup>170</sup> Pretoria also decided to maintain relations with Elisabethville mainly via its Trade Commissioner in Salisbury, Johan van Schalkwyk, who visited Katanga on a regular basis.<sup>171</sup> Unlike the Prime Minister of the Central African Federation, Roy Welensky, Verwoerd never met Tshombe, despite a number of attempts by the Katangese leader to arrange meeting. Even when the Department of External Affairs received an inquiry from Tshombe who was going to be at Jan Smuts International Airport en route to Geneva in July 1962, Pretoria declined.<sup>172</sup> Verwoerd responded in writing only to some of Tshombe's correspondence.<sup>173</sup>

Katangese representatives generally made three types of requests during their meetings with South African government officials. The first was to recognise Katanga as an independent state and establish diplomatic relations through the reopening of the South African Consulate in Elisabethville.<sup>174</sup> Such official diplomatic relations were a prime concern for the Katangese government, which was desperately in search of states to recognise its independence formally. The government of Katanga allegedly even attempted to 'buy' official recognition from Costa Rica at one stage,<sup>175</sup> likely in the hope that it would spark other governments to follow suit.<sup>176</sup> As previously explained, Pretoria did not want to be the first to establish diplomatic relations with Katanga. The South African ambassador to Lisbon stated in September 1960, that the Portuguese Foreign Office was of the opinion that other African countries 'like Nigeria or Senegal should take the initial step' as 'under the present political

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<sup>170</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, Vol 1, Letter from: High Commissioner Taswell, Salisbury, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Katanga*, 4 August 1960, p. 1.

<sup>171</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, letter from: High Commissioner HLT Taswell, to: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, *Katanga*, 15 June 1961, np.

<sup>172</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, Vol 2, Letter from: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, To: Prime Minister HF Verwoerd, 16 July 1962, pp. 1-2.

<sup>173</sup> See for instance: NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, 'Republic of the Congo Secession of the Katanga', Vol 11, Letter from: Prime Minister HF Verwoerd, To: President Moïse Tshombe, nd, np.

<sup>174</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, The Secretary, nd, p. 1.

<sup>175</sup> National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter NARA), RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Belgian Congo & Republic of Congo US Embassy and Consulate, Leopoldville, Classified General Records, 1934-1963, Box 8, File 301 'Diplomatic Relations Classified 1959-1961', Incoming Telegram American Embassy Leopoldville, December 6 1961, np.

<sup>176</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, The High Commissioner, Salisbury, *Visit to Katanga*, 27 November 1961, p. 1. Despite receiving unofficial support from a number of states, Katanga was never officially recognised by any government.

constellation, recognition by Portugal or by the Rhodesian Federation or the Union, would play into the hands of its enemies'.<sup>177</sup> Instead of recognising Katanga, Pretoria decided rather to show its diplomatic support in a manner that could still please Tshombe but minimise international criticism of South Africa. In September 1961, South African Minister of External Affairs Eric Louw openly condemned the UN for their actions in Congo and their interference in Katanga, stressing that the secession was a Congolese domestic issue.<sup>178</sup> South Africa, together with other UN member states such as Belgium, France, and the Soviet Bloc, also continuously refused to contribute to paying for *Opération des Nations Unies au Congo's* (ONUC) expenses.<sup>179</sup>

Furthermore, during his visit the Katangese Minister of Health had enquired about the supply of medical emergency aid for the stricken population of Katanga.<sup>180</sup> His request consisted of medicine, immunisation, insect repellent, and food supplies. After deliberating, Pretoria proposed to supply medicine to the value of R20,000 (c. R 1.5 million in today's currency) and food to the value of R24,000 a month, excluding transport costs.<sup>181</sup> Although in December 1960 Verwoerd agreed to donate the R20,000 worth of medical supplies, it is not clear what happened to the food supply.<sup>182</sup> That same month, Elisabethville contacted Pretoria about exchanging intelligence between Katanga's Security Service, the *Service de la Centralisation et de la Coordination du Renseignement*, and the South African Police's (SAP) Special Branch.<sup>183</sup> In March 1961, Tshombe sent a letter to the chief of the SAP's Special Branch, Att Spengler, inviting him to meet with the Katangese security services.<sup>184</sup> On one of his visits to Katanga, van Schalkwyk was informed that certain intelligence had begun to be exchanged.<sup>185</sup>

Another common type of request during meetings was the reestablishment and strengthening of the historical trade relations between the two states by increasing imports and exports with

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<sup>177</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, Vol 1, Letter from: Ambassador of the Union of South Africa, Lisbon, To: Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Visit to Lisbon of Katanga Delegation*, 2 September 1960, p. 3.

<sup>178</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, 'Republic of the Congo Secession of the Katanga', Vol 4, 5 September 1961, np.

<sup>179</sup> 'Congo Costs Row Brews', *Pretoria News*, 11 December 1961; NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 28, File '312 UN Pretoria 62-63-64', Outgoing Telegram from: American Embassy, Cape Town, 29 March 1963, pp. 1-2.

<sup>180</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 22/1/112/1, Vol 1, *Moontlike Noodlening aan Katanga*, nd, p. 2.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, pp. 5-6; <http://www.inflationcalc.co.za>

<sup>182</sup> NASA, SAB, URU 4284, 2367, 'Speciale Volmag Vd Staatspresident No 27 Van 1961/62: Noodleniging Aan Katanga', np.

<sup>183</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, *Betrekkinge met Katanga*, nd, p. 10.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, Tshombe, To: Colonel A Sprangler, 22 March 1961, p. 1.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid, *Betrekkinge met Katanga*, nd, p. 10.

South Africa. This was a diplomatic route that Pretoria particularly preferred as it would receive the least amount of criticism and yet still show Tshombe that it was committed to supporting the secession of Katanga. As a result of the secession, Katanga had cut itself off from its main market in Congo and many factory workers had to be laid off.<sup>186</sup> When Onckelinx visited South Africa in November 1960, he requested Verwoerd to support the Katangese economy. Verwoerd eventually agreed to import textiles to a value of £17,000 (c. £350,000 in today's currency) which were going to be used for prisoners and the police; import copper casting moulds to the value of £40,000 (c. £830,000 in today's currency) to be used by the South Africa mint; the issuing of special permits for certain imports such as Katangese biscuits and chocolate; approach the South African Railways Company to possibly purchase copper wire, bars and pipes from Katanga; and finally issue export permits for products from South Africa to Katanga such as white maize and 750 tons of Iscor steel.<sup>187</sup> This agreement did not however completely transpire as stipulated. The clothing samples were of an inferior standard and the agreed amount was reduced to £16,000. The price to import Katangese copper was also not competitive with prices from the Central African Federation, and the Katangese government was forced to increase its price and sell their copper at the ruling London price. The special import permit similarly ran into trouble. Katangese products were expensive and South African firms were reluctant to purchase them. Finally, the South African Railway Company still needed to make a decision on its purchase of copper wire and other promised products.<sup>188</sup> Likely as a result of the little uptake of South African companies, the Department of Trade and Industry circulated a letter to South African business associations, encouraging them to implement attempts to expand their trade with Katanga.<sup>189</sup>

South Africa, together with Belgium, Switzerland, the Central African Federation, and Portuguese Angola also participated at the July 1961 International Trade Fair in Elisabethville.<sup>190</sup> The South African government had already been invited to attend the event in 1959, but the planning and organisation was disrupted because of the disturbances that

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<sup>186</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 34/5/112, Vol 2, Letter from: Office of the high Commissioner, Salisbury, To: Secretary for Trade and Industries, Pretoria, *Handel met Katanga*, 28 November 1960, p. 1.

<sup>187</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, *Betrekkinge met Katanga*, p. 4; <http://inflation.stephenmorley.org>. Iscor was a South African parastatal steel company; now known as Mittal Steel South Africa.

<sup>188</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 34/5/112, Vol 2, *Assistance to the Katanga*, nd, pp. 1-3.

<sup>189</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, *Betrekkinge met Katanga*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>190</sup> 'SA Well Placed to Fill Katanga's Shortages', *Rand Daily Mail*, 13 July 1961.

followed Congo's independence.<sup>191</sup> Although South Africa's participation was not officially endorsed by the South African government, in reality Pretoria urged the South African Exporters' Organisation to be represented. It also contributed R8,000 (c. R620,000 in today's currency) from state funds to set up an exhibition space where more than 30 South African businesses displayed their goods.<sup>192</sup> Most South African participants apparently did not put much effort in their displays or their advertised products, and South Africa's exhibition space was described as a large under-decorated hanger.<sup>193</sup> Although it was reported that the participating companies received a substantial number of orders, follow-through was needed.<sup>194</sup> In December 1962, the Katangese government furthermore approached the South African government with a proposal to establish a Katangese trade office in South Africa from which the government of Katanga could place direct orders for food and supplies. Similar to any other form of official diplomatic relations, the South African government politely declined.<sup>195</sup>

Right until the end of the secession Pretoria continued to foster its economic ties with Katanga. In December 1962, the South African government received a telegram from the UN and the Leopoldville government that requested Pretoria to 'take the necessary measures to prohibit the shipment of Katangese copper ore into the territory of the Republic of South Africa'.<sup>196</sup> This was an attempt to block UMHK from further funding the Katangese secession, and pressuring Tshombe to end it.<sup>197</sup> That year South Africa imported approximately 9,000 tons of copper from Congo which was valued at R2,497,696 (c. R193 million in today's currency).<sup>198</sup> Complying with this request would have had serious economic consequences for South Africa. At a time when South Africa itself was threatened with a trade boycott, Minister of External Affairs Louw replied that 'the South African

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<sup>191</sup> NASA, SAB, Department of Trade and Industry (hereafter HEN) 1710, 'Exhibitions & Advertising Belgian Congo (Elizabethville)', Letter from: Sekretaris van Handel en Nywerheid, To: Sekretaris van die Tesourie, Kaapstad, *Internationale Tentoonstelling: Elisabethstad: 8 tot 23 Julie 1961*, 14 February 1961, p. 1.

<sup>192</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, *Betrekkinge met Katanga*, p. 5; '100 000 Expected at Katanga Fair', *Rand Daily Mail*, 7 June 1961; <http://www.inflationcalc.co.za>

<sup>193</sup> NASA, SAB, HEN 1710, Vol 1, Letter from: Handelskommissaris, Salisbury, To: Senior Handelskommissaris, Salisbury, *Internasionale Skou: Elisabethstad*, 24 July 1961, pp. 1-2.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid*, *Elizabethville Fair*, nd, pp. 1-2.

<sup>195</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, 'Republic of the Congo Secession of the Katanga', PL Vol 3, *Katanga Purchases in South Africa*, p. 1.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid*, Telegram from: SA Perm Del to UNO, New York, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 12 December 1962, p. 1. This request was sent to a number of other governments, none of whom -according to the Department of Foreign Affairs- implemented such sanctions.

<sup>197</sup> Kisangani, *Civil Wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 42.

<sup>198</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 3, *Information of Copper from Katanga*, nd, np; <http://www.inflationcalc.co.za>

Government cannot accept this measure in which South Africa is asked to participate in the application of economic sanctions'.<sup>199</sup>

The last, and definitely most controversial type of request by Katangese representatives, were for the supply of armaments that were crucial in keeping the Katangese gendarmerie operational. Somewhat surprisingly, the first known request made to South Africa for armaments for Katanga occurred in May 1960, more than a month before Congo's independence. A Belgian *Force Publique* Captain, Andre Bastenie, contacted the SADF, informing them that members of Katanga's white population would greatly appreciate 'a dropping of weapons by plane in a marked and controlled zone'.<sup>200</sup> Bastenie's order consisted of 100 Sten guns, 20 Bren guns, and four two-inch bazookas with ammunition.<sup>201</sup> The response by the Department of External Affairs was, as one might expect, not accommodating.<sup>202</sup>

When Katanga seceded, the Katangese government made similar enquiries. Officially, such requests were always denied by Pretoria, and its standard reply was that 'Katanga was free to make non-military purchases from private businesses in the Republic but that military equipment could not be supplied'.<sup>203</sup> There are, however, strong indications that non-military supplies and material were sent from South Africa to Katanga that ended up being used for military purposes.<sup>204</sup> In February 1961, van Schalkwyk visited Tshombe in Elisabethville and explained that 'he is receiving more assistance from South Africa than he realises, in the way of 'commercial' shipments'.<sup>205</sup> This assistance most likely refers to two consignments of 10-20 tons of Iscor steel for armour plating vehicles.<sup>206</sup> A request for armoured steel and vehicles had been made a month before by a Katangese representative,<sup>207</sup> as well as by a disgruntled

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<sup>199</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 3, Letter from: Minister of Foreign Affairs, To: Secretary General of the United Nations, 24 December 1962, p. 2.

<sup>200</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, Top Secret, Letter from: Mr Andre Bastenie, To: Mr Bosman, p. 1.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1, Die Waarnemende Sekretaris, Pretoria, 14 June 1960, np.

<sup>203</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, *Betrekkinge met Katanga*, nd, pp. 3-4.

<sup>204</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, H van Schalkwyk, Trade Commissioner, Salisbury, *Visit to Katanga*, 13 June 1961, p. 4; The National Archives (hereafter TNA), Foreign Office Papers (hereafter FO) 371/161551, 'Supply of Aircraft for Katanga', Cypher from: United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations, New York, To: Foreign Office, p. 1; SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, Kommandant-Generaal, SAW, Pretoria, *Katanga*, 17 January 1962, p. 6; See for instance: AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, Kommandant-Generaal, SAW, Pretoria, *Katanga*, 17 January 1962, np.

<sup>205</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/5/2, 'Congo: Military Aid for Katanga', Vol 1, Trade Commissioner, Salisbury, *Visit to Katanga*, 22 February 1961, np.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, *Betrekkinge met Katanga*, nd, pp. 5; 6.

Tshombe himself during a previous meeting with van Schalkwyk.<sup>208</sup> Such armoured steel could have been transported covertly as material for the Katangese copper mines, including as part of the agreed upon permit for Iscor steel.<sup>209</sup> There were also allegations that 'Pretoria provided Tshombe with weaponry with all identification marks removed'.<sup>210</sup> Although there is no concrete proof of such transactions, the supply of weapons to Katanga through the mediation of the Central African Federation was at least discussed at a high state level.<sup>211</sup> The Central African Federation's secretary of defence corresponded with his South African counterpart about the possibly aiding Tshombe's government militarily; but indicated that it would be almost impossible to keep secret.<sup>212</sup>

Evidence indicates, however, that most material was not supplied or organised by the South African government itself, but by agents who worked for the Katangese government.<sup>213</sup> In January 1960, six Piper Cub aeroplanes were exported from South Africa to Katanga without the proper clearance of the South African government. The six aeroplanes left the Wonderboom airport in northern Pretoria after the Commander of the Katangese Air Force, Hirsch, arrived in South Africa and falsely stated that he had received permission from the UN to transport the aeroplanes to Katanga.<sup>214</sup> According to a SADF interview with the Irish born South African mercenary Michael Hoare, such Piper Cubs were used by the Katangese Air Force to drop supplies to troops in the field. Hoare also noted that when he was in Katanga the troops were served what was known as 'the South African ration', which he suspected of having come from Johannesburg.<sup>215</sup> Furthermore, in February 1961, the *Rand Daily Mail* reported that the Exporters Association in Johannesburg had received enquiries about heavy socks, shirts, webbing equipment, and hats presumably to outfit the Katangese

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<sup>208</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, *Betrekkinge met Katanga*, nd, pp. 6-7.

<sup>209</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, *Die Katanga se Beroep om Hulp uit die Unie*, 5 August 1961, p. 7.

<sup>210</sup> Cohen, 'A Difficult, Tedious and Unwanted Task', p. 113.

<sup>211</sup> Department of International Relations and Cooperation (hereafter DIRCO), Secretary of Foreign Affairs (hereafter BTS) 1/58/5/1, 'Rhodesie Militere Hulp Aan', Vol 1, Letter from: Department of Defence, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 9 February 1961, np.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid, Letter from: Ministry of Defence, Salisbury, To: Secretary for Defence, Cape Town, 8 February 1961, np.

<sup>213</sup> TNA, FO 371/161924, 'South African Attitude Towards Military Assistance to Katanga', Letter from: British embassy, Pretoria, 17 July 1962, p. 2.

<sup>214</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 3, SADF, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, Letter from: PMJ McGregor, To: Commandant-Generaal, Report on Katanga, 23 September 1961, p. 1; NASA, SAB, BTS 34/5/112, Vol 2, *Sale of Six Light Aircraft (Piper) to the Katanga*, nd, pp. 2-6.

<sup>215</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, Report by the Komandant Generaal, SAW, *Katanga*, 17 January 1962, p. 7.

army.<sup>216</sup> On his visit to Katanga in June 1961, van Schalkwyk noted that there were 45 to 50 new five ton GMC and Fargo trucks in use by the Katangese army that seem to have come from a South African supplier in Parow.<sup>217</sup>

Katangese agents likely purchased supplies in South Africa or used South Africa as a port of delivery, disguised them as goods for commercial purposes and then transported them via Portuguese Angola or the Central African Federation across to Katanga.<sup>218</sup> Elisabethville regularly indicated in their conversations with Pretoria that channels did exist to transport material destined for Katanga through Southern Africa.<sup>219</sup> The Katangese government had informed the Pretoria Light Aircraft Company (the distributor of the Piper Cub aeroplanes mentioned above) that 'they have adequate channels to import these aeroplanes through Angola, Mozambique, or Tanganyika'.<sup>220</sup> Similarly, in May 1962, the British Foreign Office was informed of a possible purchase of six Dove airplanes by 'a South African source' that were to be flown to Katanga via Portuguese Angola.<sup>221</sup> The American State Department reported that the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association purchased a DC-4 aeroplane through Goldfields Minimum and Industrial Limited to transport native labour to and from Goldfields.<sup>222</sup> The aeroplane was however interned in Rhodesia when it was discovered that it was intended for Katanga.<sup>223</sup> Taswell explained that 'the Federal authorities are closing their eyes. In the case a shipment could be disguised as 'commercial' and does not raise suspicion

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<sup>216</sup> 'Katanga Mission to Seek Arms in Union', *Rand Daily Mail*, 23 February 1961.

<sup>217</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, Letter from: HLT Taswell, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 15 June 1961, pp. 1-2.

<sup>218</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Belgian Congo & Republic of Congo US Embassy and Consulate, Leopoldville, Classified General Records, 1934-1963, Box 29, File '350 Angola Classified Jan-June 1963', Incoming Telegram, American Embassy Leopoldville, from: Luanda, 15 February 1963, p. 1; TNA, FO 371/161535, 'Activities of Mercenaries', Cypher from: Foreign Office, To: United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations, 10 October 1962, np; NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 26, File '350 political (Congo) classified 1961', Incoming Telegram, From: Dept, 8 December 1961, np.; NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 2, Letter from: Sekretaris van Buitelandse Sake, Pretoria, To: Permanente Verteenwoordiger van die Republiek van Suid-Africa by die Verenigde Volke, New York, *Vliegtuie wat Vermoedelik na Katanga Gegaan het*, 8 February 1962, pp. 1-2.

<sup>219</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, Vol 5, *Request from the Katanga for War Material*, p. 1.

<sup>220</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 34/5/112, Vol 2, Letter from: Pretoria Light Aircraft Co. (PTY) Ltd, Pretoria, To: Secretary for Economic Affairs, Pretoria, 27 January 1961, p. 1.

<sup>221</sup> TNA, FO 371/161924, 'South African Attitude Towards Military Assistance to Katanga', *Memorandum on the South African Attitude Towards the Supply of Men and Material to Katanga*, nd, p. 1.

<sup>222</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 26, 350, 'Political (Congo) classified 1961', Telegram incoming 8 December 1961, p. 1.

<sup>223</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Belgian Congo & Republic of Congo US Embassy and Consulate, Leopoldville, Classified General Records, 1934-1963, Box 29, '350 Angola classified Jan-June 1963', Telegram from American embassy Leopoldville, 15 February 1963, p. 1.

such as mining equipment for Union Minière, the authorities let it pass'.<sup>224</sup> Likewise, the Central African Federation's Secretary of Defence admitted that Tshombe's agents were allowed to buy any quantity of lorry chassis and other equipment that could not be identified as military.<sup>225</sup> Taswell was of the opinion that 'we cannot, as a government, engage in shady activities but our own businessmen and the Belgians have sufficient ingenuity to disguise things so that they will pass United Nations control in Elisabethville, we must just not ask too many questions'.<sup>226</sup> Despite the UN's best efforts, the smuggling of equipment was allegedly an easy procedure, especially from the smaller towns along the Northern Rhodesian border.<sup>227</sup> According to the American State Department, the South African government together with the Central African Federation and Portugal knew that many of these consignments travelled through their territory.<sup>228</sup> The SADF's Military Intelligence Division noted that Portuguese Angola was particularly open in smuggling arms across the Katangese border.<sup>229</sup>

Pretoria did however intervene in a few instances and prevented questionable material from traveling through its territory. This was mainly because of the fact that the South African government was often automatically accused by members of the UN of supplying military aid to Katanga, even if it had not.<sup>230</sup> In February 1961, the South African controller of exports received an application for a permit to export 34 Chevrolet 1½ ton trucks that were fitted as ambulances. The firm in Elisabethville claimed it acted on behalf of the Katangese and South Kasai governments. The Department of External Affairs considered approving the request but first wanted to get permission from UN Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld, before it

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<sup>224</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/5/2, Vol 1, Letter from: High Commissioner, Salisbury, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Cape Town, *Congo*, 1 February 1961, p. 1.

<sup>225</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/58/5/1, Vol 1, Letter from: Ministry of Defence, Salisbury, To: Secretary for Defence, Cape town, 8 February 1961, np.

<sup>226</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, Top Secret, Letter from: High Commissioner HLT Taswell, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, *Congo*, 27 January 1961, p. 3.

<sup>227</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/5/2, Vol 1, *Report on Visit to Elisabethville 19-12 January 1961 by GSO 2 (Intelligence)*, Army Headquarters, 25 January 1961, p. 2.

<sup>228</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Belgian Congo & Republic of Congo US Embassy and Consulate, Leopoldville, Classified General Records, 1934-1963, Box 29, File '350 Angola Classified Jan-June 1963', Incoming Telegram, American Embassy Leopoldville, From: Luanda, 15 February 1963, p. 1.

<sup>229</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 1019, File KG/SVK/4/37/1, 'Angola', Top Secret, *Direkteur van Militere Inligting, Rapport oor toestand in Angola*, 10 January 1963, p. 2; SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, Letter from: High Commissioner, Salisbury, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Cape Town, *Congo*, 27 January 1961, p. 2.

<sup>230</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 30, File '350 Congo Pretoria 62-63-64', Incoming Telegram, From: Leopoldville, 24 March 1962, np.



issued the export licenses.<sup>231</sup> Hammarskjöld was of the opinion that the proposed consignment, especially its size, would be interpreted as military supplies. The secretary general advised the South African government that if the number were decreased considerably, allegations of supplying war material would likely not surface.<sup>232</sup> Pretoria was similarly cautious when it received an application to export a Dornier DC 27 and two Vickers Viking passenger aeroplanes to Katanga. Although these aeroplanes were technically non-military they could certainly be used for military purposes, and the South African government once again enquired about the matter with the UN.<sup>233</sup> According to the South African Permanent Representative at the UN, Hammarskjöld did not necessarily condemn the sale, even though it might not be in the best interest of South Africa. The secretary general noted that it was a matter for the South African government to decide.<sup>234</sup> Whilst the issue was discussed by the Department of External Affairs, the SADF's Commandant General, Pieter Grobelaar, explicitly stated that he 'does NOT favour their export to Katanga', as 'both aircraft are of considerable military value and potential'.<sup>235</sup> It seems that the permits for this order were therefore never issued.

Katangese aeroplanes were nonetheless serviced in South Africa. The Katangese Air Force was of vital strategic importance for Katanga's military manoeuvres. Commandant Hirsch had visited South Africa in September 1960 to acquire spare parts for Katangese aeroplanes and arrange their possible servicing.<sup>236</sup> The South African government agreed to allow Katangese aeroplanes to be serviced and repaired by the Field Aircraft Services Aeronautical Engineers and Consultants at the Rand airport in Germiston,<sup>237</sup> but only after receiving

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<sup>231</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 34/5/112, Vol 2, Immediate Telegram from: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Cape Town, To: SA Perm Delegation to UN, New York, 22 February 1961, np.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid, Immediate Telegram from: SA Perm Delegation to UN New York, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Cape Town, 23 February 1961, np.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid, Letter from: Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, To: Secretary for Defence, *Sale of Aircraft to the Katanga*, 10 March 1961, np.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid, Telegram from: SA perm Delegation to UN, New York, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Cape Town, 14 March 1961, np.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid, Commandant-Generaal SADF, Cape Town, *Sale of Aircraft to Katanga*, 24 March 1961, np.

<sup>236</sup> 'Belgian on Secret Mission in SA', *Rand Daily Mail*, 6 September 1960.

<sup>237</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 24, File '350-Political- Riots Congo Classified 1960', Outgoing Telegram, 5 September 1960, p. 1.

approval from the UN.<sup>238</sup> This arrangement continued until the end of the secession in January 1963.<sup>239</sup>

Finally, there was also the thorny issue of mercenaries being enlisted in South Africa. The first known mention of possible South African mercenary recruitment for Katanga dates back to mid-August 1960, when the South African Office of the Postmaster General informed the Department of the Interior of an intercepted telegram. A man from Springfield in Johannesburg had sent a telegram to Tshombe stating that, 'in reply to your radio appeal' he was 'prepared to organise Commando of South Africans in your rightful fight for independence and for justice'.<sup>240</sup> This appeal likely refers to a message by Katangese Minister of the Interior, Godefroid Munongo, who on 8 August 1960 called upon volunteers in all countries of the world to come and help Katanga.<sup>241</sup> The Department of External Affairs strongly emphasised to the postmaster general that it would not be in South Africa's national interest to transmit the telegram.<sup>242</sup> As the violence of the Katangese secession steadily escalated, so too did the rumours of possible recruitment in South Africa. According to a September 1960 *Rand Daily Mail* article, a spokesperson of the Katangese army (most likely Commandant Hirsch who was in Johannesburg at the time) stated that applications had been received from Europeans in South Africa volunteering for service in the Katangese gendarmes.<sup>243</sup> The following month, Radio Moscow spread the rumour that South African troops were sent to Katanga to help Tshombe's government.<sup>244</sup> Such allegations were more than likely baseless.

Foreign mercenary recruitment for the Katangese gendarmerie commenced in France and Belgium in January 1961.<sup>245</sup> These European mercenaries were described by Taswell as 'tough adventure seeking characters of the handle-bar moustache variety ready for killing and violence generally'.<sup>246</sup> The following month there had been an aborted attempt to sign up

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<sup>238</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, Vol 2, Priority en Clair Telegram: from: British Consul, Elisabethville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 4 October 1960, np.

<sup>239</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 1019, File KG/SVK/4/15/1, 'Katanga', Top Secret, *Rapport van Bron in Katanga*, 26 January 1963, p. 4. For a detailed account of the role of the Katangese air force see: Puren and Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander*.

<sup>240</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, Vol 1, Deputy Secretary, 16 August 1960, p. 1.

<sup>241</sup> 'Katanga Vra Vrywillegers uit die Hele Wereld', *Die Burger*, 9 August 1960.

<sup>242</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, Vol 1, Deputy Secretary, 16 August 1960, p. 1.

<sup>243</sup> 'Union Whites 'Volunteer' for Katanga Army', *Rand Daily Mail*, 5 September 1960.

<sup>244</sup> 'Katanga en SA Soldate', *Die Transvaler*, 19 October 1960.

<sup>245</sup> Clarke, *The Congo Mercenary*, pp. 27–28.

<sup>246</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, Letter from: High Commissioner HLT Taswell, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Congo, 27 January 1961, p. 2.

mercenaries in South Africa for the Katangese air and ground forces by Stuart Finley-Bisset, a labour agent in Lusaka.<sup>247</sup> Bisset came to South Africa to recruit mercenaries even though, according to Pretoria, the Katangese government did not recognise any connection with him.<sup>248</sup> Finley-Bisset was disliked by the South African Department of External Affairs and was later convicted in Northern Rhodesia of assaulting American Assistant Secretary of State, Mennen Williams, at Lusaka airport.<sup>249</sup>

The recruitment of mercenaries in South Africa eventually occurred in March 1961. A recruitment agency was set up in Johannesburg by Huyghé and Scottish born Roderick Russell-Cargill.<sup>250</sup> Simultaneously, recruitment centres were created in Southern Rhodesia's Bulawayo and Salisbury, but both eventually closed down after they ran into difficulties with the local authorities.<sup>251</sup> The first group of mercenaries recruited in South Africa was under the command of Richard Brown, a United Kingdom citizen who had resided in South Africa for some years.<sup>252</sup> Although not all recruits were South African citizens, many had been living in South Africa. The group, colloquially known as the *Compagnie Internationale*, arrived in Elisabethville on 6 March 1961.<sup>253</sup> Their escapades in Katanga were short lived. The following month, Brown and 29 other mercenaries were arrested by ONUC forces at the town of Kabalo in Northern Katanga, and eventually repatriated.<sup>254</sup>

This incident did not stop the recruitment of mercenaries and new 'volunteers' continued to arrive in Katanga from South Africa. Among this new batch of mercenaries was Hoare who was to lead 4 Commando, a group of South Africans, Rhodesian, Britons, Italians, and Portuguese.<sup>255</sup> According to a South African intelligence report, 55 South African mercenaries were serving in the Katangese army in mid-June 1961.<sup>256</sup> A SADF Military Intelligence Division report noted that at no time did the strength of the contingent of English

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<sup>247</sup> 'SAAF Jet Pilots Try For Congo', *Cape Times*, 8 February 1961.

<sup>248</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, Vol 2, *To Mr Stewart*, 14 March 1961, p. 2.

<sup>249</sup> Williams, *Who Killed Hammarskjöld?*, p. 221.

<sup>250</sup> 'S.A. Manne na Katanga', *Die Burger*, 7 March 1961.

<sup>251</sup> United Nations Archives (hereafter UNA), 'FC/U/3013, Mercenaries in Katanga Gendarmerie', 31/03/1961-3/5/1963, Series:S-0787, Box: 2, File: 9, *Report to Secretary General from his acting special representative in the Congo concerning the interrogation of 30 mercenaries apprehended in Kabalo on 7 April 1961*, 15 April 1961, p. 2.

<sup>252</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, Vol 2, Telegram from: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Cape Town, To: SA permanent delegation to UN, New York, 20 March 1961, np.

<sup>253</sup> TNA, FO 371/154995, 'Activities of Mercenaries in Belgian Congo', Telegram from: Elisabethville To: Foreign Office, March 13 1961; NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, Vol 2, *To Mr Stewart*, 14 March 1961, p. 1.

<sup>254</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, *Betrekkinge met Katanga*, p. 9.

<sup>255</sup> Hoare, *The Road to Kalamata*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>256</sup> SADF, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, Rapport d'uer GSO 2(Inf) Katanga, 29 June 1961, p. 1.

speaking mercenaries exceed 150.<sup>257</sup> The presence of South African mercenaries in Congo significantly subsided from August and September onwards after ONUC's operations 'Rumpunch' and 'Morthor' rounded up and expelled most foreign mercenaries present in Katanga.<sup>258</sup> The UN repatriated 314 Belgians, and 71 non-Belgian mercenaries of which 25 were South African nationals.<sup>259</sup> However, cases of individual mercenaries based in South Africa slipping into Katanga via the Rhodesias continued to be recorded, especially a handful of South African mercenary pilots. Both Jerry Puren and Patrick Vosloo, two South African mercenaries who had previously been repatriated by the UN, returned to Katanga and served in the Katangese Air Force until the end of the secession.<sup>260</sup>

The South African government did not however organise such recruitment, nor was it happy about it taking place so openly. According to the Department of External Affairs, 'the Union government was unpopular enough at the United Nations without giving their critics there another stick to beat them with'.<sup>261</sup> Even though Pretoria was thus not responsible for the recruitment of mercenaries, it was certainly well aware of it. The Department of External Affairs and the South African security services kept themselves informed about the movement of mercenaries, liaised with some of them, and (as in the case of Brown who met with a Colonel Uys of the SADF) allegedly enlisted their services to gain information about the occurrences in the Congo.<sup>262</sup> In his biography Puren even claims that Tshombe made arrangements with the SADF and the Central African Federation's security services to smuggle him and fellow South African mercenary pilot Jimmy Hedges into Katanga, but no archival material has been uncovered detailing this event.<sup>263</sup>

In February 1961, even before any mercenary recruitment had actually taken place, cabinet decided that the South African government would not issue travel documents if it were known that these documents would be used to travel to Katanga. Nor was it willing to offer passport facilities to persons who applied for another region in Africa as a means of getting

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<sup>257</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, p. 1.

<sup>258</sup> Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo*, pp. 155–157.

<sup>259</sup> UNA, 'FC/U/3013, Mercenaries in Katanga Gendarmerie', 31/03/1961-3/5/1963, Series:S-0787, Box: 2, File: 9, *Breakdown of Foreign Personnel Evacuated from Katanga by the United Nations in Accordance with Paragraph A-2 of Security Council Resolution of 21 February 1961*, np.

<sup>260</sup> See Puren and Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander*.

<sup>261</sup> TNA, FO 371/161924, Letter from: British Embassy, Pretoria, 17 July 1962, p. 1.

<sup>262</sup> TNA, FO 1100/2, 'Mercenaries', Secret, Addressed to Leopoldville, 23 May, np; NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, Telegram from: SA Perm Delegation to UN, New York, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Cape Town, 22 May 1961, np.

<sup>263</sup> See Chapter 15 in: Puren and Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander*.

into Katanga.<sup>264</sup> The Minister of the Interior further decided two months later that no passport for Congo would be issued unless the applicant had provided written proof that he had to visit Congo for business purposes, accompanied by a sworn statement in which he vowed not to take part in any of the fighting.<sup>265</sup> Even though the South African government publicly tried to distance itself from these practises, in reality the bare minimum was done by Pretoria to prevent mercenaries from departing to Katanga. No recorded instances were found of the South African government stopping mercenaries from leaving. Such lax measures by the South African authorities are well illustrated when, on 30 March 1961, an Air Katanga flight was ready to depart from Jan Smuts International Airport carrying 20 men of various nationalities. Officers of the South African Department of Interior came to investigate and merely took affidavits from all eight South Africans to the effect that they were not going to take part in any war in Katanga. The eight men signed the documents and the plane departed without any further questions.<sup>266</sup> The actual prevention of such recruitment was also difficult, as mercenaries would indicate that they were going to the Central African Federation instead of Congo.<sup>267</sup> Others like the two British mercenaries, Ian Gordon and Nigel Osborn, simply crossed the South African border with Southern Rhodesia on foot at unguarded points.<sup>268</sup>

## **Conclusion**

After the breakdown in relations with Leopoldville, Pretoria decided to politically, economically, and to a certain extent militarily aid the secessionist state of Katanga, albeit always in a cautious manner that would not jeopardise its own position. The South African government provided enough support to maintain friendly relations with Katanga and at the same time allow the secession to carry on. Tshombe's continued reluctance to come to an agreement with the Central Congolese government resulted in the forceful termination of the secession of Katanga, and therefore the termination of Congo's only politician who expressed a desire to maintain diplomatic and economic relations with the South African government. The consequence for South Africa of this event had been forewarned in an August 1961 *Pretoria News* article. Its author pronounced that,

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<sup>264</sup> TNA, FO 371/161924, *Memorandum on the South African Attitude Towards the Supply of Men and Materials to Katanga*, nd, p. 1.

<sup>265</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, *Betrekkinge met Katanga*, nd, p. 9.

<sup>266</sup> TNA, FO 371/154996, 'Activities of Mercenaries in Belgian Congo', Inwards Telegram to Commonwealth Relations Office, from: Cape Town, 5 April 1961, np.

<sup>267</sup> TNA, FO 371/161924, *Memorandum on the South African Attitude Towards the Supply of Men and Material to Katanga*, nd, p. 1.

<sup>268</sup> TNA, FO 1100/2, Confidential, Addressed to FO, June 19, np.

It is certain that if Congo's Central government succeeds in deposing President Tshombe and imposing its rule upon the whole of the Congo, South Africa's brief accord with one African state will come to an abrupt end. The Congo will not be on speaking, dining or trading terms with the Republic.<sup>269</sup>

These prophetic words perfectly encapsulate the state of South African-Congolese relations at the time when Tshombe departed from the political theatre in January 1963. What followed was a new period that was the polar opposite of Pretoria's relationship with Katanga; namely that of the Congo alliance.

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<sup>269</sup> 'Katanga's Friends', *Pretoria News*, 9 August 1961.

# Chapter Four

## The Congo alliance, 1963-1964

Congo will not hesitate to give its moral and material support to all people struggling for their freedom. [...] Our geographical situation in the centre of Africa means for us that the liberation of other African peoples still under foreign domination depends in large measure upon our support, and to aid these peoples is for us a duty of solidarity that we must not shirk.

Cyrille Adoula, September 1961<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

In April 1960 while visiting Ghana's capital city, Accra, Patrice Lumumba promised to assist 'the natives in the Rhodesias, South Africa and Portuguese territories to attain independence', and announced that in future Congo would be used as a base for independence movements in neighbouring territories.<sup>2</sup> Although Lumumba was unable to fulfil his promise, for a brief moment Cyrille Adoula was successful in transforming Congo into a centre of Southern African liberation through the creation of the 'Congo alliance'. The Pan African Congress (PAC) and South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) actively participated in the Congo alliance, which lasted from 1963 to 1964. This chapter makes use of the PAC and SWAPO's involvement in the alliance to examine this short but important moment in Congolese and Southern African history. The chapter's first subsection examines the formation of the Congo alliance, whilst the second subsection details its decline.

### 4.1 The formation of the Congo alliance

The formation of the Congo alliance has its roots in the relationship that emerged between the Congolese government and the Angolan liberation movements, specifically the relationship between Adoula and Holden Roberto. Roberto was born in Portuguese Angola in 1923. Two years later his family moved to Congo where he would spend most of his remaining life. As a young man, Roberto worked as an accountant for the Belgian administration, and he was stationed in Leopoldville, Bukavu, and Stanleyville. Whilst living in Congo Roberto had also been a member of the Daring Soccer Club of which Adoula was

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<sup>1</sup> Speech by Congolese Prime Minister Cyrille Adoula at the September 1961 Belgrade Conference of Non-Aligned States; John Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol I: The Anatomy of an Explosion, 1950-1962* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1969), p. 260.

<sup>2</sup> 'Congo Will Help Other Africans', *The Star*, 20 April 1960.

captain, and a friendship developed between the two.<sup>3</sup> He became politically active from the 1950s onwards, and spent most of his remaining life involved in Angola's liberation struggle. Throughout his liberation career, Roberto served as president of the *União das Populações de Angola* (UPA), chairman of the executive of the *Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola* (FNLA) and president of the *Governo revolucionário de Angola no exílio* (GRAE), which was the Angolan Government in Exile.<sup>4</sup> At the December 1958 All-African Peoples' Conference in Accra, Roberto established contact with various young African nationalists, including Lumumba. At the following All-African Peoples Conference in Tunis in January 1960, Lumumba invited Roberto to launch the UPA's 'Angolan campaign from Congo'.<sup>5</sup> Despite this promise, the Congolese government significantly reduced its assistance to the UPA after Lumumba's political disposal by Joseph Kasavubu and Joseph Mobutu.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, when Roberto's old acquaintance Adoula was elected as Congo's new prime minister in August 1961, the Angolan liberation leader regained Leopoldville's favour.<sup>7</sup> Roberto's FNLA and the *Partido Democrático Angolano* united to form GRAE the following year in April, and Roberto was elected as its president.<sup>8</sup> GRAE's headquarters were established at Leopoldville, and Adoula agreed to finance and support the Angolan government in exile.<sup>9</sup> Urged on by the American government who had a close relationship with both Adoula and Roberto, Leopoldville officially recognised GRAE in late June 1962.<sup>10</sup> More importantly, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) also recognised GRAE in July the following year, and acknowledged it as the only legitimate nationalist front in Portuguese Angola. The OAU insisted that African and foreign aid to the Angolan liberation movements should be channelled via Adoula's government to GRAE.<sup>11</sup> Adoula had also granted GRAE's army, the *Exército de Libertação Nacional de Angola* (ELNA), permission to house and train its recruits at an abandoned military camp in Kinkuzu, some 82 kilometres west of Thysville.

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<sup>3</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol I*, p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>6</sup> See, p. 31; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol I*, p. 96.

<sup>7</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol I*, pp. 179–180.

<sup>8</sup> Maina Kagombe, 'African Nationalism and Geurilla Warfare in Angola and Mozambique', in: Christian Potholm and Richard Dale, eds., *Southern Africa in Perspective, Essays in Regional Politics* (London: The Free Press, 1972), p. 197.

<sup>9</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol I*, pp. 98; 305.

<sup>10</sup> George Wright, *The Destruction of a Nation: United States' Policy Towards Angola since 1945* (London: Pluto Press, 1997), pp. 8–9.

<sup>11</sup> Wright, *The Destruction of a Nation*, p. 9; John Marcum, 'The Exile Condition and Revolutionary Effectiveness: Southern African Liberation Movements', in: Christian Potholm and Richard Dale, eds., *Southern Africa in Perspective, Essays in Regional Politics* (London: The Free Press, 1972), pp. 268–269.



Members of GRAE's senior command together with Angolan officers who had previously received military training in Algeria opened up the camp in August 1962.<sup>12</sup>

The relationship between the Congolese government and the liberation of Portuguese Angola became increasingly intertwined. Roberto accompanied Adoula to the May 1963 conference of the OAU's formation in Addis Ababa. Here he liaised with representatives of various Southern African liberation movements.<sup>13</sup> On his return journey from the conference, Adoula invited South African PAC London representative, Nelson 'Nana' Mahomo; Mozambican *União Democrática Nacional de Moçambique* (UDENAMO) President, Paulo Gumane; South West African SWAPO President, Sam Nujoma; and Southern Rhodesian then still Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU) National Chairman, Ndabaningi Sithole, to join him and Roberto on his private plane en-route to Congo for discussions.<sup>14</sup> Adoula in conjuncture with Roberto proposed to form a joint body of regional liberation movements. The group would have its headquarters in Congo from where it would train and launch its campaign to liberate the Southern African sub-continent.<sup>15</sup> In July 1960, SWAPO founder, William Eric Getzen, whose *nom de guerre* was Mburumba Kerina, had already sought the support of Patrice Lumumba to try to get South West Africa under direct United Nations (UN) control.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, SWAPO's Secretary General Jacob Kuhangua, met with Roberto in Leopoldville two years later, and formed an alliance between SWAPO and the FNLA.<sup>17</sup>

In this new and more representative regional alliance, which eventually became colloquially known as the 'Congo alliance', Roberto was to act as the mediator between the Congolese government and the representatives of the different liberation movements.<sup>18</sup> The Congo alliance was not, however, the first attempt by Southern African nationalist movements to form a coalition. In April 1960, the African National Congress (ANC), PAC, and South African Indian Congress agreed to cooperate and established the South African United Front (SAUF). At the Conference of Independent African States in Addis Ababa three months later, the South West African National Union joined the SAUF, and in January 1961 SWAPO

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<sup>12</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol I*, pp. 98; 305.

<sup>13</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol II*, pp. 70; 73.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, p. 74.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 72.

<sup>16</sup> 'Vra Hulp by Lumumba', *Die Burger*, 26 July 1960.

<sup>17</sup> 'SWAPO Leader is Promised Help', *Contact*, 4 October 1962, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol II*, p. 74.

became a member.<sup>19</sup> These nationalist movements had formally agreed to work together to raise awareness about the plight of the South African and South West African population and lobby for an international boycott of the apartheid state. By the end of 1960, the SAUF had established offices in London, Cairo, Accra, and Dar es Salaam. However, the SAUF disintegrated in early 1962 due to inter-organisational conflict.<sup>20</sup> Around the same time, the Pan African Freedom Movement for East and Central Africa (PAFMECA) agreed at its February 1962 conference in Addis Ababa to include Southern African nationalist movements in its organisation. PAFMECA was subsequently renamed to the Pan African Freedom Movement for East, Central and Southern Africa (PAFMECSA).<sup>21</sup> Later that year PAFMECSA held a conference in Leopoldville, where its members made ‘a series of formal, public promises to the representatives of southern liberation movements’.<sup>22</sup> Despite Southern Africa’s regional integration, PAFMECSA’s assistance and support to the liberation of the sub-region ‘remained largely symbolic’.<sup>23</sup> When the OAU was formed in March 1963, it established the Liberation Committee, largely making PAFMECSA obsolete.<sup>24</sup> The Liberation Committee, which was also known as the Committee of Nine, was made up of, Algeria, Congo (Leopoldville), Senegal, Tanganyika, Uganda, the United Arab Republic (Egypt), Ethiopia, and Guinea. It was responsible for organising and managing the aid and funds that were donated to African liberation movements, which at the time were primarily from the Southern African region.<sup>25</sup>

The main purpose of the Congo alliance was for the PAC, SWAPO, and UDENAMO to train its members at Kinkuzu. ZAPU’s participation in the Congo alliance was curbed by Sithole’s decision to form the breakaway Zimbabwean African Nationalist Union (ZANU).<sup>26</sup> There was an expectation that some of the recruits training at Kinkuzu would build up practical experience by fighting alongside ELNA troops in their Angolan campaign, and eventually

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<sup>19</sup> Arianna Lissoni, 'The South African Liberation Movements in Exile, c. 1945-1970', (PhD, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2008), 98; Ronald Dreyer, *Namibia and Southern Africa: Regional Dynamics of Decolonization, 1945-1990* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1994), p. 31.

<sup>20</sup> Dreyer, *Namibia and Southern Africa*, pp. 31–32.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p. 35.

<sup>22</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol I*, p. 312.

<sup>23</sup> Dreyer, *Namibia and Southern Africa*, p. 35.

<sup>24</sup> Azaria Mbughuni, 'Tanzania and the Pan African Quest for Unity, Freedom, and Independence in East, Central, and Southern Africa: The Case of the Pan African Freedom Movement for East and the Central Africa/Pan African Freedom Movement for East Central and South Africa', *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 7, 4 (October 2014), pp. 230.

<sup>25</sup> Christian Williams, 'Living in Exile: Daily Life and International Relations at SWAPO’s Kongwa Camp', *Kronos*, 37, 1 (January 2011), 62; SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1 VI, 'PAC Affiliations', Secret, *Die Afrika Bevrydingskomitee*, 26 November 1964, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol II*, p. 75.

use that practice in the fight for liberation across Southern Africa.<sup>27</sup> The Congo alliance was the first time an African government gave permission to South African or South West African liberation movements to establish military training camps in exile. The famous Kongwa camp in Tanzania was only opened up by FRELIMO and SWAPO in April 1964, whilst the ANC established its camp at Kongwa in August 1964, and the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* and ZAPU in 1965.<sup>28</sup> The Congo alliance was also the first instance Southern African liberation movements tried to join forces to engage in a coordinated attempt to militarily liberate the subcontinent. Adoula actively tried to transform newly independent Congo into a centre of African nationalism. This idea was supported by other African leaders. In early 1964, the Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah, allegedly openly advocated that Congo should serve ‘as a corridor and a base for all possible aid to the people of Angola and Southern Africans fighting for their liberation’.<sup>29</sup> Nkrumah even proposed to move the Liberation Committee’s headquarters to Leopoldville as the Congolese government offered to provide offices and accommodation for its members. Nkrumah believed that Dar es Salaam (the headquarters of the Liberation Committee) had ‘exposed members of nationalist liberation movements to espionage, intrigue and frustration and disappointment as a result of the neo-colonial influences present in Tanzania’.<sup>30</sup>

The PAC’s participation in the alliance slowly commenced after Mahomo’s initial meeting with Adoula in early 1963. By July that year, former PAC youth leader Manelisi Ndibongo, whose *nome de guerre* was Nga ‘Mamba’ Machema, was stationed in Leopoldville on Roberto’s staff.<sup>31</sup> Ndibongo was born in Cape Town’s Langa Township, and was arrested in 1960 after the PAC’s anti-pass demonstration in the Western Cape. As a result, he went into exile in January 1960, and received ‘unconventional warfare’ training in Egypt and Yugoslavia.<sup>32</sup> After the PAC was banned by the South African government in April 1960, it moved underground. At the party’s 1961 conference in Maseru, it was agreed that PAC

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<sup>27</sup> Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa*, p. 308.

<sup>28</sup> Williams, 'Living in Exile', pp. 63–65.

<sup>29</sup> NASA, SAB, Department of Foreign Affairs UNO Mission (hereafter BVV) 108, The Congo, Vol 3, Letter from: Permanent Representative, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Congo*, 8 January 1964, np.

<sup>30</sup> Sifiso Ndlovu, 'The ANC and the World', in: South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1, 1960-1970* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2004), p. 560.

<sup>31</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Belgian Congo & Republic of Congo US Embassy and Consulate, Leopoldville, Classified General Records, 1934-1963, Box 29, '350 Angola Classified July- 1963', Incoming Telegram, American Embassy, Leopoldville, from: Luanda, 31 July 1963, np.

<sup>32</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2630, 'Pol 13 Non-Party Blocs S Afr 1/1/64', Department of State Memorandum of Conversation, *Pessimism of PAC Follower Mahomo*, 12 September 1964, p. 1; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol II*, p. 116.

members should receive military training abroad. Some PAC members travelled to Lesotho to receive basic military training from fellow members that were based there. This action, however, occurred without the permission or knowledge of the local authorities in Lesotho.<sup>33</sup> Small group of members were also sent to places such as Egypt and Ethiopia for military instruction in 1961 and 1962.<sup>34</sup>

In the meantime, the PAC's insurrectionist movement Poqo launched various uncoordinated attacks across the Cape and Transvaal Provinces.<sup>35</sup> However, Poqo had been dealt a severe blow by the end of March 1963, when a security blunder on the part of the PAC's Acting President, Potlako Leballo, resulted in a nationwide mass arrest.<sup>36</sup> Leballo had sent two female couriers from Lesotho to Ladybrand to post letters that included instructions for Poqo cadres in South Africa. The two were arrested by the South African Police (SAP) before they could post the letters.<sup>37</sup> As a result, the Basutoland police raided the PAC's office in Maseru and confiscated various documents including membership lists. In the weeks that followed the SAP arrested 3,246 PAC and Poqo members.<sup>38</sup> Those PAC members who were already in exile, including Ndibongo, were safe. On 13 August 1963, Ndibongo released a communiqué whilst in Algiers. In it he declared that 'the Congo-Leopoldville Government has given its "unconditional support" for the overthrow of the South African government of Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd', and further mentioned that the PAC and GRAE 'had reached an agreement of close co-operation'.<sup>39</sup>

According to Tom Lodge, a leading group of 14 PAC men arrived at Kinkuzu in November 1963.<sup>40</sup> Former PAC Soweto Branch Chairman, Hezekiel Mothupi, who was one of the initial recruits sent to Congo, claims that they had arrived at Kinkuzu in September 1963.<sup>41</sup> Regardless of the exact date, Mothupi recalls how the group took a train from Dar es Salaam to Kigoma, crossed Lake Tanganyika to Albertville from where they continued their journey

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<sup>33</sup> Houston, Ka Plaatjie and April, 'Military Training Camps of the Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa', p. 35.

<sup>34</sup> Brown Maaba, 'The PAC's War Against the State, 1960-1963', in: South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1, 1960-1970* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2004), p. 286.

<sup>35</sup> Lissoni, 'The South African Liberation Movements in Exile', p. 175.

<sup>36</sup> Thami Ka Plaatjie, 'The PAC in Exile', in: South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 2, 1970-1980* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2006), pp. 706-707.

<sup>37</sup> Houston, Ka Plaatjie and April, 'Military Training Camps of the Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa', p. 32.

<sup>38</sup> Tom Lodge, *Sharpeville: An Apartheid Massacre and Its Consequences* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 202.

<sup>39</sup> (DIRCO), BTS 1/112/3, 'Republic of (the Congo) Zaire, Relations with SA', Vol 4, *Africa South of the Sahara, Alliance against South Africa government, August 19 1963*, np.

<sup>40</sup> Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa*, p. 307.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi, 6 June 2014.

by rail to Kamina and from Kamina to Luluabourg. From there on the members boarded a riverboat that sailed downstream to Leopoldville.<sup>42</sup> The journey across Congo was not easy. Another member of the initial group, Fana Malidisa, recalls how they were confronted by local Congolese government officials who would harass them and questioned their paperwork, despite having accredited letters for their passage.<sup>43</sup> Malidisa explains that the advance group was tasked with opening up the PAC's training camp at Kinkuzu. Once the camp had been set up they were to instruct the other groups of recruits that were to arrive.<sup>44</sup> Some of the members of the group, including Malidisa himself, had previously been sent abroad to undertake military training courses and were therefore already partially skilled.<sup>45</sup> After the 1960 Sharpeville massacre, Malidisa, for instance, went abroad into exile by crossing the South African border into Bechuanaland, and proceeded to travel to Tanzania. He was sent to Egypt where he received military training consisting of nine months of normal infantry training, and another three month specialised commando course before returning to Dar es Salaam.<sup>46</sup>

Whilst the first group of PAC recruits arrived in Congo, other exiled members residing in Bechuanaland were experiencing increased harassment by the local authorities. Bechuanaland served as an important escape route for South Africans who fled from the apartheid regime, and Francistown contained a large community of political exiles from various organisations.<sup>47</sup> By the end of 1963, the PAC leadership wanted to move its members from the refugee camp near Francistown to a safer location away from the influence of the SAP. Leballo sent a letter to the various PAC representatives in exile in late November 1963. In it he announced that as a result of the PAC's formation of a new base (referring to Kinkuzu) an immediate airlift of PAC members in Bechuanaland needed to occur as there were genuine concerns that the SAP would cross in to British protectorate in the near future. A plan was subsequently hatched to send some of the PAC's Bechuanaland refugees to Congo for military training.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi, 6 June 2014.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Fana Malidisa, 1 October 2014.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Fana Malidisa.

<sup>47</sup> For a detailed history of Botswana as a transport route for political refugees see: Neil Parsons, 'The Pipeline: Botswana's Reception of Refugees, 1956–68', *Social Dynamics: A Journal of African Studies*, 34, 1 (March 2008), pp. 17–32.

<sup>48</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, Letter from: PK Leballo, Maseru To: London, Dar, Accra, UAR, Congo, Francistown and Swaziland, 30 November 1963, np.

This operation was organised by Mahomo, who tasked National Committee for Liberation (NCL) member, John Lang, with airlifting the members from Francistown to Leopoldville. Lang's brother in law was to be responsible for acquiring a Douglas DC-3 from a charter company in Southern Rhodesia.<sup>49</sup> If the DC-3 was successfully acquired, which it is not clear, than the OAU's Liberation Committee allegedly agreed to partially finance any future transportation of PAC and ANC members to Congo and Tanganyika with the purchased aeroplane.<sup>50</sup> The NCL, later renamed the African Resistance Movement, was a small scale militant umbrella organisation that during the early 1960s on several occasion successfully smuggled political refugees from South Africa into exile.<sup>51</sup> Around the time the NCL was assisting the PAC with the airlift, NCL founder, Randolph Vigne, had stated in a draft discussion paper that at some point in the near future the ANC and PAC military wings could join forces as 'the National Freedom Army'. The NCL would be in charge of recruiting, training, and jointly leading the National Freedom Army.<sup>52</sup> This envisioned role seems to have some basis in truth, as the NCL was suspected of picking recruits 'of their own selection for training in the Congo'.<sup>53</sup> Despite Mahomo's struggle to organise air transport, 26 PAC members supposedly left Francistown by aeroplane to Congo for military training on 16 January 1964. Three members who refused to go deserted en-route to the airport, whilst another member was arrested by the Bechuanaland Police at the airport.<sup>54</sup>

Mahomo also seems to have organised for Lang to airlift a second group of PAC members to Congo, this time from Swaziland.<sup>55</sup> In February 1964, the PAC received a \$5,000 (c. \$38,000 in today's currency) donation from the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) to transport PAC members from Swaziland to

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<sup>49</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, *Received from Source 212: Information Gathered During January 1964 on PAC*, 13 February 1964, pp. 1; 3; 5.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 5 *Transport*, Jan 1964, np.

<sup>51</sup> Magnus Gunther, 'The National Committee of Liberation (NCL)/African Resistance Movement (ARM)', i in: South African Democracy Education Trust, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 1, 1960-1970* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2004), pp. 210; 212-214.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, 238-239.

<sup>53</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, *Received from Source 212: Information Gathered During January 1964 on PAC*, 13 February 1964, p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, 'PAC Finance', Secret, *PAC Activities*, 22 January 1964, np; SADO, AMI, Group 15, Box 111, No File Number, 'RSA PAC', Secret, *Daaglikse Veiligheidsoorsig no 1*, 5 February 1964, nd.

<sup>55</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, *Pan Africanist Affairs*, 16 January 1964, np.

Leopoldville.<sup>56</sup> American State Department official, Robert Stephens, was said to be responsible for depositing the money in the PAC's bank account in Lusaka and was also in charge of arranging the arrival of the PAC members with the local authorities in Leopoldville.<sup>57</sup> Depending on the source, the intended group consisted between 12 and 50 individuals.<sup>58</sup> It is not clear if any of these PAC refugees were successfully airlifted from Swaziland to Congo. According to Marcum, roughly 50 PAC members were based at the Kinkuzu camp by February 1964.<sup>59</sup> However, an allegedly well-placed informant of the SADF Military Intelligence Division declared that only 37 men, including SWAPO members, were ever trained at Kinkuzu.<sup>60</sup>

By the second half of 1963, SWAPO started transferring some of its members to Congo. Like the PAC, SWAPO had a large refugee presence in Francistown.<sup>61</sup> SWAPO's Jacob Kuhangua called the American Embassy in Dar es Salaam in October 1963, to inform them that SWAPO would move about 30 refugees from Bechuanaland to Katanga.<sup>62</sup> Nujoma was in charge of organising the airlift and had hired a small aeroplane that made 14 round trips transporting them to Elizabethville.<sup>63</sup> The following month, the American Embassy in Dar es Salaam noted that SWAPO had successfully moved 28 refugees from Francistown including three Angolans. Roughly 10 SWAPO members remained in Bechuanaland, and Nujoma was trying to organise their further airlift.<sup>64</sup> According to Nujoma, the operation was funded by the OAU's Liberation Committee and it had cost c. £4,000.<sup>65</sup> It is not clear what happened to

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<sup>56</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, 'PAC Affiliations', Secret, nd, 4; SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, 'PAC Finance', Secret, *PAC en die VSA*, 25 February 1964, np; <http://www.usinflationcalculator.com>

<sup>57</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, 'PAC Affiliations', Secret, nd, 4; SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, 'PAC Finance', Secret, *PAC en die VSA*, 25 February 1964, np.

<sup>58</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, *Pan Africanist Affairs*, 8 February 1964, np; SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, 'PAC Finance', Secret, *PAC en die VSA*, 25 February 1964, np.

<sup>59</sup> Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa*, p. 308.

<sup>60</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 15, Box 111, No File Number, *Congo (LEO)/Political, Activities of PAC, SWAPO and FRELIMO*, 5 January 1965, np.

<sup>61</sup> Shipanga and Armstrong, *In Search of Freedom*, pp. 51–52; 56.

<sup>62</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Belgian Congo & Republic of Congo US Embassy and Consulate, Leopoldville, Classified General Records, 1934-1963, Box 29, '350, African Misc (A-Z), Class, 1963', Incoming Telegram, American Embassy, Leopoldville, from: Dar es Salaam, 17 October 1963, np.

<sup>63</sup> Nujoma, *Where Others Wavered*, p. 129.

<sup>64</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 29, Incoming Telegram American Embassy, Pretoria, from: American Embassy Dar Es Salaam, 11 November 1963, p. 1.

<sup>65</sup> Nujoma, *Where Others Wavered*, p. 129.

this initial group, but SWAPO's Andreas Shipanga claims to have found eleven Namibians upon his arrival in Congo in late 1963.<sup>66</sup>

During the first half of 1960, SWAPO sent a small number of recruits to Ghana, Egypt, Algeria, and the Soviet Union for military instruction, but confusion exists over whether SWAPO members were actually trained at Kinkuzu.<sup>67</sup> Both Mothupi and Malidisa do not recall any other liberation movement members at the camp besides the PAC and the Angolans.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, Shipanga declares that although he visited Roberto's training camp with a number of representatives of other liberation movements, he felt that its atmosphere was not conducive to train SWAPO cadres. Shipanga subsequently wrote to SWAPO's leadership in Dar es Salaam, informing them that Kinkuzu was not the right place for SWAPO.<sup>69</sup> Marcum however claims that SWAPO and UDENAMO members arrived at Kinkuzu for basic military training in the autumn of 1963. The SADF Military Intelligence Division's source also corroborates the presence of SWAPO recruits at Kinkuzu.<sup>70</sup> Although SWAPO's presence at Kinkuzu is thus contented, what is undeniable is the training of PAC members at the camp.

Malidisa described Kinkuzu as 'being in a bush area [...] not very hilly' and he recalls how a small seasonal stream ran through the centre of the camp, dividing the PAC members from the Angolans.<sup>71</sup> Mothupi explained that due to the language barrier that existed between the Angolans and the South Africans, the PAC members largely kept to themselves.<sup>72</sup> Malidisa does recall how on some occasions men from either side would cross the riverbed to play cards with each other.<sup>73</sup> Although the PAC recruits at Kinkuzu made use of Roberto's military material, they were instructed by their own members.<sup>74</sup> Ndibongo was initially in charge of training the recruits in Kinkuzu, and was considered by Leballo as the PAC's 'most

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<sup>66</sup> Shipanga and Armstrong, *In Search of Freedom*, p. 70.

<sup>67</sup> Denis Herbstein and John Evenson, *The Devils Are Among Us: The War for Namibia* (London: Zed Books, 1989), p. 14.

<sup>68</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol II*, p. 116; Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi; Interview with Fana Malidisa.

<sup>69</sup> Shipanga and Armstrong, *In Search of Freedom*, p. 71.

<sup>70</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol II*, 116; SADoD, AMI, Group 15, Box 111, No File Number, *Congo (LEO)/Political, Activities of PAC, SWAPO and FRELIMO*, 5 January 1965, p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Fana Malidisa.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Fana Malidisa.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.



equipped technician and military man'.<sup>75</sup> According to Malidisa, training at the camp 'was very preliminary [...] We had a shooting range, also doing some patrols [...] It was sort of infantry like, small arms, rifles, sub-machine guns and pistols'.<sup>76</sup> Mothupi explained how their training consisted of exercises such as gun handling and dismantling, target shooting, and instruction on explosives and the use of mines.<sup>77</sup>

As part of transforming Congo into a centre of African nationalist liberation, Adoula also gave the Congo alliance members permission to open up offices in Leopoldville at the *Maison des Nationalistes*, where GRAE's headquarters were located.<sup>78</sup> Just before the Sharpeville and Langa protests in March 1960, Mahomo and Peter Molotsi had been sent overseas by PAC President Robert Sobukwe, to establish an overseas support network. The PAC's first office was set up in Ghana. Soon after, Mahomo opened up an office in London, and Molotsi in Dar es Salaam, in Lusaka, and later on in New York where he became the PAC's representative to the UN.<sup>79</sup> In November 1963, Ndibongo travelled to Leopoldville to discuss the opening of a PAC office with the Congolese authorities, for which he received permission the following month.<sup>80</sup> By March 1964, the PAC's office in Leopoldville was staffed by about four members.<sup>81</sup> Mothupi explained how those working at the PAC office were in charge of canvassing support from the various embassies present in Leopoldville, taking charge of the military activities at Kinkuzu, and organising funds and food for the recruits.<sup>82</sup> He described the office as very small with only a counter and no telephone.<sup>83</sup> Similarly, Shipanga, who had been tasked with setting up SWAPO's office in Leopoldville, described the various offices as 'little hovels'. SWAPO, which by 1963 had already set up offices in Dar es Salaam, Cairo, and Algeria, opened its Leopoldville office around the same time as the PAC.<sup>84</sup> Shipanga notes how at the *Maison des Nationalistes* he met

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<sup>75</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, 7 *Organisation*, 10 February 1964, np; Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Fana Malidisa.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.

<sup>78</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol II*, p. 75.

<sup>79</sup> Lodge, *Sharpeville*, p. 207.

<sup>80</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, *AFP 84 –Liberation Movement-Leopoldville*, 9 November 1963, np; *Ibid*, *PAC Kantoor Geopen*, 12 Desember 1963, np.

<sup>81</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2631, 'Pol 13-9 S AFR, 1/1/64', Secret/no Form Memorandum for the Files, *Divisions in the Pan-African Congress*, 20 July 1964, p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>84</sup> Shipanga and Armstrong, *In Search of Freedom*, pp. 51–52; 68; 70.

representatives of the PAC, ZANU, and the liberation movements of Equatorial Guinea and Mozambique.<sup>85</sup>

Mothupi recalled that a few PAC members were also studying at the University of Kisangani in Stanleyville, but the exact number is not clear.<sup>86</sup> During a tour in the United States in March 1963, Mahomo furthermore mentioned the existence of a PAC language school in Leopoldville where English, French, and Portuguese were taught.<sup>87</sup> However, Mothupi cannot recall such an initiative.<sup>88</sup> It is likely that Mahomo either had ambitions to set up such an initiative in future or fabricated this non-violent initiative to attract more donations from potential funders.

Mahomo also wanted to use Congo as a location to transmit PAC radio broadcasts. This initiative was similar to an earlier agreement that had come about between Roberto and Lumumba. In the summer of 1960, Lumumba gave Roberto permission to use Radio Leopoldville to transmit a series of weekly UPA broadcast that could be tuned into from Portuguese Angola.<sup>89</sup> According to Mahomo, Radio Katanga had good reception in South Africa, and in late August 1963, he approached Adoula to allow the PAC to make use of the station, which at the time was utilised by the UN.<sup>90</sup> The following year in May, Mahomo announced that the Congolese government had granted the PAC permission to make use of Radio Katanga's facilities, but had indicated that Leopoldville could not fund the project or provide technical personnel to operate the station.<sup>91</sup> Mahomo, aided by Marcum, had successfully acquired technical assistance and financial aid from 'private American sources' two months later, and the PAC was allowed to conduct their radio broadcast twice a week on

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<sup>85</sup> Shipanga and Armstrong, *In Search of Freedom*, pp. 68; 70.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.

<sup>87</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2631, 'Pol 13-9 S AFR, 1/1/64', Secret/no Form Memorandum for the Files, *Divisions in the Pan-African Congress*, 20 July 1964, p. 3.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.

<sup>89</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol I*, p. 86.

<sup>90</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Belgian Congo & Republic of Congo US Embassy and Consulate, Leopoldville, Classified General Records, 1934-1963, Box 29, '350 Africa Misc (class) 1963', Outgoing Telegram American Embassy, Leopoldville, 3 September 1963, pp. 1-2; NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2631, Pol 13-9 S AFR, 1/1/64', Secret For the Record, *Summary of Comments made by Nana Nelson Mahomo (PAC) During his Talks with Department Officials on March 13, 1964*, 7 May 1964, np.

<sup>91</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2631, Pol 13-9 S AFR, 1/1/64', United States Government Memorandum, from: Peter Hooper, To: Governor Williams, *Nana Mahomo's Meeting With the Attorney General*, 19 March 1964, pp. 1-2.

a non-partisan basis.<sup>92</sup> Mahomo noted that some trade unions (possibly the AFL-CIO or the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions [ICFTU]) would supply radio engineers and other technicians.<sup>93</sup> However, with Tshombe replacing Adoula as Prime Minister that same month, the project's future was uncertain.<sup>94</sup> Mahomo had to decide if it was worthwhile launching a radio station in Tshombe's home province without any clear indication if Tshombe would give it his blessing. The alternative was to broadcast from somewhere else in Africa, or from Brazil, which was an option that had previously been discussed by Mahomo and Marcum as a viable alternative.<sup>95</sup> In September 1964, the American State Department noted that the PAC's plans to use Radio Katanga were blocked because of the disturbances in Congo and 'Tshombe's uncertain standing in Africa'.<sup>96</sup> It does not seem that they ever materialised afterwards.

In order to establish and maintain such initiatives, Mahomo was constantly canvassing external support and funding from various sources, particularly in the US. Mahomo's campaigning was initially aided by Patrick Duncan who had extensive political connections in America and Britain.<sup>97</sup> Whilst still being a member of the Liberal Party of South Africa (LPSA) Duncan had visited Congo in June 1961. During his stay in Leopoldville, Duncan interviewed Roberto for *Contact* magazine, and later assisted the Angolan leader by organising maps of Portuguese Angola and Congo for him.<sup>98</sup> He left the LPSA in 1963 and joined the PAC. Later that year in June, Duncan toured the United States together with Mahomo, met Attorney-General Robert Francis 'Bobby' Kennedy, and secured funding from the AFL-CIO.<sup>99</sup> Mahomo also approached the American State Department in November 1963. During this meeting, the State Department promised to donate £10,000 (c. £ 180,000 in

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<sup>92</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2631, Pol 13-9 S AFR, 1/1/64', Secret/no Form Memorandum for the Files, *Divisions in the Pan-African Congress*, 20 July 1964, 2; SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, Letter from: John Marcum, To: Nana Mahomo, 7 October 1963, p. 3.

<sup>93</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, 'PAC Affiliations', Secret, nd, p. 4.

<sup>94</sup> See, p. 39.

<sup>95</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Belgian Congo & Republic of Congo US Embassy and Consulate, Leopoldville, Classified General Records, 1934-1963, Box 29, '350 Africa Misc (class) 1963', Secret/no Form Memorandum for the Files, *Divisions in the Pan-African Congress*, 20 July 1964, p. 2; SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, Letter from: John Marcum, To: Nana Mahomo, 7 October 1963, p. 3.

<sup>96</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2630, 'Pol 13 Non-Party Blocs S Afr 1/1/64', Department of State Memorandum of Conversation, *Pessimism of PAC Follower Mahomo*, 12 September 1964, pp. 1-2.

<sup>97</sup> Lodge, *Sharpeville*, p. 205.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, 203; Charles Driver, *Patrick Duncan: South African and Pan-African* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980), p. 201.

<sup>99</sup> Lodge, *Sharpeville*, p. 205.

today's currency) to the PAC if Mahomo steered the organisation away from communism, a condition to which Mahomo allegedly agreed.<sup>100</sup> The following year, the PAC also received three Land Rovers that were donated by the ICFTU through the controversial anti-communist trade unionist and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agent, Irving Brown.<sup>101</sup> The Land Rovers had allegedly been purchased in Salisbury in January 1964, and were intended to transport PAC members across the subcontinent.<sup>102</sup> One of these Land Rovers possibly ended up in Leopoldville where it was used by the leadership to run errands.

The following month Mahomo commenced on a solo tour across America trying to canvass support and funding. He delivered a series of speeches at various universities across the country, and at organisations such as the AFL-CIO and the Council on Foreign Relations. Mahomo also met with Senators Thomas Dodd and Frank Bureh.<sup>103</sup> Once again he held a meeting with Robert Kennedy, and enquired about receiving funds and technical assistance to set up the Radio Katanga project. Mahomo told Kennedy that he was looking for at least \$25,000 (c. \$190,000 in today's currency) to kick-start the initiative.<sup>104</sup> Kennedy informed Mahomo that he was aware of his desire to gain United States funding, and told him that he should remain in contact with William H. Brubeck, or himself as they were 'working on the matter'. When Mahomo requested United States assistance to train PAC members in guerrilla warfare, Kennedy's response was less forthcoming. The Attorney General stated that the United States did not want to become involved in aiding any undertaking that would contribute to violence.<sup>105</sup> According to Marcum, such fund raising tours in the United States were generally disappointing. The distinction between private and public assistance was also often blurry, as in the case of the ICFTU and the AFL-CIO who were both funded by the CIA.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, 17 November 1963-23 November 1963, np; <http://inflation.stephenmorley.org>

<sup>101</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, 'PAC Affiliations', Secret, nd, p. 4.

<sup>102</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, PAC, January 1964, np.

<sup>103</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, 'PAC Affiliations', Secret, nd, p. 5.

<sup>104</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2631, 'Pol 13-9 S AFR, 1/1/64', Secret For the Record, *Summary of Comments made by Nana Nelson Mahomo (PAC) During his Talks with Department Officials on March 13, 1964*, 7 May 1964, pp. 1-2; <http://www.usinflationcalculator.com>

<sup>105</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2631, 'Pol 13-9 S AFR, 1/1/64', United States Government Memorandum, from: Peter Hooper, To: Governor Williams, *Nana Mahomo's Meeting With the Attorney General*, 19 March 1964, p. 2.

<sup>106</sup> Marcum, 'The Exile Condition and Revolutionary Effectiveness: Southern African Liberation Movements', p. 263; For a detailed outline of the relationship between the CIA and the ICFTU and the AFL-CIO see Paul

The PAC also received funding from the OAU. Some of these funds ended up being used for its members in Congo. The Liberation Committee donated R20,000 (c. R 1.5 million in today's currency) to the PAC in January 1964. The PAC's representative in Dar es Salaam, L Masimini, proposed to send R1,000 of this amount to Congo to spend on materials such as uniforms, arms, and explosives as the PAC recruits at Kinkuzu had been relying on Roberto's material.<sup>107</sup> Despite the steady development of the PAC's presence in Congo, the Congo alliance slowly began to fall apart before it had taken on proper form.

#### **4.2 The collapse of the Congo alliance**

The reasons for the failure of the Congo alliance are multiple, and from the time the first PAC recruits arrived at Kinkuzu the organisation was plagued by logistical and leadership problems. The conditions at Kinkuzu were tough. Malidisa explained that the camp was not conducive to train its members and that there was a scarcity of water and food, which on occasion forced the recruits to go into the bush to hunt for animals.<sup>108</sup> Marcum notes that many of the PAC men had difficulty with the Angolan diet of manioc, rice, and dried fish, a fact that is corroborated by Mothupi.<sup>109</sup> This does not mean that the conditions of the Angolan forces were any better. According to a security source, the Angolans at Kinkuzu were badly starved and only had two daily meals consisting of cassava and beans.<sup>110</sup> Some PAC members also fell ill during their stay in Congo, as the recruits from South Africa were more vulnerable to tropical diseases such as malaria, and lacked medical attendants and medicine.<sup>111</sup> SWAPO's Shipanga recalls how he suffered badly from malaria whilst in Congo.<sup>112</sup> Around the turn of 1963, the PAC members stationed in Congo did, however, seem to have received a supply of drugs consisting of aspirin, anti-malarial- and water stabilisation tablets, supplied by the University College Hospital in London through a contact.<sup>113</sup>

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Trewhela, 'The AFL-CIO and the Trade Unions in South Africa', *Searchlight South Africa*, 2, 2 (January 1991), pp. 69-90.

<sup>107</sup> SADOd, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, 'PAC Finance', Secret, PAC, 13 February 1964, np; Ibid, PAC Activities, 22 January 1964, np; <http://www.inflationcalc.co.za>

<sup>108</sup> Interview with Fana Malidisa.

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol II*, pp. 118; 120.

<sup>110</sup> SADOd, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, Leo/ Rsa/ Angola/ Katanga/ Military/ Subversion, Pac Activities, 20 April 1964, p. 1.

<sup>111</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol II*, p. 118.

<sup>112</sup> Shipanga and Armstrong, *In Search of Freedom*, p. 69.

<sup>113</sup> SADOd, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, *Pan Africanist Affairs*, nd, np.

In April 1964, PAC Treasurer-General, Abednego Ngcobo, received a letter from one of the trainees at Kinkuzu. It stated that 'there was neither adequate food nor proper training facilities' and that 'many of the trainees were afflicted with fever'.<sup>114</sup> The physical conditions at the camp were bad and Malidisa recalls how, when in Leopoldville, Marcum financially assisted the PAC members, and organised tinned food for them. According to Malidisa, Marcum 'was very, very helpful to us'. He even gave Malidisa some of his own clothing and took him out to eat at a hotel in Leopoldville. Despite being 'a very good chap', Malidisa did suspect Marcum of working for the CIA, as he apparently was always trying to obtain information.<sup>115</sup> When PAC Cairo representative Lawrence Mgweba visited Kinkuzu in early 1964, he 'was thoroughly shocked about the poverty and misery in the Congo camp'. Mgweba made an urgent appeal to the PAC's Presidential Council in Maseru to organise clothing, medicine, and especially funds to combat the food emergency, and asked permission to borrow R1,000 for relief.<sup>116</sup> A March 1964 SADF Military Intelligence Division report noted that the camp was in complete disarray, that conditions were awful and that everybody was giving orders and no one executing them.<sup>117</sup> Likewise, when on 18 May 1964 Marcum passed through London en route from Leopoldville, he mentioned that the PAC forces at Kinkuzu were in state of complete chaos, and urged Mahomo to go to Congo to sort things out.<sup>118</sup>

Due to the dismal conditions at Kinkuzu, discontent among the PAC members based at the camp had started brewing from as early as November 1963, when a number of recruits refused to cooperate and wanted to leave.<sup>119</sup> According to Ndibongo, this group consisted of Aggrey Mokoane, Steven Ncube, Francis Luthuli, Gerald Motaung, Gibson Nokwe, and Johannes Mokabe.<sup>120</sup> Although the exact turn of events are difficult to piece together, on 19 December 1964, the British ambassador in Leopoldville claims that Luthuli had arrived at his office and asked to assist him and the others. In a bizarre tale, the group allegedly landed up in a small civilian prison on the outskirts of Leopoldville. The British ambassador took the six men to the Nigerian ambassador in Leopoldville who promised to further assist them and

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<sup>114</sup> Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa*, p. 308.

<sup>115</sup> Interview with Fana Malidisa.

<sup>116</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, *PAC Activities*, 21 March 1964, p. 1.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*, *PAC Affairs*, 9-19 May 1964, p. 2.

<sup>118</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, 'PAC Affiliations', Secret, *The USA Influence on the PAC*, June 1964, p. 1.

<sup>119</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, 'PAC Propaganda', Secret, *PAC Bedrywighede*, 6 December 1963, np.

<sup>120</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, *Pan Africanist Affairs*, nd.

arrange their passage out of Congo.<sup>121</sup> According to Malidisa, this group had arrived at a later stage than the initial group and only stayed at Kinkuzu for a short period.<sup>122</sup> However, Mothupi claims that ‘they were part and parcel of the original 14’ and only left later in 1964.<sup>123</sup> Regardless of the differences in detail, both Mothupi and Malidisa agree that the reason for the group wanting to leave was that they were dissatisfied with the PAC’s leadership and instead of receiving military training wanted to attain scholarships abroad.<sup>124</sup> Some members of the group successful obtained such study opportunities. Luthuli ended up in the Netherlands, and Ncube went to the United States.<sup>125</sup> A group of PAC members in Francistown were also reluctant to be airlifted to Congo. Apparently, the men had said that they had left South Africa ‘on the understanding that they would receive further educational scholarships’ and did not want to receive military training at Kinkuzu.<sup>126</sup> This group likely refers to the three men that deserted in Francistown on their way to the airport.

The PAC’s presence in Congo was also marked by serious leadership problems that contributed to the above-mentioned difficulties. Marcum notes that recruits at Kinkuzu began to resent their leaders in Leopoldville who had a considerably more comfortable lifestyle. The lack of organisational and logistical support from the leadership, also contributed to their frustrations.<sup>127</sup> Such discontent with the party leadership is partially corroborated by Malidisa who described Ndibongo as an ‘ambitious fellow [...] very, very ambitious’, but did not feel that his position as a commander fitted him. He recalled how Ndibongo liked ‘the good life’ and how he would not stay in the camp. Ndibongo would remain in Leopoldville and occasionally, ‘maybe once after two months or three months’, come and visit. As a result, the men were left to their own devices and were forced to organise themselves and teach each other various skills.<sup>128</sup> Life for those based in Leopoldville certainly had the potential of being more pleasant than for those residing at Kinkuzu. Shipanga who was stationed in Leopoldville recalls how he would occasionally visit the house of Congolese Minister of External Affairs, Justin Bomboko, at the high-end Mbinza neighbourhood in Leopoldville. According to Shipanga,

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<sup>121</sup> TNA, FO 371/167303, ‘Activities of Mercenaries and Ex-gendarmes’, Letter from: British Embassy, Leopoldville, 19 December 1963, np.

<sup>122</sup> Interview with Fana Malidisa.

<sup>123</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.

<sup>124</sup> Interview with Fana Malidisa.

<sup>125</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.

<sup>126</sup> Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945*, p. 309.

<sup>127</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol II*, p. 119.

<sup>128</sup> Interview with Fana Malidisa.

At his house there was always champagne to be had, good food and beautiful women, and whenever I was hungry I would find some excuse to visit him. Sometimes he would take me to his favourite club, the Afro-Jazz club. We had some memorable nights dancing and drinking there.<sup>129</sup>

Throughout the PAC's presence in Congo, most of the leadership stationed in Leopoldville abandoned their post, leaving the men at Kinkuzu to fend for themselves.<sup>130</sup> According to Mothupi, Mahomo was supposed to be the PAC representative in Congo but left early on and was replaced by Edgar Ngolase.<sup>131</sup> Mahomo did occasionally return to Leopoldville, but only for brief visits. Ngolase, who supposedly ran into conflict with Ndibongo, also subsequently left.<sup>132</sup> Similarly, at the start of February 1964, Ngcobo arrived in Leopoldville to take up his post as PAC representative in Congo but was said to have suddenly left near the end of the following month for Dar es Salaam.<sup>133</sup> The next day the PAC's two remaining senior leaders in Congo, Adrian Limo and Ndibongo, sent a letter to the PAC office in London declaring their 'resignation as office bearers of the PAC'.<sup>134</sup> The two stated that they wished to 'cease to function in any department of the Pan African Congress' from 1 April 1964, explaining that their duties had never been 'properly defined'.<sup>135</sup> Ndibongo apparently left Congo on 28 April 1964 for Cairo.<sup>136</sup> Ndibongo did briefly return to Leopoldville in October 1964, but two months later was back in the United States.<sup>137</sup>

A possible explanation for Ndibongo absconding is provided by an American State Department memorandum. During his conversation with a member of the State Department in September 1964, Ndibongo had expressed his disillusionment with the lack of promised aid from the OAU and the Liberation Committee. He also explained that he did not have confidence in the state of the Southern African resistance movements at that moment in time. More importantly, Ndibongo pointed out that the PAC's lack of executive ability had been one of its major shortcomings. Seeing that the party's senior leadership was in severe conflict, Ndibongo explained that time was needed to sort out the PAC's internal problems

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<sup>129</sup> Shipanga and Armstrong, *In Search of Freedom*, p. 70.

<sup>130</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 15, Box 111, No File Number, *Congo (LEO)/Political, Activities of PAC, SWAPO and FRELIMO*, 5 January 1965, p. 2.

<sup>133</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, *PAC Bedrywighede*, 19 February 1964, np; Ibid, Secret, Letter from: Nga Machema, 20 March 1964, np.

<sup>134</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, *RSA/Political*, 14 April 1964, p. 2.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, Letter from: Adrian Limo, NMM, MFHN, Congo Leopoldville, 20 March 1964, np.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, Secret, nd, p. 6.

<sup>137</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 359, File 148/5/1/1, 'PAC General', Secret, *Congo (LEO)/ANC/PAC Activities*, 6 November 1964, np; SADO, AMI, Group 15, Box 111, No File Number, *Congo (LEO)/Political, Activities of PAC, SWAPO and FRELIMO*, 5 January 1965, p. 2.



and plan a proper long-term strategy. Mahomo had apparently decided that during this unstable period he wanted to train a group of PAC leaders in ‘administration, security and the arts of political organisation’.<sup>138</sup> Likely as a result, Ndibongo commenced his studies at Michigan State University, and in 1967 successfully graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Police Administration.<sup>139</sup>

The conflict that existed between members of the PAC’s senior leadership had a clear effect on the problems experienced by the PAC in Congo. Mahomo was in charge of the PAC’s Congo operation, and some leaders in Leopoldville like Ndibongo were loyal to him as they had known Mahomo from home. Fears grew that Mahomo was increasingly acting on his own, and that he and Ndibongo were building a ‘private army’ at Kinkuzu over which the PAC’s leadership would lose control.<sup>140</sup> There is, perhaps, an element of truth to this fear, as during his March 1964 tour of the United States, Mahomo had stated to Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, William Harriman, that ‘today the principal centre outside of South Africa is Leopoldville [...] Leopoldville is now of greater importance’ than Dar es Salaam.<sup>141</sup> According to Malidisa, Leballo also no longer agreed with the alliance Mahomo had set up with Roberto, who he accused of being pro-West. Leballo rather wanted to receive support from communist sources such as the People’s Republic of China.<sup>142</sup>

Throughout 1964, the rift between the Mahomo and the Leballo camp grew.<sup>143</sup> Mahomo was one of the PAC’s foreign representatives who were in charge of sourcing funding. The financial system of the PAC in exile at the time was not centralised and many party representatives abroad, including Mahomo, had their own bank accounts that were separate to that of the treasurer-general.<sup>144</sup> By 1964, both Molotsi and Mahomo were accused of failing to transfer donated funds to the PAC’s treasurer-general. However, it is suggested that the two wanted to retain control over certain operations because of Leballo’s questionable

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<sup>138</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2630, ‘Pol 13 Non-Party Blocs S Afr 1/1/64’, Department of State Memorandum of Conversation, *Pessimism of PAC Follower Mahomo*, 12 September 1964, pp. 1-2.

<sup>139</sup> Ellen Ray et al., eds., *Dirty Work 2: The CIA in Africa* (London: Zed Books, 1980), p. 84.

<sup>140</sup> SADO, AML, Group 15, Box 111, No File Number, *Congo (LEO)/Political, Activities of PAC, SWAPO and FRELIMO*, 5 January 1965, p. 2.

<sup>141</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2630, ‘Pol 13 Non-Party Blocs S Afr 1/1/64’, Department of State Memorandum of Conversation, *The Pan Africanist Congress*, 11 March 1964, p. 2.

<sup>142</sup> Interview with Fana Malidisa.

<sup>143</sup> Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa*, p. 309.

<sup>144</sup> Plaatjie, ‘The PAC in Exile’, p. 711.

leadership decisions.<sup>145</sup> In August 1964, Mahomo was subsequently suspended and ‘charged with misappropriation of funds and attempts to create personal loyalties and sources of personal operation’.<sup>146</sup>

As a result of the dismal conditions at the camp and the problems relating to the leadership, the PAC’s operations in Congo slowly disintegrated. By late May 1964, the PAC’s Leopoldville office was reportedly short of funds and faced the possibility of closing down. Military training at Kinkuzu had also almost come to a standstill.<sup>147</sup> A SADF Military Intelligence Division source noted that after Ndibongo’s departure in late April 1964, Ngolase returned to Congo and told Roberto that he was removing the PAC recruits from Kinkuzu to Leopoldville. Despite Roberto’s initial protest the PAC contingent was transported from Kinkuzu to the capital city by Landrover.<sup>148</sup> Mothupi’s account differs as he stated that ‘the men themselves eventually decided to leave the camp and reached Leopoldville on their own accord.’<sup>149</sup> This version is partially corroborated by Marcum, who states that by April 1964 the PAC operation at Kinkuzu collapsed and members broke away from the camp and travelled to Leopoldville.<sup>150</sup> According to Mothupi, the group decided to leave Kinkuzu as the PAC’s leadership in Congo systematically absconded and the logistical network of supplies to the camp had completely halted. Mothupi furthermore recalled that the atmosphere at the camp had also become hostile because of internal conflict among the Angolan forces.<sup>151</sup> Marcum notes that GRAE’s organisation was chaotic at the time and that the morale of the Angolans at Kinkuzu was dismal. Discontent about leadership grew and regional conflict emerged among the members in the camp.<sup>152</sup> Such discontent eventually resulted in Joseph Savimbi’s resignation as GRAE’s minister of External Affairs in July 1964.<sup>153</sup>

The group of PAC Kinkuzu recruits remained in Leopoldville for about a month. There, Mothupi recalls how he went to the British Embassy and the UN representatives asking for

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<sup>145</sup> Plaatjie, ‘The PAC in Exile’, p. 711.

<sup>146</sup> Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa*, p. 309.

<sup>147</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, ‘PAC Activities’, Secret, *Is PAC hanging itself*, 29 May 1964, p. 2.

<sup>148</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 15, Box 111, No File Number, *Congo (LEO)/Political, Activities of PAC, SWAPO and FRELIMO*, 5 January 1965, np.

<sup>149</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.

<sup>150</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol II*, p. 117.

<sup>151</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.

<sup>152</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol II*, p. 120.

<sup>153</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.

funds to assist them to travel to Dar es Salaam.<sup>154</sup> Eventually the group managed to leave Leopoldville by train to Elisabethville, but due to a lack of funds had to stay in Elisabethville for another month or so.<sup>155</sup> Eventually the men took a train down to Lusaka from where they travelled to Dar es Salaam. Some members had however decided to stay behind in Congo to try to acquire scholarships from foreign embassies and aid organisations to go and study overseas.<sup>156</sup>

Although the bulk of PAC members had left Congo, by the end of August 1964 a handful remained behind to start operating the PAC's printing press that was located at the Leopoldville office.<sup>157</sup> Mothupi believed that the printing equipment had likely been donated by a Scandinavian country to produce PAC propaganda material but had never been used.<sup>158</sup> Instead, Mahomo was planning to make use of the printing press to publish a monthly publication on 'African matters'.<sup>159</sup> Marcum advised Mahomo to try to ship the printing press and equipment from Leopoldville to London.<sup>160</sup> However, according to Mothupi the press 'fell victim to corruption' and was eventually taken over by GRAE who had refused Mahomo permission to move it. It is not clear if GRAE paid for the press, and if it did what happened to the money.<sup>161</sup>

A SADF Military Intelligence Division source noted that Ngolase returned to Leopoldville in late December 1964, and took five PAC and five SWAPO members to Lusaka en route to Dar es Salaam.<sup>162</sup> At the same time as organising this airlift, Ngolase approached the Portuguese Embassy in Leopoldville to try to sell certain information about the PAC to the South African authorities. As an *amuse-bouche*, Ngolase provided the embassy with two documents: a memorandum titled 'to all offices abroad and all regions at home' and a four page letter by an unknown writer about alleged subversion activities in South Africa.<sup>163</sup> Ngolase stated that if he were reimbursed well, he would provide further information for an

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<sup>154</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.

<sup>155</sup> Interview with Fana Malidisa.

<sup>156</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi; Interview with Fana Malidisa.

<sup>157</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, 'PAC Activities', Secret, *PAC Bedrywighede*, 27 August 1964, p. 2.

<sup>158</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.

<sup>159</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VII, 'PAC Activities', Secret, *PAC-Bedrywighede*, nd, np.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid*, *Activities of Nana Mahomo*, 28 August 1964, np.

<sup>161</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.

<sup>162</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 15, Box 111, No File Number, *Congo (LEO)/Political, Activities of PAC, SWAPO and FRELIMO*, 5 January 1965, np.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid*, Letter from: South African Embassy, Lisbon, To: J Fourie, Departement van Buitelandse Sake, Pretoria, 31 December 1964, p. 1.

extra payment of \$500 (c. \$ 3,800 in today's currency).<sup>164</sup> However, it is not clear if Ngolase was intentionally trying to sell sensitive information or trying to peddle unimportant documents. It is also unclear as to whether he was planning to use the money for personal benefit or for PAC operations. By mid-January 1965 a daily security summary stated that there still were some PAC members in Congo who would shortly afterwards be sent to Cairo, but it is not known how many they were or when these last men eventually left.<sup>165</sup>

Marcum notes that around the same time as the departure of the PAC men, the Mozambican and SWAPO recruits also began to leave, and the Congo alliance had broken down beyond repair.<sup>166</sup> One SADF Military Intelligence Division source stated that Nujoma was wary of Tshombe's return to Congo, as he feared Tshombe would end SWAPO's presence and activities in Congo.<sup>167</sup> Similarly, Kuhangua was worried about Tshombe's attitude towards South Africa and, if possible, wanted the SWAPO members in Congo to be moved elsewhere.<sup>168</sup> This anxiety and concern was not unfounded. Tshombe's friendly relationship with the Portuguese government and his open dislike of Roberto were well known. However, Tshombe did not want to act too drastically. Instead, he opted to 'cut off external and internal supplies of funding and arms and ammunition which had previously been funnelled through Congolese channels' and 'encouraged the provincial government of Kongo Central to harass Roberto followers'.<sup>169</sup> He also decided to support smaller Angolan movements such as the *União Nacional Angolana* which opposed GRAE and which were more open to the idea of a negotiated settlement with the Portuguese.<sup>170</sup> Although by the end of Tshombe's prime ministership in November 1965 the Angolan insurgency from Congo had come to a near standstill, under Mobutu the Congolese government's support of the FNLA once again flourished.<sup>171</sup>

Unlike the PAC which abandoned the alliance largely as a result of internal issues, Shipanga states that the return of Tshombe and the turmoil of the Kwilu and Eastern rebellions was largely to blame for SWAPO's exit from Congo. According to Shipanga, the appointment of Tshombe as prime minister raised concern about the safety of the Namibians in Congo and

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<sup>164</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 15, Box 111, No File Number, Secret, copy ch, pp. 2-3.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid*, *Daaglikse Veiligheidsoorsig nr 7*, 18 January 1965, np.

<sup>166</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol II*, p. 117.

<sup>167</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 35, Box 21, File 1371, 'Tshombe M (Pres)', Vol 1, Secret, *Leer no 1371 Bron & Dat 196 27.7.64*, np.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid*, *RSA/SWA/Political*, 11 August 1964, np.

<sup>169</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Vol II*, pp. 141-142.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 145-146.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 141-142; Wright, *The Destruction of a Nation*, p. 9.

resulted in the eventual closure of the SWAPO office. During his time in Leopoldville, Shipanga had struck up a good relationship with the Swedish ambassador, who during the second half of 1964 assisted the SWAPO members to leave Congo.<sup>172</sup> A SADF Military Intelligence Division source noted that SWAPO still had a representative in Leopoldville named Peter Kongulu at the start of 1965. Although some Mozambicans had receive training at Kinkuzu, the same source claims that there were no more Mozambican members left in Leopoldville by mid-January 1965.<sup>173</sup>

The PAC leadership acknowledged the chaotic operation in Congo. On 15 December 1964, the party's national secretary wrote a letter that stated that 'consultation with the membership particularly at training establishments should be made possible. Disgraceful [...] Congo incidents should not be allowed to occur again'.<sup>174</sup> Despite the initial alliance between the FNLA, PAC, and SWAPO, their relationship completely turned around the following decade. In 1975, the FNLA received military and logistical support from the SADF in return for its assistance in expelling SWAPO from Angola.<sup>175</sup> At the same time, SWAPO had abandoned its relations with the PAC and aligned itself with the African National Congress (ANC).<sup>176</sup> When reflecting on this contentious but unique and certainly important episode in the history of the PAC, Malidisa stated that 'it was [...] time wasted. It brought us nothing'.<sup>177</sup> Mothupi was slightly more optimistic and explained that their time in Congo was difficult 'but we endured and enjoyed it'.<sup>178</sup>

## Conclusion

Due to Adoula's desire to transform Congo into a centre of African nationalism, the PAC and SWAPO were able form an alliance with other Southern African liberation movements. The Congo alliance resulted in the opening up of PAC and SWAPO offices in Leopoldville and provided an opportunity to train their members militarily. Yet due to leadership problems among some of the liberation movements and significant changes in Congolese politics, the Congo alliance was short-lived and broke down soon after its establishment. From 1963 until

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<sup>172</sup> Shipanga and Armstrong, *In Search of Freedom*, pp. 70; 72.

<sup>173</sup> SADoD, AML, Group 15, Box 111, No File Number, *Congo (LEO)/Political, Activities of PAC, SWAPO and FRELIMO*, 5 January 1965, np.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid, Letter from: National Secretary, *PAC of SA, ACCRA*, 15 December 1964, p. 2.

<sup>175</sup> Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 2002), p. 295.

<sup>176</sup> Stephen Ellis and Tsepo Sechaba, *Comrades Against Apartheid: The ANC and the Communist Party in Exile* (London: James Currey, 1992), p. 90-91.

<sup>177</sup> Interview with Fana Malidisa.

<sup>178</sup> Interview with Hezekiel Mothupi.

1964, South Africa's involvement in the Congo crisis was thus shaped by the PAC and SWAPO's participation in the Congo alliance. Although this moment in South African-Congolese relations was a significant shift from the previous three years, the breakdown of the Congo alliance and the return of the South African government's ally in Congo, Tshombe, resulted in a revived relationship between Pretoria and Congo.

## Chapter Five

### The return of Tshombe and the formation of V Commando, 1964-1965

The government of the Democratic Republic of Congo has volunteers not mercenaries and their task is to train cadres and members of the Congolese National Army. Practically every African country has similar expatriates.

Moïse Tshombe, March 1965<sup>1</sup>

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#### Introduction

On 10 July 1964, Moïse Tshombe took office as Congo's new prime minister. In his political autobiography, Tshombe wrote that he had 'been summoned to return in the hope that I might save the Congo which appeared to be in danger of complete collapse'.<sup>2</sup> Soon after his arrival in Leopoldville to commence with this task, Tshombe's former relations with Pretoria re-emerged and he once again called upon South African mercenaries to fight for him. This relationship would last throughout his prime ministership. The following chapter examines South Africa's involvement in the Congo crisis during Tshombe's office as prime minister. The chapter's first subsection discusses the formation, actions, and disbandment of V Commando, whilst the second outlines the relationship that developed between Pretoria and Leopoldville.<sup>3</sup>

#### 5.1 V Commando

South Africa's involvement during the time of Congo's Kwilu and Eastern rebellions was dominated by its mercenary presence. According to the South African Defence Force (SADF) Military Intelligence Division, Jerry Puren was recruiting mercenaries for Tshombe in South Africa in late March 1964. Puren allegedly paid 12 individuals R10 each at a Cafe in Johannesburg. At the same time he made the improbable statement that the South African government would make vehicles with radio equipment available to the mercenaries.<sup>4</sup> *The Star* reported that some of the men were Italian immigrants working on the mines, and had

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<sup>1</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2708, 'Pol 15-1 Head of State the Congo Executive Branch, 1/1/65', Incoming Telegram Department of State, from: Nairobi, *Tshombe Press Interview*, 9 March 1965, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Tshombe, *My Fifteen Months in Government*, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> The 'V' in V Commando stands for 5.

<sup>4</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 1014, File KG/SVK/4/15, Kongo (Leo), Top Secret, Letter from: Directeur van Militaire Inligting, To: Komandant Generaal SAW, *Kongo – Huursoldate*, 30 July 1964, p. 1.

been hired to support a new secession attempt by Tshombe.<sup>5</sup> The SADF Military Intelligence Division noted that around the same time as Puren's recruitment attempts, former Katangese mercenary, Ian Gordon, had also been enlisting mercenaries at his house in the Johannesburg suburb of Hillbrow.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, Tshombe contacted former 4 Commando leader Michael Hoare in early April 1964, asking if he was interested in leading a column of gendarmes from Portuguese Angola into Katanga. The majority of Katangese gendarmes together with some loyal ex-Katangese mercenaries like the Belgian, Jean Schramme, were based in north-western Portuguese Angola. There they waited for an opportunity to launch a new secession attempt across the border into Katanga. Hoare declined to take up Tshombe's offer.<sup>7</sup> Soon after these early attempts to recruit mercenaries for Tshombe in South Africa, the former Katangese president's fate as an exiled political leader changed, when in June 1964 he was invited by the Leopoldville government to return to Congo.<sup>8</sup>

On 23 July 1964, a small band of mercenaries led by Puren arrived in Leopoldville to meet Tshombe, who earlier that month had been appointed as Congo's new prime minister.<sup>9</sup> The group consisted of Puren, John McIntosh, Herald Kingman, Sutherland, Jimmy Hedges, Alastair Wicks, and Hoare. The first three were 'swashbuckling South Africans', the fourth was Australian, the fifth was Rhodesian, and the final two were British.<sup>10</sup> It was not clear if their visit had been organised by Tshombe, or if the men had come to Congo on their own accord to try to secure a contract with him. According to the Belgian consulate in Johannesburg, the group arrived on their own invitation and forced Tshombe's hand.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Hoare recalled that their visit and stay in Leopoldville was organised by Puren. There had not been a clear invitation from Tshombe, only a strong suspicion that he would eventually meet them.<sup>12</sup> Puren on the other hand claimed that Tshombe directly called on his

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<sup>5</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2714, 'Pol 23-9 The Congo 4/1/64', outgoing Telegram Department of State, 22 April 1964, np.

<sup>6</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 1014, File KG/SVK/4/15, Letter from: Directeur van Militaire Inligting, To: Komandant Generaal SAW, *Kongo – Huursoldate*, 30 July 1964, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Colvin, *The Rise and Fall of Moïse Tshombe*, pp. 156; 158.

<sup>8</sup> See, p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> FPSFA, AA, Portefeuille Nr 14795, Lias Nr 1631, 'Afrique Du Sud Janvier à Mai 1965', Letter from: Consul Generaal van België, Johannesburg, To: Vice-Eerste Minister en Minister van Buitelandse Zaken, Brussels, *Michael Hoare en de Huurlingen voor Congo*, 21 January 1965, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> TNA, FO 1100/9, 'Mercenaries Operating in the Congo', Cypher/OTP To: Foreign Office, 30 July 1964, 1-2; *Ibid*, Letter from: British Embassy, Leopoldville, To: British Embassy, Pretoria, 30 July 1964, np.

<sup>11</sup> FPSFA, AA, Portefeuille Nr 14795, Lias Nr 1631, Letter from: Consul Generaal van België, Johannesburg, To: Vice-Eerste Minister en Minister van Buitelandse Zaken, Brussels, *Michael Hoare en de Huurlingen voor Congo*, 21 January 1965, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Hoare, *Congo Mercenary*, pp. 17-18; 24-25.



services by telegram.<sup>13</sup> The British Foreign Office was similarly unsure of the mercenaries' status. It did not know whether the group had come to Leopoldville at Tshombe's summons or on their own initiative. However, their source suggested that they had arrived without visas, but were in the possession of a letter from Tshombe.<sup>14</sup> Whatever the case may be, the intent of their visit was clear: to arrange a meeting with Tshombe and secure a contract to assemble a mercenary force for Congo.

At the time of their arrival, Tshombe was absent, and the group was forced to linger in the capital city waiting for his return. When a few days later a freelance reporter interviewed them at the Memling Hotel in Leopoldville, the men declared that they were a 'famine relief reconnaissance team'.<sup>15</sup> The American State Department noted that by the end of July 1964, the group was 'running out of patience and money'. They still had not met with Tshombe and therefore decided to halt the planned arrival of a second group of mercenaries.<sup>16</sup> This follow-up contingent is possibly the one referred to in a SADF Military Intelligence Division report. The report claimed that a Rhodesian Air Services aeroplane would pick up c. 50 mercenaries together with arms and ammunition from the Voortrekkershoogte military base in Pretoria, and fly them to Congo.<sup>17</sup> A more plausible scenario, however, was that this second group referred to a small party of ex-Katangese mercenary pilots which Puren had previously recruited to be on standby.<sup>18</sup>

After the initial difficulties in trying to establish contact with Tshombe, Hoare finally managed to meet the prime minister in Leopoldville on 8 August 1964, successfully convincing Tshombe to employ him.<sup>19</sup> Appointed to lead V Commando, Hoare was instructed by Joseph Mobutu to start recruiting 200 mercenaries immediately and an additional 800 in two further phases. Puren would act as V Commando's liaison and administration officer.<sup>20</sup> Puren's wife, Julia, was to organise the payment of the mercenaries

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<sup>13</sup> Puren and Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander*, p. 186.

<sup>14</sup> TNA, FO 1100/9, Cypher/OTP To: Foreign Office, 30 July 1964, pp. 1-2.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, Minutes MAL/151, *Mercenaries*, 29 July 1964, pp. 1-2.

<sup>16</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2713, Pol 23-6 The Congo 1/1/64', Incoming Telegram: Department of State, 31 July 1964, np.

<sup>17</sup> SAdoD, AMI, Group 3, Box 1014, File KG/SVK/4/15, Letter from: Directeur van Militaire Inligting, To: Komandant Generaal SAW, *Kongo – Huursoldate*, 30 July 1964, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Puren and Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander*, p. 184.

<sup>19</sup> Colvin, *The Rise and Fall of Moïse Tshombe*, p. 177.

<sup>20</sup> Mockler, *The Mercenaries*, p. 174; Puren and Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander*, p. 191.

as well as the management of other logistical issues concerning V Commando.<sup>21</sup> Soon after receiving permission to raise such a force, advertisements were placed in South African and Southern Rhodesian newspapers and recruitment offices were opened in Johannesburg and Salisbury.<sup>22</sup>

The first group of recruits from South Africa arrived in Congo around the second half of August 1964, although some sources list their arrival as early as 13 August 1964.<sup>23</sup> Eight days later, the South African *Sunday Times* noted that 200 mercenaries had already left Johannesburg on Rhodesian Air Services charter airplanes, and that further recruitment was taking place.<sup>24</sup> The press reported that by September 1964 the number of mercenaries leaving South Africa for Congo had risen to c. 260. Many of these recruits were recent immigrants to South Africa.<sup>25</sup> Thirty-four year old Eric Bridges was originally from Kenya but had immigrated to South Africa two years before he signed up in Johannesburg.<sup>26</sup> A wide variety of nationalities including South Africans, Rhodesians, Englishmen, Germans, Greeks, Italians, and a few Belgians enlisted with V Commando.<sup>27</sup> By mid-October 1964, Puren claimed that V Commando consisted of around 330 mercenaries, of whom roughly 70 per cent were South Africans.<sup>28</sup> A significant number of mercenaries also had military backgrounds. Before signing up, Alan Stevens had served with the British army in Cyprus, and he had later been employed as a police officer in Nyasaland.<sup>29</sup> One recruit estimated that c. 90 per cent of the South Africans in V Commando possessed some type of previous military experience.<sup>30</sup>

Some South African mercenaries also flew for the Congolese Air Force at the time. The first South African pilots were recruited in late July 1964, and arrived in Congo a few weeks later.

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<sup>21</sup> TNA, FO 1100/9, Minutes 1/92/64, *Mercenaries*, 23 September 1964, 1; Puren and Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander*, 192; Verhaegen and Centre de recherche et d'information socio-politiques, *Rebellions Au Congo: Maniema, Tome II*, p. 651.

<sup>22</sup> Hoare, *Congo Mercenary*, p. 33.

<sup>23</sup> Clarke, *The Congo Mercenary*, p. 42.

<sup>24</sup> '600 Rush to Join Tshombe's Army', *Sunday Times*, 30 August 1964.

<sup>25</sup> TNA, FO 371/176716, 'Recruitment of Mercenaries', Inward Serving Telegram, from: Pretoria, To: Foreign Office, *Mercenaries*, 4 September 1964, np.

<sup>26</sup> TNA, FO 1100/9, Letter from: Elisabethville, To: Leopoldville, 14 September 1964, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> SADO, Kommandant Generaal (hereafter KG), Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, 'Samewerking RSA-Kongo', Vol 1, Top Secret, Brig JH Robbertze, *Militere Toestand – Kongo (LEO)*, 25 September 1964, p. 2; TNA, FO 371/176716, Inward Serving Telegram, from: Pretoria, To: Foreign Office, *Mercenaries*, 4 September 1964, np.

<sup>28</sup> SADO, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, Vol 1, *Kongo*, Pretoria, 15 October 1964, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> TNA, FO 1100/10, 'Mercenaries Operating in the Congo', Letter from: EF Lewis, 20 October 1964, np.

<sup>30</sup> TNA, FO 371/176716, Letter from: British High Commission, Salisbury, To: Commonwealth Relations Office, London, 9 September 1964, np.

The number of pilots steadily expanded over the following months.<sup>31</sup> By mid-October 1964, the British Foreign Office reported that the mercenary group consisted of nine pilots and 12 ground crew members.<sup>32</sup> One South African mercenary recalls that about half of the group were South Africans.<sup>33</sup> Many of the pilots were very experienced; four of them being flight instructors.<sup>34</sup> One of these instructors had commenced his training in the South African Air Force and afterwards the Royal Air Force before signing up as a mercenary.<sup>35</sup> This group was initially stationed at Leopoldville's N'dolo and N'Djili airports. The more experienced pilots would train the others how to fly Harvard T6's, which had been acquired from various countries including Italy.<sup>36</sup> After having established a decent standard, the mercenary pilots were deployed across Congo, operating from various bases such as Coquilhatville, Boende, and Stanleyville. The pilots would conduct patrol and supply missions, take out enemy targets, and provide air cover for V Commando. At least one South African mercenary ended up flying for the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) WIGMO from March 1966 until April 1967.<sup>37</sup> Afterwards he signed up as a mercenary pilot in Biafra.<sup>38</sup>

A few days after the arrival of the first consignment of V Commando mercenaries, Hoare hurriedly launched two badly planned offensives against the rebel-controlled city of Albertville, the first on the 24 August 1964 and the second one on the 29 August 1964. This initial small, poorly trained and ill-equipped group of mercenaries were defeated and forced to retreat.<sup>39</sup> Despite of this first botched offensive, recruitment in South African continued. Large groups of mercenaries were flown to V Commando's training facility in Kamina in northern Katanga; an abandoned and dilapidated military base.<sup>40</sup> In early September 1964, the Congolese government temporarily decided to halt any further recruitment of mercenaries. Too many men were arriving and they could not be properly deployed.<sup>41</sup> This pause gave Belgian Colonel Frederic Vandewalle time to establish some control over the chaotic

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<sup>31</sup> Interview with Mercenary Pilots, 29 June 2015.

<sup>32</sup> TNA, FO 1100/10, Minutes LEO/S.1004/AIR, *The Mercenary Air Squadron*, 16 October 1964, np; Puren and Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander*, p. 187.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Mercenary Pilots.

<sup>34</sup> TNA, FO 1100/10, Minutes LEO/S.1004/AIR, *Air Support for ANC and Mercenary Operations*, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Mercenary Pilots.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid; TNA, FO 1100/10, Minutes LEO/S.1004/AIR, *The Mercenary Air Squadron*, 16 October 1964, np; Puren and Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander*, p. 187.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Mercenary Pilots; Villafana, *Cold War in the Congo*, p. 81.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Mercenary Pilots.

<sup>39</sup> TNA, FO 1100/9, ANX A to MAL/151/1, *Mercenaries in the Congo (Leopoldville)*, 18 September 1964, 3; Colvin, *The Rise and Fall of Moïse Tshombe*, p. 177.

<sup>40</sup> TNA, FO 1100/10, *Visit to ANC Base Kamina - 7 Oct 64*, 12 October 1964, pp. 1-2.

<sup>41</sup> TNA, FO 1100/9, Minutes MAL/151, *Mercenaries*, 14 September 1964, p. 1.

situation that was building up at Kamina.<sup>42</sup> Although V Commando was divided up into eight smaller units that would act fairly independently in the field, the English speaking mercenary contingent formed part of the 5th Mechanised Brigade, and thus fell under the overall command of Vandewalle.<sup>43</sup>

A serious shortage of arms, vehicles, and other equipment plagued V Commando during the first few months of its existence. Such material as there was had been stretched between the Congolese National Army and Katangese gendarmes deployed throughout Congo. In addition, the financial system needed to support the mercenary contingent was extremely inefficient and unreliable.<sup>44</sup> Hoare was convinced that the Belgian technical advisors in charge of the 5th Mechanised Brigade were deliberately sabotaging the logistical build-up of V Commando in an attempt break its morale.<sup>45</sup> The Belgians were suspected of wanting to discredit the mercenaries, so that they could replace them with their own non-English speaking group.<sup>46</sup> Tshombe confirmed Hoare's suspicions.<sup>47</sup> These allegations were however denied by former *Chef de Cabinet* of the Katangese army, Carlo Huyghé, who stated that they were inspired by Puren as way of hiding his and his wife's own organisational shortcomings.<sup>48</sup> One way or another, the chaotic situation significantly lowered the morale of many recruits.

One Burma veteran named JA O'Brien arrived at Kamina in September 1964, and left within a week due to the disorganised state of affairs. He claimed that 50 others did likewise. O'Brien insisted that no contracts or life insurance policies had been issued to the mercenaries, and that some of them had only received the equivalent of £4 as pay. The only equipment available for the 250 men was 30 rifles and a small quantity of ammunition. No medical gear was provided and there was little food and no portable field rations, clothing or other items of equipment.<sup>49</sup> In his book *Mad Dog Killers*, Rhodesian mercenary Ivan Smith similarly recalled that the search for food was a daily occurrence throughout his six month

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<sup>42</sup> TNA, FO 1100/9, ANX A to MAL/151/1, *Mercenaries in the Congo (Leopoldville)*, 18 September 1964, pp. 3-4.

<sup>43</sup> TNA, FO 1100/10, *Visit to ANC Base Kamina - 7 Oct 64*, 12 October 1964, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, *Visit to ANC Base Kamina - 7 Oct 64*, 12 October 1964, pp. 1-2.

<sup>46</sup> SADO, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, Vol 1, Top Secret, *Memo oor Aangeleenthede in Kongo (Leo)*, Pretoria, 19 September 1964, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Colvin, *The Rise and Fall of Moise Tshombe*, pp. 188–198.

<sup>48</sup> FPSFA, AA, Portefeuille Nr 14795, Lias Nr 1631, Letter from: Consul Generaal van België, Johannesburg, To: Vice-Eerste Minister en Minister van Buitelandse Zaken, Brussels, *Michael Hoare en de Huurlingen voor Congo*, 21 January 1965, pp. 1-2.

<sup>49</sup> TNA, FO 371/176716, Letter from: British High Commission, Salisbury, To: Commonwealth Relations Office, London, 9 September 1964, np.

contract.<sup>50</sup> Initially many mercenaries were sent into the field without proper training, resulting in a high percentage of sustained injuries.<sup>51</sup> Bridges, who told his mother that he was going to Congo for a holiday, was left with a paralysed right arm after being shot during the landing at Albertville.<sup>52</sup> By 14 April 1965, 19 South Africans had reportedly been killed and many more had been wounded.<sup>53</sup> Although the families of mercenaries who died were supposed to be compensated with a sum of R14,000 (c. R 1 million in today's currency) one V Commando officer wrote in a letter to the South African Ministry of the Interior, Johannes de Klerk, that 80 per cent of casualty remuneration was still unpaid in December 1965.<sup>54</sup>

One of the biggest points of contention among recruits during the first few months of V Commando was lack of pay. Mercenaries were to be partly paid in Congolese Francs, and partly paid in foreign currency, but problems concerning the payment of wages were rife.<sup>55</sup> The American State Department claimed that 150 mercenaries had set 26 August 1964 as the deadline to quit unless they were paid.<sup>56</sup> In October 1964, Gerald Green informed the British Consulate in Johannesburg that the Congolese government had not kept their end of the bargain. Nothing had been paid in his South African bank account. Because of this delay, Green was concerned about the financial well-being of his children.<sup>57</sup> The following month, the Belgian consul in Johannesburg mentioned that during the last couple of days he had received several inquiries by family members of South African mercenaries in Congo asking him to intervene in the matter of outstanding pay. One mother of a mercenary, Mrs Prinsloo, even founded a committee in defence of the interests of South African mercenaries. She claimed that V Commando recruiter Patrick O'Malley was hiding, and Puren avoided seeing anybody during his trips to Johannesburg. Pretoria was annoyed by this situation and, according to the Belgian consul in Johannesburg, even considered detaining Puren and

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<sup>50</sup> Smith, *Mad Dog Killers*, p. 35.

<sup>51</sup> TNA, FO 1100/10, *Visit to ANC Base Kamina - 7 Oct 64*, 12 October 1964, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> TNA, FO 1100/9, Letter from: Elisabethville, To: Leopoldville, 14 September 1964, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 4, *Verhoudings met die Kongo*, 1966, p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> FPSFA, AA, Portefeuille Nr 14795, Lias Nr 1631, Letter from: Consul Generaal van België, Johannesburg, To: Vice-Eerste Minister en Minister van Buitelandse Zaken, Brussels, *Vertrek van een Groep van 59 Huurlingen per Vliegtuig van Kaapstad naar Kongo op 11 Maart*, 26 March 1965, np; Mockler, *The Mercenaries*, p. 233; <http://www.inflationcalc.co.za>

<sup>55</sup> SADO, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, Vol 1, Top Secret, *Kongo*, Pretoria, 15 October 1964, p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2705, 'POL 9-87 The Congo 1/1/64', Incoming Telegram Department of State, 26 August 1964, np.

<sup>57</sup> TNA, FO 1100/11, 'Mercenaries Operating in the Congo', Letter from: Mr Gerald L Green, Kamina, To: HBM Consul-General, Johannesburg, 12 October 1964, np.

holding him accountable for the promises made to the recruited mercenaries.<sup>58</sup> These high levels of discontent caused many mercenaries to end their ‘adventure’ in Congo and return home.

In December 1964, Ian Ross wrote a letter to his mother in Kenya, saying that he would definitely not risk his life if he were not paid. He complained that ‘so far mercenaries are getting killed very frequently and it’s not worth it for nothing, already plenty of people have left’.<sup>59</sup> Puren initially did not allow men to be repatriated, and some recruits were put under detention as Puren considered their departure as tantamount to desertion, despite the fact that they could terminate their contract.<sup>60</sup> According to the British Foreign Office, there were cells at Kamina, colloquially known as ‘the Memling’ (named after the luxurious hotel in Leopoldville) where mercenaries were being detained.<sup>61</sup> Green wrote that he ‘was being held in Kamina against his wishes after tendering’ his ‘resignation from this pseudo army’.<sup>62</sup> Despite having complied with all the terms of his six month contract, including the 15 days of notice in advance of resigning, the commanding officer refused to permit him to leave.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, John Moss allegedly tried to resign three times, but all his requests were denied by Puren.<sup>64</sup>

By early October 1964, the British Embassy in Leopoldville was ‘swamped with South African mercenaries wishing to be repatriated’. Britain provided consular assistance to those who wanted to return home.<sup>65</sup> The embassy noted later that month that during the past fortnight it had been approached by more than a dozen English speaking V Commando mercenaries from South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and the United Kingdom wanting to be repatriated. It suspected that more cases would follow.<sup>66</sup> True to its prediction, the British

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<sup>58</sup> FPSFA, AA, Portefeuille Nr 14795, Lias Nr 1631, Letter from: Consul-Generaal van België, Johannesbrug, To: Vice-Eerste Minister en Minister van Buitelandse Zake, Brussel, *Zuid-Afrikaanse Huurlingen in Congo*, 10 November 1964, pp. 1-2.

<sup>59</sup> TNA, FO 1100/12, ‘Mercenaries Operating in the Congo’, Letter from: Ian, Elisabethville, 2 December 1964, np.

<sup>60</sup> TNA, FO 1100/10, Letter from: Leopoldville, To: Pretoria, 23 October 1964, p. 1; Ibid, Letter from: Leopoldville, To: Pretoria, 27 October 1964, np.

<sup>61</sup> TNA, FO 1100/9, Minute MAL/151/1, *Mercenary Plans*, 21 September 1964, np.

<sup>62</sup> TNA, FO 1100/11, Letter from: Mr Gerald L Green, Kamina, To: HBM Consul-General, Johannesburg, 12 October 1964, np.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> TNA, FO 1100/10, Letter from: Elisabethville, To: Leopoldville, 26 October 1964, np; Ibid, Letter from: Leopoldville, To: Pretoria, 24 October 1964, np.

<sup>65</sup> TNA, FO 371/176742, ‘Question of UK Continuing to Act for South African Interests in Congo’, Letter from: British Embassy, Leopoldville, To: Consular Department Foreign Office, London, 3 November 1964, np.

<sup>66</sup> TNA, FO 1100/10, Letter from: Leopoldville, To: Pretoria, 23 October 1964, p. 1.

Embassy in Elisabethville noted that the following day South Africans Jacobus de Beer and Dennis Leslie had abandoned Kamina base and had asked the British Embassy to assist their repatriation.<sup>67</sup> Pretoria was initially unwilling to help South African mercenaries who wanted to return home. In late October 1964, the South African Department of the Interior informed the British Foreign Office that ‘mercenaries are not luckless tourists distressed through no fault of their own, but must be deemed responsible for their actions and deserve little sympathy. Any repatriation should be the responsibility of the Congolese government’.<sup>68</sup>

Not all recruits were considered suitable to serve in V Commando, and some were eventually forcefully repatriated.<sup>69</sup> Hoare himself notes how the general standard of recruits was ‘alarmingly low’ among the first groups of mercenaries arriving at Kamina. He elaborated that ‘there was too high a proportion of alcoholics, drunks, booze artists, bums and layabouts, who were finding it difficult to get a job anywhere else and thought this was a heaven-sent opportunity to make some easy money’. In addition, ‘there was a fair amount of dagga-smokers and dope addicts’ and a ‘high incidence of homosexuals’.<sup>70</sup> Upon arrival, such ‘undesirables’ were weeded out and forcefully sent back. Some recruits like the 18 year old South African John Woods, from Boksberg, were simply too young to join and were sent home.<sup>71</sup> According to the British Foreign Office, Hoare had about 20-30 men at Kamina whom he decided to discharge from the mercenary force in October 1964 as they were deemed to be unsuitable for service.<sup>72</sup> A few days later Belgian military advisor to the Congolese Air Force, Colonel Avin Bouzin, contacted the British Foreign Office to ask if they could not assist in getting clearance from Johannesburg to repatriate 100 mercenaries to South Africa.<sup>73</sup>

Despite of such early chaos, efforts were made to try to stabilize the situation. In August 1964, Hoare’s second in command, Alistair Wicks, met with Mobutu to sort out the payment and transfer of funds from Congo to a bank in Johannesburg.<sup>74</sup> The following month it was

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<sup>67</sup> TNA, FO 1100/10, Letter from: Elisabethville, To: Leopoldville, 26 October 1964, np; Ibid, Letter from: Leopoldville, To: Pretoria, 24 October 1964, np.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, Letter from: Foreign Office, Leopoldville, 28 October 1964, p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, Letter from: EF Lewis, 20 October 64, np.

<sup>70</sup> Hoare, *Congo Mercenary*, p. 66.

<sup>71</sup> TNA, FO 1100/9, Salisbury telex 79/77 31 1631, np.

<sup>72</sup> TNA, FO 1100/10, *Visit to ANC Base Kamina - 7 Oct 64*, 12 October 1964, p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> TNA, FO 1100/9, Minutes MAL/151, *Mercenaries*, 14 September 1964, p. 1.

<sup>74</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2705, ‘POL 9-87 The Congo 1/1/64’, Incoming Telegram Department of State, 26 August 1964, np.

reported that a paymaster was installed at Kamina.<sup>75</sup> By late December 1964, Puren noted that the problems regarding mercenary pay were finally resolved. He optimistically stated that the salaries were reaching the bank accounts of the men and that, with the exception of a few, everyone had been paid to date.<sup>76</sup> *Die Transvaler* noted a short while later in January 1965 that a payment department had also been set up at the recruitment office in Johannesburg. The department was responsible for paying the families of casualties and the wounded. It would also clear up any other outstanding payment issues.<sup>77</sup> In much the same period, lack of supplies and equipment had also largely been resolved, and troops had started receiving proper training in the form of target practice, route marches, fitness training, table exercises, and sports.<sup>78</sup>

In early December 1964, Wicks together with Hoare travelled to South Africa to organise a new group of 150 mercenaries as replacements for those whose six month contract with V Commando was expiring.<sup>79</sup> According to Huyghe, Hoare had however returned without an official recruitment assignment from the Congolese government.<sup>80</sup> Hoare and Wicks renewed their contracts the following month, whilst Jerry and Julia Puren resigned from the Congolese National Army and joined ‘an intelligence gathering unit’ detached to Godefroid Munongo’s Department of the Interior.<sup>81</sup> The new recruitment drive was said to have received the blessing of the South African authorities, provided it was done in a serious manner and that the necessary funds were deposited beforehand in a South African bank.<sup>82</sup>

Despite having sorted its logistical problems, V Commando was plagued by indiscipline among its rank and file. The first trials of European mercenaries had commenced in mid-1965. German immigrant to South Africa and V Commando paymaster, Gerd Block von Blottnitz, was charged for stealing 54 Million Congolese Francs. He was eventually

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<sup>75</sup> TNA, FO 1100/9, Appx 1 to Anx A to MAL/151/1 dated 18 Sep 64, *Mercenaries in the Congo Miscellaneous Notes*, nd, np.

<sup>76</sup> TNA, FO 1100/12, Minutes MAL/151/1, *Mercenaries*, 22 Dec 1964, p. 1.

<sup>77</sup> ‘Maj Hoare (nog in Bevel) Gaan Nuwe Organisasie Stig’, *Die Transvaler*, 20 January 1965.

<sup>78</sup> TNA, FO 1100/10, *Visit to ANC Base Kamina - 7 Oct 64*, 12 October 1964, 2; TNA, FO 1100/12, Minutes MAL/151/1, *Mercenaries*, 10 Dec 1964, p. 1.

<sup>79</sup> ‘Maj Hoare (nog in Bevel) Gaan Nuwe Organisasie Stig’, *Die Transvaler*, 20 January 1965; TNA, FO 1100/12, Minutes MAL/151/1, *Mercenaries*, 10 Dec 1964, p. 1.

<sup>80</sup> FPSFA, AA, Portefeuille Nr 14795, Lias Nr 1631, Letter from: Consul Generaal van België, Johannesburg, To: Vice-Eerste Minister en Minister van Buitelandse Zaken, Brussels, *Michael Hoare en de Huurlingen voor Congo*, 21 January 1965, p. 3.

<sup>81</sup> Puren and Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander*, p. 210.

<sup>82</sup> FPSFA, AA, Portefeuille Nr 14795, Lias Nr 1631, Letter from: Consul Generaal van België, Johannesburg, To: Vice-Eerste Minister en Minister van Buitelandse Zaken, Brussels, *Michael Hoare en de Huurlingen voor Congo*, 21 January 1965, p. 3.



acquitted. Australian Joseph Edward Larkin together with his South African accomplice Nicolas van Staden were less fortunate, and were sentenced to four and a half years imprisonment for stealing an airplane.<sup>83</sup> The Department of External Affairs noted in March 1966 that although six South African mercenaries had been convicted for crimes such as theft, manslaughter, and mutiny, all but van Staden had been released.<sup>84</sup> One particular case that stood out was the trial of British V Commando member, Samuel Cassidy, who had been arrested for the murder of Trevor Bottomley, a British subject employed by the CIA. For this murder, Cassidy was sentenced to death on 23 January 1967, but Mobutu softened his sentence to life in prison.<sup>85</sup> Allegations of a culture of ill-discipline among V Commando were, however, vehemently denied by a former member of the South African permanent forces and regimental Sergeant Major of V Commando, who wrote a letter to *The Star* in February 1967. He claimed that during the latter part of 1965, some 70 mercenaries were returned to South Africa in a single day. Drunkards were fined, and Hoare and former SAS member, John Peters, dealt severely with their men who ‘fraternized’ with African women by, charging, fining, and repatriating them. Peters, he concluded, was ‘fair and just’, even flying in frozen chickens and turkeys for Christmas in 1965.<sup>86</sup>

Even though by the end of 1965 the *Conseil National de Libération* (CNL) held areas in eastern Congo had largely been reconquered, recruitment for V Commando continued in Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban.<sup>87</sup> Peters took over command of V Commando from Hoare in December 1965, and at the start of the following year, the English speaking mercenary unit was c. 400 men strong. About 300 of them were South African.<sup>88</sup> The majority of men under Peters were said to be Afrikaans speaking, a new development from Hoare’s time as commander.<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, Wicks explained to *The Star* that recruitment requirements had changed. The enlistment age limit was set at 35, and a greater emphasis was placed on physical fitness. V Commando operated in mountainous terrain, and recruits had to

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<sup>83</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 35, Box 20, No File Number, ‘Mobutu Joseph’, Vol 1, Secret, Source Sheet No: 2912, *Congo (Leo/Military)*, 10 August 1965, p. 1.

<sup>84</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, ‘Republic of (the Congo) Zaire, Relations with SA’, PL Vol 3, *Suid-Afrikaners (Huursoldate) in die Gevangenis in die Kongo*, Pretoria, 4 March 1966, p. 1.

<sup>85</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 35, Box 21, File 1371, ‘Tshombe M (Pres)’, Vol 2, Secret, *Direkteur van Militere Inligting, Kongo (Kin)*, 10 May 1967, pp. 1-2.

<sup>86</sup> ‘Brutality Denied by ex RMS’, *The Star*, 24 February 1967.

<sup>87</sup> See, pp. 41-42.

<sup>88</sup> ‘Tougher Congo Mercenaries are Wanted’, *The Star*, 2 February 1966; DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 4, *Verhoudings met die Kongo*, 1966, p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> Mockler, *The Mercenaries*, p. 233.

do most of their patrols on foot.<sup>90</sup> The Belgian consul in Cape Town noted that due to the implementation of these stricter criteria, there were fewer applicants than in the past.<sup>91</sup> The number of V Commando had dropped to 210 men by 1967.<sup>92</sup> In March of that year, Mobutu ordered South African Georg Schroeder, who had taken over command from Peters in February 1967, to stop further recruitment of mercenaries.<sup>93</sup> Mobutu was concerned that the presence of white mercenaries in Congo would embarrass him when the fifth Organisation of African Unity (OAU) meeting would take place in Kinshasa in September 1968. The Department of External Affairs also suspected that the Congolese government would be unable to finance the mercenary force for much longer. If payment stopped, anarchy and plunder by mercenaries was likely.<sup>94</sup>

After Mobutu's announcement, Hoare briefly visited Congo. He was rumoured to have wanted to take command of V Commando while it was set to be disbanded. In a letter intercepted by the South African Police (SAP) Security Branch, Hoare disclosed that his plans had run aground, as Schroeder had informed Congolese National Army General, Louis Bobozo, that Hoare was not the right man for the job. A second rumour circulated that the CIA had paid Hoare \$3,000 (c. \$21,000 in today's currency) to leave Congo.<sup>95</sup> In May 1967, the Department of External Affairs reported that airplanes returning mercenaries were arriving in South Africa and that no new recruits were departing for Congo.<sup>96</sup> Schroeder was back in South Africa by the second half of 1967, and V Commando had been completely disbanded.<sup>97</sup> By eliminating V Commando, Mobutu limited the possibility of a coup by Tshombe.<sup>98</sup>

During Tshombe's time in exile, various attempts were made to accomplish his return to power. These plans usually involved former V Commando mercenaries, or ex-mercenaries

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<sup>90</sup> 'Tougher Congo Mercenaries are Wanted', *The Star*, 2 February 1966.

<sup>91</sup> FPSFA, AA, Portefeuille Nr 14795, Lias Nr 1631, Letter from: Consul-Generaal van België, Kaapstad, To: Minister van Buitelandse Zake, Brussel, *Aanwerving van Blanke voor Militaire Dienst in Kongo*, 3 August 1965, p. 1.

<sup>92</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 35, Box 21, File 1371, Vol 2, Secret, Directeur van Militere Inligting, *Kongo (Kin)*, 10 May 1967, pp. 1-2.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, Bronrapport nr: 1646A, *Relations Between 5+6 Commando Groups with a. Mobutu b. Moise Tshombe*, 8 March 1967, pp. 2-4.

<sup>94</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/5/1, 'Kongo SA Huursoldate', Vol 1, *Suid-Afrikaanse Huursoldate in die Kongo*, Pretoria, 8 March 1967, pp. 3-5.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, Letter from: Komisararis Suid Afrikaanse Polisie, To: Sekretaris van Buitelandse Sake, Pretoria, *RSA Vrywilligers in die Kongo*, 1 May 1967, np.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, *Suid-Afrikaanse Huursoldate in die Kongo*, Pretoria, May 1967, pp. 1-2.

<sup>97</sup> Mockler, *The Mercenaries*, p. 185.

<sup>98</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/5/1, Vol 1, *Suid-Afrikaanse Huursoldate in die Kongo*, Pretoria, 8 March 1967, pp. 3-5.

residing in South Africa. In July 1966, Tshombe plotted an uprising in Congo that relied upon gaining control over Katanga. According to the SADF Military Intelligence Division, Tshombe had met Peters two months before, and had guaranteed that ‘he would reward South African mercenaries who would support him with farms’. Under the command of Peters, V Commando was to take control of Albertville in a surprise attack.<sup>99</sup> Simultaneously with Peters’ attack Wicks, who had recruited a separate mercenary force in South Africa, was to take off from Henrique de Cavalho airport in north-western Portuguese Angola and occupy Elisabethville.<sup>100</sup> For reasons unknown, Peters informed Mobutu about the coup before its launch. According to one report, Mobutu decided to take preventative measures and temporarily cancelled the contracts of Peters, Peter Ross-Smith, and one Lieutenant Gough. Mobutu also ordered the airplane at Jan Smuts International Airport to fly to Congo without any new V Commando recruits on board.<sup>101</sup> This foiled coup attempt was followed up by the First Kisangani Mutiny (also known as the Baku Mutiny) on 23 July 1966, when 700 discontented Katangese gendarmes and a smaller group of white mercenaries revolted. This uprising also ended in failure.<sup>102</sup> Later that year, a group of mercenaries in Johannesburg had plotted the assassination of Mubutu, but Peters, who had got wind of the plan, once again informed Mobutu.<sup>103</sup>

Although Tshombe could not outbid the Congolese government when it came to the entire mercenary force, he was able to offer more money to individual Commando leaders.<sup>104</sup> In December 1966, Tshombe invited Hoare over to Majorca where he asked him his opinion about organising a mercenary force. The meeting became heated, as Tshombe did not agree with Hoare’s advice to hang on until Mobutu fell out of favour with the West.<sup>105</sup> Tshombe tried once more to organise a mercenary force the following year in April, sending his advisor, the Italian former quartermaster of V Commando Gino Tozzi, to South Africa. Tozzi’s mission was to reach an agreement with Hoare and Peters, but the meeting never happened. Later that month, Tozzi met Peters in London asking him to act before V

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<sup>99</sup> SADF, AMI, Group 35, Box 21, File 1371, Vol 2, Secret, Source Sheet No: 1166A, *Katangese Rebellion en Afskeiding Beplan*, 22 July 1966, pp. 1-2.

<sup>100</sup> Puren and Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander*, p. 226.

<sup>101</sup> SADF, AMI, Group 35, Box 21, File 1371, Vol 2, Secret, Source Sheet No: 1166A, *Katangese Rebellion en Afskeiding Beplan*, 22 July 1966, pp. 1-2.

<sup>102</sup> Mockler, *The Mercenaries*, pp. 179–180; Colvin, *The Rise and Fall of Moïse Tshombe*, p. 224.

<sup>103</sup> SADF, AMI, Group 35, Box 21, File 1371, Vol 2, Secret, Bronrapport nr: 2197A, *War in Nigeria*, 5 October 1967, pp. 1-2.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, Bronrapport nr: 1646A, *Relations Between 5+6 Commando Groups with a. Mobutu b. Moïse Tshombe*, 8 March 1967, p. 1.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, Source Sheet No: 1166A, *Katangese Rebellion en Afskeiding Beplan*, 22 July 1966, pp. 1-2.

Commando was disbanded.<sup>106</sup> At the end of June 1967, Peters and Tozzi flew from London to Majorca to meet Tshombe.<sup>107</sup> During their morning meeting, an agreement was reached on an advance payment for 300 men for three months, but later that same day Tshombe's airplane was hijacked mid-flight and rerouted to Algeria, where he was arrested.<sup>108</sup> Even after Tshombe's imprisonment in Algeria, rumours of South African mercenaries planning to come to his rescue continued to circulate. *Die Sondagstem* newspaper reported in July 1967 that Tshombe's wife, Alice, wanted South African mercenaries to free her husband; allegedly offering more than R 1 million (c. R 68,5 million in today's currency) for a rescue attempt.<sup>109</sup> No plan to rescue Tshombe ever materialised, and on 29 June 1969 Tshombe died in Algeria.

## 5.2 Pretoria-Leopoldville relations

After the failure of the Katangese secession, some ex-mercenaries returned to South Africa where the local security services kept a close eye on their activities. One of the mercenaries with whom the SADF Military Intelligence Division remained in contact was Puren, who frequently supplied them with information about Tshombe.<sup>110</sup> Whilst serving as a pilot in Katanga, Puren had struck up a close relationship with Tshombe. He travelled back and forth between South Africa and Europe during Tshombe's period in exile, acting as Tshombe's representative in South Africa, and the 'official' representative of the South African government to Tshombe.<sup>111</sup> Despite Puren's best efforts to convince the South African authorities to help Tshombe, Pretoria was reluctant to become directly involved with him, or, indeed, any plan to return Tshombe to Congo. Still licking the wounds of its international reputation following the Katanga debacle, the South African government decided to keep its distance from Tshombe while remaining courteous towards him.<sup>112</sup>

During his time in exile, Tshombe sent four letters to Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd. The South African Embassy in Madrid responded three times in the name of the prime minister. Only in one instance, in late February 1964, did Verwoerd himself reply. Pretoria's initial

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<sup>106</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 35, Box 21, File 1371, Vol 2, Secret, Directeur van Militere Inligting, *Kongo (Kin)*, 10 May 1967, p. 1.

<sup>107</sup> Colvin, *The Rise and Fall of Moïse Tshombe*, p. 243.

<sup>108</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 35, Box 21, File 1371, Secret, Bronrapport nr: 2197A, *War in Nigeria*, 5 October 1967, p. 2.

<sup>109</sup> 'Tshombe se Hoop op Jong Afrikaners', *Die Sondagstem*, 16 July 1967; <http://www.inflationcalc.co.za>

<sup>110</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 3, Box 1014, File KG/SVK/4/15, Letter from: Directeur van Militaire Inligting, To: Komandant Generaal SAW, *Kongo – Huursoldate*, 30 July 1964, p. 1.

<sup>111</sup> Puren and Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander*, p. 176.

<sup>112</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 3, Box 1014, File KG/SVK/4/15, Letter from: Directeur van Militaire Inligting, To: Komandant Generaal SAW, *Kongo – Huursoldate*, 30 July 1964, p. 1.

reserved attitude towards the former Katangese leader changed once it became aware of his possible return to Congo. When these rumours were confirmed the following month, the Department of External Affairs suggested that Verwoerd should let Tshombe know that he was happy to learn of Tshombe's appointment as prime minister, and send him his 'best wishes for success in the difficult task that [lay] ahead'.<sup>113</sup> South Africa's Minister of External Affairs, Hilgard Muller, nonetheless wanted to wait until Tshombe's position in Congo was more secure before formal ties were established.<sup>114</sup>

This happened sooner rather than later. In early August 1964, Tshombe sent the South African government a list of essential supplies that were urgently needed to boost the morale of the Congolese National Army and Katangese gendarmes in their campaign against the rebel forces.<sup>115</sup> According to the American State Department, Tshombe's 'shopping list' comprised of: an air squadron with helicopter support; napalm bombs; white officers and non-commissioned men to lead Congolese troops; mobile fighting units; military boots and socks for 10,000 men; paratrooper boots for 4,000 men; parachute packets; paratrooper uniforms and helmets; field rations; first aid supplies; food; medical teams and doctors.<sup>116</sup> In order to determine what and how much the South African government could actually provide, high-ranking members of the SADF met on 10 August 1964. They concluded that although it could provide pairs of boots and socks, tents and marquees, medical equipment and rations, other supplies such as parachute equipment and napalm could not be supplied.<sup>117</sup>

Before informing Tshombe about Pretoria's decision, the South African ambassador in Washington contacted the State Department. The ambassador explained that Pretoria not only had its doubts about providing military aid to Tshombe, but also was aware that any South African military involvement in Congo could be counterproductive and burden other actors like the United States. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Gerhard Mennen 'Soapy' Williams, responded that the South African government should make up its own

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<sup>113</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, 'Republic of the Congo, Relations with SA', PL Vol 2, *Onlangse Gebeure in die Kongo: Moontlike Boodskap aan Moise Tshombe*, nd, pp. 1-2.

<sup>114</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2637, 'Pol - Political Affairs & Rel. S Afr - A 1/1/64', Incoming Telegram Department of State, from: Pretoria, 22 July 1964, np.

<sup>115</sup> See, pp. 40-41.

<sup>116</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2637, 'Pol - Political Affairs & Rel. S Afr - A 1/1/64', Incoming Telegram Department of State, from: Pretoria, 12 August 1964, p. 1.

<sup>117</sup> SADoD, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, Vol 1, *Notule van 'n Vergadering Gehou te VHK om 14 30-NM op 10 Aug 64*, Secretaris, nd, p. 5.

mind about the nature and extent of its help for the Congolese government.<sup>118</sup> Despite receiving an apparent *carte blanche* from the United States, Pretoria initially chose to stay clear of any overt military aid, and rather focus its efforts on providing ‘humanitarian aid’ to the Congolese government.

Verwoerd’s cabinet allocated a sum of R250,000 (c. R18 million in today’s currency) to this end.<sup>119</sup> The first consignment of aid consisted of medical supplies, clothes, and food. It was delivered by a South African Air Force C-130 transport plane to Leopoldville on 22 August 1964.<sup>120</sup> However, Munongo and Tshombe wanted future supplies delivered to Elisabethville instead of Leopoldville, as they were not prepared to give all of the reserves to the Central Congolese government whom they did not fully trust.<sup>121</sup> Munongo and Tshombe were said to be uncertain about the stability of the new government and thus still looked towards their home province of Katanga for security. The two men believed that a conspiracy existed against Tshombe’s government and in case of a crisis wanted to make use of Katanga as a secure base.<sup>122</sup> The overt delivery of the goods by the South African military C-130 had attracted international criticism and had brought unwanted attention to Pretoria’s involvement. As a result, the South African government specified that the transportation of the remaining supplies it had made available (comprising of a further 60 C-130 planeloads) would have to be organised by the Congolese government itself.<sup>123</sup> Despite the urgency of the request and South Africa’s prompt response, the remaining aid had not been picked up by the Congolese authorities by early October 1964. Tshombe and Munongo claimed that the responsible departments were unable to organise the transportation of the goods. They explained that the Belgians who were in charge of logistically aiding the Congolese government were actively opposed to receiving such supplies from South Africa.

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<sup>118</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2637, ‘Pol – Political Affairs & Rel. S Afr – A 1/1/64’, Outgoing Telegram Department of State, 11 August 1964, p. 1.

<sup>119</sup> SADO, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, Vol 1, *Kongo: Versoek om Voorrade*, 14 October 1964, p. 2; <http://www.inflationcalc.co.za>

<sup>120</sup> SADO, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, Vol 1, *Special C-130 Transport Flight*, 19 August 1964, pp. 1-2.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*, Letter from JH Robbertze, Pretoria, *Memo vir sy Edele Die Minister van Verdedeging*, 2 October 1964, p. 1.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid*, *Memo oor Aangeleenthede in Kongo (Leo)*, Pretoria, 19 September 1964, pp. 1; 4.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*, Letter from: Brig JH Robbertze, *Opsomming van Besprekings oor Hulp*, 25 September 1964, p. 1.

Notwithstanding Williams' previous approval, the Americans also objected to such deliveries.<sup>124</sup>

Regardless of these transportation difficulties, Puren arrived unannounced at Jan Smuts International Airport with an Air Congo DC-4 later that month. He requested that medical supplies, food, tools and repair kits for the T6 Harvard airplanes should be available for collection. The South African government was agitated by Puren's unexpected visit. First, because Puren was sent by Mobutu, who represented the Congolese military authorities, and not Tshombe or Munongo, who represented the Congolese civil authorities. Second, because he arrived without warning, and although the medical supplies and food were part of the so-called non-military supplies that had been agreed upon, the requested airplane repair kits and accompanying tools (which had previously not been approved) could be interpreted as being for military purposes. Additionally Puren also informed the authorities that part of the first consignment of supplies had been distributed to South African mercenaries in Congo.<sup>125</sup>

After his arrival in Johannesburg, Puren was informed by Assistant Director of Military Intelligence Division Colonel le Roux that the South African government did not want to deal with the Congolese military authorities.<sup>126</sup> Although they agreed that for this one time the supplies could be picked up as in the past, any future requests had to come from Tshombe or Munongo. Pretoria also had to be officially notified in advance, and future collections would be made at the Waterkloof military airbase, and not Jan Smuts International Airport. Finally, any aid that was collected had to consist of goods that the South African government had approved.<sup>127</sup> Just over a week after Puren arrived, a high-level political meeting discussed how the authorities should react. Verwoerd reiterated during the meeting that Pretoria did not want to deal directly with the military in Congo, as Puren and Mobutu's action 'could place both the Congolese government and the South African government in great embarrassment'.<sup>128</sup> Soon after, Munongo sent a letter to Verwoerd in early December 1964, urgently requesting at least one C-130 aeroplane to bring food and medical equipment to the recently liberated city of Stanleyville. Verwoerd agreed to such a delivery, but insisted that

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid, Letter from JH Robbertze, Pretoria, *Memo vir sy Edele Die Minister van Verdedeging*, 2 October 1964, p. 1.

<sup>125</sup> SADO, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, Vol 1, *Kongo: Versoek om Voorrade*, 14 October 1964, pp. 1-3.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, *Mededeling aan Kol Le Roux, Assistant-Direkteur van Militere Inligting*, 16 Oktober 1964, 20 October 1964, np.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, *Onderhoud met LT-kol Puren on Friday 16 October 1964*, 20 October 1964, p. 1.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, Top Secret, *Hulpverlening aan die Kongo*, 20 October 1964, np.

the Congolese pick up the order themselves. The Congolese government however explained that it did not have the necessary aeroplanes that could transport large amounts of cargo, and the Americans, who did have such aeroplanes, were not prepared to let them be used for this purpose. Additionally, Zambia's recent independence hampered the transport of goods to Congo via rail, which meant that the aid could not be sent to Congo via freight train. The South African government had to come up with its own means of sending the consignment of aid without attracting unwanted attention. Pretoria considered chartering a South African Airways aeroplane, even making an enquiry with the International Red Cross if the delivery could not be sent through them.<sup>129</sup> However, it is not clear how, or if, this aid was transported.

The following year, the South African government deviated from its initial policy of only supplying non-military material when it agreed to donate portable radio equipment to the Congolese government. In late April 1965, Verwoerd approved the supply 10 A-39 radios and accompanied battery packs from which all SADF army property signage was to be removed.<sup>130</sup> The radios were used by Katangese gendarmes sent to Leopoldville to prevent a suspected coup against Tshombe.<sup>131</sup> Another way in which the South African government decided to aid Tshombe's fragile political position was by donating and transporting 6,000 uniforms consisting of camouflage jackets and pants that were intended to equip 3,000 gendarmes, together with two tons of medical supplies in September 1965. The value of this shipment amounted to R37,646 for the uniforms, and R8,719 for the medical supplies. Both were intended for the Katangese gendarmes.<sup>132</sup> Although it is not clear from the available documentation how such supplies were transported, the Belgian consul in Johannesburg suggested that the order was sent via Lobito in Portuguese Angola.<sup>133</sup> By October 1965, one month before Mobutu's coup, South Africa had donated significant aid to the Congolese government. This amounted to R53,496 worth of medicine, clothes, and shoes; R48,793 for the 10 portable radios, as well as the 2 tons of medical supplies and uniforms for the Katangese gendarmes; all for a total of R102,289. A further 5,700 pairs of shoes and socks

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<sup>129</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/5/1, Vol 1, *Hulp aan die Kongo: Versoek van Munongo dat nog 'n C130 Gestuur Moet Word met Kos en Mediese Voorrade*, Cape Town, nd, pp. 1-2.

<sup>130</sup> SADO, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, Vol 1, Message Form Number 2623, 27 April 1965, np.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, Message Form Number 2316, 23 April 1965, np.

<sup>132</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, PL Vol 2, Letter from: Dr Moïse Tshombe, Leopoldville, To: Kantoor van die Eerste Minister, 21 September 1965, np; *Ibid*, *Kommentaar*, nd, np.

<sup>133</sup> FPSFA, AA, Portefeuille Nr 14795, Lias Nr 1631, Letter from: Consul Generaal van België, Johannesburg, To: Vice-Eerste Minister en Minister van Buitelandse Zaken, Brussels, *Zuid-Afrika-Congo en omliggende landen*, 8 April 1965, np.



still needed to be delivered which would have increased the grand total to R132,289,42 (c. R 9.5 million in today's currency).<sup>134</sup> This amount was just over half of the budget initially allocated by Cabinet.

In August 1964, SADF member Robbie Robbertze, together with four members of the SAP Security Branch including Colonel Johan Buys, flew to Leopoldville on the C-130 transport plane that delivered the first consignment of aid.<sup>135</sup> Robbertze, who according to Puren was a former military attaché in Brussels and Paris, acted as the South African government's liaison officer.<sup>136</sup> Robbertze attended a number of meetings with Tshombe, Munongo, and Mobutu over the following two months during which the delivery of aid, the South African mercenaries, and Congolese military strategy were discussed.<sup>137</sup> At his first meeting with Tshombe, Robbertze explained that he could make himself available to serve as an intermediary and advisor. Tshombe initially agreed to this.<sup>138</sup>

During Robbertze's second meeting with Tshombe on the 23 August 1964, the Congolese Prime Minister inquired about the formation of a special *Force de Frappe*. The idea of such a force was repeated by Mobutu the following day. He described it as '*une bonne compagnie*' of approximately 250 men. Robbertze said that he would ask Pretoria if the government was willing to send troops to make up such a group. Although it was not Pretoria's policy, Robbertze thought that it might be possible to infiltrate such a group into the existing mercenary force. On his return to Leopoldville one week later, Robbertze insisted that the South African government could not fulfil such a request, but the quality of troops sent by the recruitment offices in South Africa would be of the right calibre.<sup>139</sup> A *Sunday Express* report of 30 August 1964 mentioned that Robbertze had been seen at Jan Smuts International Airport in the company of Commanding Officer of the SADF First Parachute Battalion, Willem Louw. Both of them spoke to V Commando Recruiting Officer, Patrick O'Malley.<sup>140</sup> According to a 31 August 1964 statement by Louw, Robbertze had asked him if he wanted to

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<sup>134</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/185/3, 'Congo Republic Relations with SA', Vol 1, *Hulp aan die Kongo*, 5 October 1965, p. 1; <http://www.inflationcalc.co.za>

<sup>135</sup> SADO, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, Vol 1, *Special C-130 Transport Flight*, 19 August 1964, pp. 1-2; *Ibid*, Letter from Commandant-general SADF, Pretoria, *Special C130 Transport Flight*, 19 August 1964, p. 1. The names of these SAPS members are written in a side note as joining Robbertze.

<sup>136</sup> Puren and Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander*, p. 196.

<sup>137</sup> SADO, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, Vol 1, Letter from: Brig JH Robbertze, *Opsomming van Program*, 25/9/64, pp. 1-2.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*, Letter from: Brig JH Robbertze, *Opsomming van Besprekings oor Hulp*, 25 September 1964, p. 1.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>140</sup> TNA, FO 371/176716, Inward Serving Telegram, from: Pretoria, To: Foreign Office, *Mercenaries*, 4 September 1964, np.

create this special force for Congo, and if he could lead it. Robbertze explained that SADF members wishing to volunteer would be granted special leave of six months with pay, as well as additional ‘Congo’ pay. Louw would have to organise an advance team of 21 officers, 18 non-commissioned officers, and two contact officers, preferably from the Citizen Force and Standing Force. Robbertze also asked Louw to approach the SADF’s chief of staff with a request for radio equipment to prevent further accidents among mercenaries, which had been blamed on lack of communications.<sup>141</sup> The same day that Louw wrote this statement, the Minister of Defence, Jacobus Fouché, authorised the SADF’s Commandant General, Pieter Grobelaar, to make available an unspecified number of SADF members to the military authorities of Congo to be temporarily incorporated into the Congolese forces.<sup>142</sup>

It is not clear how, or if, this plan materialised. Puren mentions that Robbertze approached Louw, who was interested in the idea, but hints that the plan was abandoned because of the influence of Mobutu’s American and Belgian advisors.<sup>143</sup> The Belgian Consul in Johannesburg noted in March 1965 that after examining the matter closely, he could find no proof that serving SADF soldiers were leaving for Congo as mercenaries.<sup>144</sup> Similarly, a few months later, the British Embassy in Cape Town noted that despite investigating rumours that SADF regulars or reservists had been purposely sent to Congo to gain battle experience, it could not find any proof of this allegation.<sup>145</sup>

The British Foreign Office believed that Robbertze had also been tasked by Pretoria to investigate the persistent grievances among the South African mercenaries.<sup>146</sup> During a meeting with Vandewalle in September 1964, Robbertze complained that V Commando was not properly met, housed, or administered. Vandewalle replied that that he did not control their rate of arrival and thus could not properly absorb them. He asked Robbertze to prepare the next contingent of recruits from South Africa and keep them on standby until they were

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<sup>141</sup> SADO, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, Vol 1, *Verklaring deur Komdt W Louw op 31 Aug 64*, 31 August 1964, np.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, Letter from: Minister of Defence, Pretoria, To: Kommandant-Generaal SAW, 31 August 1964, np.

<sup>143</sup> Puren and Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander*, p. 208.

<sup>144</sup> FPSFA, AA, Portefeuille Nr 14795, Lias Nr 1631, Letter from: Consul Generaal van België, Johannesburg, To: Vice-Eerste Minister en Minister van Buitelandse Zaken, Brussels, *Vertrek van een Groep van 59 Huurlingen per Vliegtuig van Kaapstad naar Kongo op 11 Maart*, 26 March 1965, p. 1.

<sup>145</sup> TNA, FO 371/181677, ‘Political Relations: South Africa’, Letter from: British Embassy, Pretoria, To: West and Central African Department of Foreign Office, 20 July 1965, p. 2.

<sup>146</sup> TNA, FO 1100/9, ANX A to MAL/151/1, *Mercenaries in the Congo (Leopoldville)*, 18 September 1964, p. 3.

called forward.<sup>147</sup> Robbertze later informed Vandewalle that any future mercenary recruits from South Africa to Congo would be according to his specifications.<sup>148</sup>

Although Robbertze noted that Munongo and Tshombe were friendly towards South Africa, he explained that they were anxious about their relations with Pretoria and had a change of heart concerning him staying behind as an advisor.<sup>149</sup> As a result, Robbertze was recalled to South African in mid-September 1964, and the direct link between Pretoria and Leopoldville was broken.<sup>150</sup> However, soon after, contact was renewed when Buys was assigned as South Africa's new official liaison officer. Buys made regular trips to Congo until the end of September 1965, when he was assigned a new position.<sup>151</sup> The individual appointed to take over from Buys was SAP Security Branch member Major van Wyk, but it is not clear if he ever visited Leopoldville.<sup>152</sup>

Despite the fact that the South African government was not keen to be seen assisting mercenaries, it allowed injured mercenaries to receive medical treatment in South Africa. Munongo sent a letter to the Department of External Affairs in December 1964, explaining that some of South Africa's 'gallant nationals who were wounded in fighting' could not be taken care of at any Congolese hospital as these were neither sufficiently well-equipped, nor had the necessary specialised personnel. Munongo requested that casualties be sent to South Africa for medical treatment. The Congolese government would cover all costs involved. Although some South African mercenaries were already receiving treatment at hospitals in Johannesburg, Benoni, and Durban, no official arrangement existed and the number of mercenaries sent to South Africa was expected to increase in future.<sup>153</sup> One example of an injured mercenary who had previously been repatriated to South Africa was Frank Lotz: a 37 year old, blue eyed, tattooed, five feet and seven inches, moustachioed mercenary who was hospitalised in October 1964 due to a spear wound that left him paralyzed from the waist down.<sup>154</sup> However, Munongo explained that not all hospitals were accommodating, and some

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<sup>147</sup> TNA, FO 1100/9, Minutes MAL/151, *Mercenaries*, 14 September 1964, p. 1.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, ANX A to MAL/151/1, *Mercenaries in the Congo (Leopoldville)*, 18 September 1964, p. 4.

<sup>149</sup> SADO, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, Vol 1, Letter from JH Robbertze, Pretoria, *Memo vir sy Edele Die Minister van Verdedeging*, 2 October 1964, p. 1.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, Letter from Brig JH Robbertze, *Opsomming van Program*, 25/9/64, p. 2.

<sup>151</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, PL Vol 3, Letter from: Dr Moïse Tshombe, Leopoldville, To: Sy Eksellensie die Eerste Minister van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika, Pretoria, 27 September 1965, np.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, Die Sekretaris, Pretoria, 7 March 1966, pp. 1-2.

<sup>153</sup> SADO, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, Vol 1, Letter from: Minister for the Interior, G Munongo, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Africa, 1 December 1964, np.

<sup>154</sup> TNA, FO 1100/10, Telegram from: Leopoldville, To: Pretoria, 19 October 1964, p. 2.

injured mercenaries had encountered difficulties with the hospital authorities. Thus, he asked if Fouché could not intervene and make sure that such arrangement would run smoothly. Munongo furthermore stated that he would send all wounded men to the General Hospital in Johannesburg; except in very special cases where, for ‘humanitarian reasons’ and at the request of the persons wounded, they would be send elsewhere.<sup>155</sup> Verwoerd approved this request, and instructed Minister of Health, Albert Hertzog, to inform Johannesburg Hospital Administration that they should expect to receive wounded South African mercenaries.<sup>156</sup> In early January 1965, Buys was instructed to advise Munongo that Pretoria would accept wounded South African mercenaries, but had to decide on the matter of hospitalising non-South African mercenaries.<sup>157</sup>

Verwoerd had previously indicated that all wounded mercenaries from Congo, ‘regardless of race or colour or nationality’ should be treated in South African hospitals.<sup>158</sup> He noted that as the government had allowed the recruitment of mercenaries for Congo in South Africa, it would be better from a political standpoint for Pretoria to accept all wounded from Congo, even if they were ‘non-white’. If there were no objections, black soldiers could be admitted to ‘non-white’ hospitals.<sup>159</sup> However, Pretoria doubted that the Congolese government would send many, if any, wounded black soldiers or captured rebels, as such an exercise would be a costly affair. A return ticket from Leopoldville to Johannesburg was c. R240, and this amount excluded hospital costs. If rebel leaders were indeed sent down, the authorities should prevent them from contacting ‘subversive elements’ in South Africa.<sup>160</sup> Despite this initial decision, the Department of External Affairs later insisted that they ‘did not have facilities for non-white patients at this moment.’<sup>161</sup>

Throughout V Commando’s existence, the South African authorities closely monitored the mercenary situation in Congo and were in contact with volunteers who supplied them with

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<sup>155</sup> SADO, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, Vol 1, Letter from: Minister for the Interior, G Munongo, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Africa, 1 December 1964, np.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, Letter from: Sekretaris van Buitelandse Sake, Pretoria, To: Sekretaris van Gesondheid, *Toelating tot Hospitale in die Republiek van Gewonde Huursoldate uit die Kongo*, 21 December 1964, p. 2.

<sup>157</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/5/1, Vol 1, Letter from: Department of Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 19 January 1965, np.

<sup>158</sup> SADO, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, Vol 1, Letter from: Sekretaris van Buitelandse Sake, Pretoria, To: Sekretaris van Gesondheid, *Toelating tot Hospitale in die Republiek van Gewonde Huursoldate uit die Kongo*, 21 December 1964, p. 2.

<sup>159</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/5/1, Vol 1, *Toelating van Gewonde Huursoldate uit die Kongo van alle Nasionaliteite tot Hospitale in die Republiek*, Pretoria, January 1965, pp. 1-2.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>161</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, PL Vol 2, *Gewonde Huursoldate en Andere Blankes uit die Kongo (Leopoldville) tot Hospitale in die Republiek*, 4 May 1965, p. 2.

information. One South African mercenary working for the Congolese Air force in Leopoldville stated that he was there with full knowledge of Colonel George Klindt of the SAP Security Branch in Witwatersrand.<sup>162</sup> Similarly, the SADF Military Intelligence Division noted that German born Hans Germani, who was Hoare's Liaison Officer in V Commando, worked under Buys.<sup>163</sup> Puren also claims that he regularly sent intelligence updates to Pretoria.<sup>164</sup> Documents in the South African archives contain numerous reports supplied by known and unknown mercenaries in Congo, clearly indicating that a close relationship existed between the South African authorities and V Commando.

Pretoria's contact with mercenaries was useful for intelligence gathering purposes other than V Commando's activities in Congo. During the second half of 1965, the SADF Military Intelligence Division organised Operation Bajonet. The aim of this operation was to smuggle into South Africa weapons, ammunition, and other military material collected in Congo by mercenaries.<sup>165</sup> The group in charge of this operation would send the material by dismantling it and hiding the pieces in the luggage of returning mercenaries. Initially an AR-15 rifle was brought over by one of the operational organisers' son who was recruited by V Commando, but the weapon had been confiscated by customs at Jan Smuts International Airport. Subsequently arrangements were made between the SADF Military Intelligence Division and the custom officials at Jan Smuts to retrieve weapons from the returning mercenaries covertly.<sup>166</sup> These weapons were destined for intelligence training and some were handed over to Major Dirk Marais of 16 *gevegsgroep* at Voortrekkershoogte. This was a military unit specialising in unconventional warfare.<sup>167</sup> Some material was also passed on to Britain's MI5.<sup>168</sup> By early November 1965, the list of smuggled weaponry consisted of: jungle knives; bayonets; different types of ammunition; an anti-tank shell; an anti-personnel mine; assorted small arms; a Chinese hand grenade; and the AR-15 rifle.<sup>169</sup> Additionally, ex-Katangese

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<sup>162</sup> TNA, FO 1100/10, Cypher/OTP, To: Pretoria, 12 October 1964, np.

<sup>163</sup> SADoD, AML, Group 5, Box 272, File z/11/49, 'Inligtingsdiens Kongo', Top Secret, *Intelligence Officers in Leopoldville*, 16 May 1965, p. 2.

<sup>164</sup> Puren and Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander*, p. 195.

<sup>165</sup> SADoD, AML, Group 5, Box 254, File z10/1/3/3, 'Terroristewapens Vanaf Kongo Na RSA', Top Secret, *Operasie Bajonet*, 17 December 1965, pp. 1-2.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, Letter from: Maj AB Kitshoff, To: Direkteur van Militere Inligting, Pretoria, *Inbring van Wapens na die RSA van die Kongo*, August 1965, pp. 3-4.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, Letter from: Maj AB Kitshoff, To: Direkteur van Militere Inligting, Pretoria, *Inbring van Wapens na die RSA van Die Kongo*, August 1965, 1-2; 4; W.A. Dorning, 'n Kort Kroniek van Die Suid-Afrikaanse Weermag (1912-1987)', *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies* 17, 2 (1987), pp. 25-47, 44.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, *Operasie Bajonet*, 17 December 1965, pp. 1-2.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid. 1-2; 6.

mercenary and V Commando member Arthur Carton-Barber brought two machine guns that were handed over to the SAP's Security Branch.<sup>170</sup>

With Tshombe in office as prime minister, the relationship between Pretoria and Leopoldville continued to warm. In February 1965, whilst campaigning for Congo's second democratic elections,<sup>171</sup> Tshombe asked the South African government for supplies of white maize for South Katanga.<sup>172</sup> The irregular supply of maize in Congo as well as its ever increasing prices had created discontent among the Katangese population, and Tshombe wished to stabilise the market so that he could retain his strong support in the area. The yellow maize supplied by the Americans was apparently not favoured by the local population, whilst white maize received from Portuguese Angola and Rhodesia had been sold to Congo at inflated prices. Tshombe requested up to 5,000 tons per month for an unspecified period.<sup>173</sup> The Department of External Affairs approached the South African Maize Board, who pointed out that stocks were limited.<sup>174</sup> Despite the scarcity of supplies, Muller insisted that 'the sale of white *mealies* to Katanga [should] not run adrift'. Tshombe's advisor Mario Spandre, who acted as the middle man in this project, went further in raising the possibility of purchasing the 150,000 bags, but believed that the agreed upon price quoted per bag was too high. Although the South African government considered subsidizing part of this transaction from the remaining Congo aid budget, no further documentation exists about the arrangement.<sup>175</sup>

As Tshombe's political ascendancy in Congo was confirmed by the landslide victory of the *Convention Nationale Congolaise* during the legislative elections, Pretoria showed a keen interest in improving its trade relations with Congo.<sup>176</sup> It wanted to forge closer economic ties by possibly purchasing wood from Congo and in return selling clothes and food.<sup>177</sup> Verwoerd contacted Tshombe inquiring about the possibility of expanding relations. He argued that 'although we would naturally wish to increase our exports to the Congo, we would not make

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<sup>170</sup> SADoD, AMI, Group 5, Box 254, File z10/1/3/3, Letter from: J Wessels, *Wapens aan Carter Deur Doeane Afgegee*, 3 November 1965, np.

<sup>171</sup> See, p. 42.

<sup>172</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, PL Vol 2, Letter To: Sy Edele Die Minister, *Wit Mielies vir Suid-Katanga*, Kaapstad, February 1965, p. 1.

<sup>173</sup> DIRCO, BTS 34/5/112, 'Belgian Congo-Republic of SA Commercial Relations Between', PL, Telegram from: Department of Foreign Affairs, Cape Town, To: Department of Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 4 February 1965, p. 1.

<sup>174</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, PL Vol 2, *Voorlegging: Verkoop van Wit Mielies aan Katanga*, Kaapstad, February 1965, p. 1.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid*, Letter To: Eerste Adjunk-Sekretaris, *Verkoop van Wit Mielies aan Katanga*, Cape Town, 24 March 1965, pp. 1-2.

<sup>176</sup> See, p. 42.

<sup>177</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, PL Vol 2, Letter from: Sekretaris van Buitelandse Sake, Kaapstad, To: Sekretaris van Handel en Nywerheid, Kaapstad, *Verhoudings met die Kongo*, 13 April 1965, p. 2.

it a pre-requisite for increased imports from your country'.<sup>178</sup> Verwoerd furthermore hinted that he would like to see South Africa and Congo enter into a confidential trade agreement.<sup>179</sup> During a meeting in September 1965, Munongo, who was then governor of the Eastern Katanga Province, reminded Buys that he and Tshombe would like to see a South African trade mission opened in Elisabethville.<sup>180</sup>

Although the South African government was a great proponent of improving formal relations with Congo by strengthening its trade relations, it was less enthusiastic when Tshombe solicited Pretoria for 'financial contributions'. A previous request by the Congolese prime minister for \$150,000 (c. \$ 1 million in today's currency) had been refused by Pretoria, but in mid-September 1965 the Department of External Affairs was considering the possibility of donating R60,000 (c. R 4.5 million in today's currency) from its 'secret fund' to the Congolese government. This, it argued, could help Congo's dysfunctional administrative system, which it blamed for Congo's economic and political instability.<sup>181</sup> However, it is not clear if the proposed donation was ever made. Tshombe wrote to Verwoerd just over a week later, thanking him for all the aid that South Africa had so far given to him. He explained to Verwoerd that Buys had been informed about the difficulties Congo was facing and that Buys had been told what South Africa could do to 'help'.<sup>182</sup> According to Buys, Tshombe was again looking for a bribe. Verwoerd consequently refused to entertain the request.<sup>183</sup> Tshombe's political future was quickly cut short by Mobutu's military coup in November 1965, once more removing South Africa's ally on the ground.

During his exile in Spain, Tshombe remained in contact with the South African authorities, even sending Verwoerd a Christmas card.<sup>184</sup> Munongo, who was still in Congo, also sent a card for the festive season. According to the Department of External Affairs, Munongo once again offered the South African government an invitation to open a trade office in Elisabethville as a 'token of friendship'. Despite Mobutu's efforts to weaken Munongo's

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<sup>178</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, PL Vol 2, Letter from: HF Verwoerd, Pretoria, To: His Excellency Dr Moise Tshombe, Leopoldville, nd, pp. 1-3.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid, Letter from: Godefroid Munongo, To: Eerste Minister van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika, 26 September 1965, np.

<sup>181</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/185/3, Vol 1, *Skenkings aan Joeloë en Tshombe*, Pretoria, 14 September 1965, pp. 1-4; <http://www.usinflationcalculator.com>; <http://www.inflationcalc.co.za>

<sup>182</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, PL Vol 3, Letter from: Dr Moise Tshombe, Leopoldville, To: Sy Ekselensie die Eerste Minsiter van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika, Pretoria, 21 September 1965, np.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid, *Kommentaar*, nd.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, Letter To: Sy Edele die Eerste Minister, Kaapstad, January 1966, p. 1.

political influence, Munongo retained a strong support base in Katanga and was to play an important role in Tshombe's plans to return to Congo. He was however arrested by Mobutu on 26 December 1966.<sup>185</sup>

Despite the foiled V Commando coup and failed First Kisangani Mutiny in July 1966, Tshombe tenaciously clung to the idea of his return to Congo. In September 1966, he contacted the South African Embassy in Lisbon to request Pretoria's assistance.<sup>186</sup> A Portuguese informant explained that such assistance could be 'limited to purely moral support or assurance of non-condemnation of his actions'. If the South African government decided to support Tshombe's attempt to regain power, he promised close economic co-operation with South Africa, Portuguese Africa, and Rhodesia, and that he would stop subversive elements from moving southwards.<sup>187</sup> The South African Embassy in Lisbon was instructed by Pretoria to inform Tshombe in a friendly manner that South Africa could not become involved in affairs of other countries.<sup>188</sup>

The South African government, nonetheless, continued to be approached by Tshombe's representatives. In April 1967, Huyghé, Johannesburg lawyer John Martin and a Belgian named Crispan devised a plan for Tshombe's return from exile.<sup>189</sup> Crispan was in the possession of an accredited letter from Tshombe, and was acquainted with the assistant trade attaché of the Belgian Consulate in Johannesburg.<sup>190</sup> He had come to South Africa to establish contact with a highly placed individual who could apprise him of Pretoria's stance on the return of Tshombe to Congo.<sup>191</sup> Martin met with a member of the Department of External Affairs through the mediation of an acquaintance, and approached one judge Hiemstra, most likely Victor Hiemstra, brother of SADF Commandant General Rudolph Hiemstra, who arranged contact with an intermediary between himself and the Cabinet.<sup>192</sup> The

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<sup>185</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, PL Vol 3, *Kersgroete van Munongo, Goewerneur van Oos-Katanga aan Sy Edele die Eerste Minister*, Cape Town, 2 February 1966, pp. 1-2.

<sup>186</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/5/1, Vol 1, Immediate Cypher OTP Telegram, from: SA Embassy, Lisbon, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Cape Town, 15 September 1966, np.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid, Immediate Cypher OTP Telegram, from: SA Embassy, Lisbon, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Cape Town, 12 September 1966, pp. 1-2.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid, Cypher OTP Telegram, from: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Cape Town, To: SA Embassy, Lisbon, 19 September 1966, np.

<sup>189</sup> SADOd, AMI, Group 5, Box 272, File z/11/49, Report, *Recruitment of a Task Force for Congo*, 5 April 1967, pp. 1-2.

<sup>190</sup> SADOd, AMI, Group 35, Box 21, File 1371, Vol 2, Secret, *Direkteur van Militere Inligting, Kongo (Kin)*, 16 May 1967, p. 3.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>192</sup> SADOd, AMI, Group 5, Box 272, File z/11/49, Report, *Recruitment of a Task Force for Congo*, 5 April 1967, pp. 1-2.



Department of External Affairs informed Martin that the South African government did not want to get involved with Tshombe. The link between the group and the Cabinet seems to have been equally unfruitful.<sup>193</sup>

Similarly, Puren visited the SAP Security Branch and Department of External Affairs in early May 1967. He informed them that Tshombe intended to retake Katanga sometime between May and December 1967. In order to coordinate this operation, a mercenary force was to be transported from Salisbury to north Katanga from where they would link up with Katangese gendarmes in order to launch a coordinated attack across the province. On their return flight, the airplanes for this operation would need to land at Katima Molilo in the Caprivi Strip, and Puren wanted Pretoria's permission to do so. Puren request was denied by both the SAP Security Branch and the Department of External Affairs alike.<sup>194</sup> Finally, whilst Tshombe was held captive in Algeria, the South African government was contacted in February 1969 by his son Jean Ditend Tshombe. Jean Tshombe requested a meeting with Prime Minister John Voster. Tshombe wanted to ask Voster for funding to cover the costs of the visits he needed to make to form an international lobby group, as well as pay for the legal cost of trying to free his father.<sup>195</sup> The South African government turned down his request, as it was not convinced that such help would actually result in Tshombe's freedom, and even if successful whether Tshombe could actually regain power.<sup>196</sup>

After Tshombe's disappearance from the Congolese political theatre, Pretoria debated if it should stop the recruitment of mercenaries in South Africa. There was the real possibility that their presence in Congo could become dangerous, making it difficult for the South African government to help them in case of emergency. However, in February 1966, the Department of External Affairs decided against any measures.<sup>197</sup> In the month after the thwarted First Kisangani Mutiny of July 1966, the Secretary of External Affairs cautioned that during this fluid moment in Congolese politics, V Commando might embarrass the South African government. Whomever they supported, Tshombe or Mobutu, this could reflect badly on

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<sup>193</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 35, Box 21, File 1371, Vol 2, Secret, Directeur van Militere Inligting, *Kongo (Kin)*, 16 May 1967, pp. 1-2.

<sup>194</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/5/1, Vol 1, Letter from: JJ Becker, Pretoria, To: Mr Burger, 9 May 1967, pp. 1-2.

<sup>195</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 4, Letter To: Sekretaris van Buitelandse Sake, Kaapstad, *Moïse Tshombe*, 17 February 1969, p. 1.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, Letter from: Sekretaris van Buitelandse Sake, Pretoria, To: Buitengewone en Gevolmagtigde Ambassadeur van die Republiek van Suid-Africa, Bern, *Moïse Tshombe*, 12 May 1969, np.

<sup>197</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, PL Vol 3, Letter To: Mr Burger, Pretoria, 24 February 1966, np.

Pretoria.<sup>198</sup> The South African government banned Peters from visiting South Africa as a way of distancing themselves from V Commando.<sup>199</sup>

The following year in March, the Department of External Affairs suggested ways in which the South African government could quietly reduce the number of mercenaries in Congo. Pretoria was worried about V Commando's decidedly poor reputation under Peters. According to a SAP Security Branch report, 'horrible crimes, including cold blood murder' were linked to V Commando. The report concluded that 'the volunteers, which largely consist of a weak type, lost all sense of values whilst they are acting in the Congo', further stating that such mercenaries would 'find it difficult to adjust when they return to the Republic'. The Congolese government was also slow in paying for wounded mercenaries transferred to South African hospitals. The Department of External Affairs noted that hospital authorities were worried that they would have to foot the bill. As a result, an inter-ministerial meeting to discuss the issue of South African mercenaries' future in Congo was organised.<sup>200</sup> The Department of the Interior proposed to control the passport applications of mercenaries. The names of all applicants traveling to Congo would be referred to the SAP Security Branch for recommendation, and an additional deposit would be demanded of all passports issued for Congo. This deposit, approximately R200 or more, would deter large-scale recruitment, as the average mercenary could not afford the required amount. It was argued that such administrative restrictions could be lifted at a later stage if the movement of mercenaries from South Africa to Congo was deemed appropriate. Around the time of the meeting, news that Mobutu had instructed Schroeder to halt any further mercenary recruitment reached Pretoria.<sup>201</sup> Any of Pretoria's concerns about the future of V Commando were thus allayed by Mobutu's decision to disband the unit.

Since Mobutu had taken over control, Pretoria had to decide if it should recognise Mobutu's government and deal with it in future. Around March 1966, the Department of External Affairs was approached by family members of South African mercenaries arrested and jailed in Congo, asking if their incarcerated relatives could be transferred to South Africa to complete their sentences. There were almost 300 South African mercenaries in Congo at the time, and the possibility of more of them landing up in jail was high.<sup>202</sup> Issues such as unpaid

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<sup>198</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/5/1, Vol 1, *Suid-Afrikaanse Huursoldate in die Kongo*, Pretoria, 8 March 1967, pp. 1-2.

<sup>199</sup> 'SA Bans Mercenary Officers', *The Star*, 19 December 1966.

<sup>200</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/5/1, Vol 1, *Suid-Afrikaanse Huursoldate in die Kongo*, Pretoria, 8 March 1967, pp. 1-2.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 3-5.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid*, *Suid-Afrikaners (Huursoldate) in die Gevangenis in die Kongo*, Pretoria, 4 March 1966, pp. 1-2.

hospital costs also caused Pretoria to maintain relations with the Congolese government.<sup>203</sup> Furthermore, the South African government wanted to go through with the trade agreement that had previously been discussed with Tshombe in late 1965, even if an official agreement might attract negative publicity. Although South African exporters had quietly expanded their trade with Congo, and some Congolese were equally keen to do business with South Africa, there were those in Congo who preferred to sever all trade between the two countries.<sup>204</sup> Hopes for renewed South African-Congolese relations were dashed as Mobutu showed no interest in dealing with Pretoria. On 25 March 1968, in message to commemorate the fifth year of the OAU's existence, Mobutu expressed his wish that 'the flag of freedom will soon fly over [South Africa] and Rhodesia'.<sup>205</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Tshombe's return to Congo resulted in a renewed recruitment drive in South Africa of mercenaries for Congo. Unlike during the secession of Katanga, this time the mercenaries fought for the Leopoldville government. V Commando was plagued by organisational difficulties throughout its existence, and cases of ill-discipline were common. Regardless of such problems and despite the controversial nature of the mercenary force, V Commando was an important military unit for the Congolese government that enabled it to overthrow the rebel forces. Tshombe's position as Congo's new prime minister also allowed Pretoria to re-establish relations with Leopoldville, albeit briefly. The South African government supported Tshombe's political position and a close association emerged during his time in office. Pretoria's hopes of continuing and further strengthening its relations with Leopoldville were done for when Tshombe was once again banished from Congo's political theatre in November 1965. Mobutu's coup marked the end of the South African government's attempts at establishing formal relations with Congo, and South Africa's involvement in the Congo crisis came to a symbolic conclusion with the disbanding of V Commando in 1967.

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<sup>203</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, PL Vol 3, *Erkenning van die Nuwe Bewind in die Kongo*, Pretoria, February 1966, p. 1.

<sup>204</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 4, Mnr GF Marais, *Verhoudings met Kongo (Kinshasa)*, nd, pp. 1-2.

<sup>205</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 35, Box 20, No File Number, *86 Kongo/Mobutu en die OAE, Rhodesie, RSA/Italie*, 21 June 1968, np.

## **Section II**

### **South African rationale and perceptions**

# Chapter Six

## Pretoria's rationale, 1960-1965

South Africa's position holds a lesson for the world. If the UN had realised this earlier a Congo would not have emerged [...] They say we must give in to certain demands of which the world asks. The Congo gave in to the world. We will never [...] Must we give in? No! Must we be afraid? No! Courage!

Hendrik Verwoerd, August 1961<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

In March 1965, South African Communist Party member Michael Alan Harmel, who went by the *nom de plume* of 'A. Lerumo' when writing for *African Communist*, accused Pretoria of being part of an 'unholy alliance'. He claimed that

... the powerful anti-African financial interests, with their close ties with the state machinery in [...] Johannesburg [...] joined forces in a joint [...] alliance of beasts of prey to crush the reality and the spirit of Congo independence, and drown it in blood.<sup>2</sup>

Harmel's assertion was based on the contemporaneous accusation that Southern Africa's white minority governments had formed an unholy alliance with Moïse Tshombe to safeguard the region's white settler societies and protect its mining interests.<sup>3</sup> This claim about Pretoria's rationale was never substantiated. This chapter will examine the South African government's motives for getting involved in the Congo crisis. The chapter's first subsection outlines Pretoria's reasoning for supporting the Katangese secession. The second discusses the South African government's rationale for aligning itself to Leopoldville during Tshombe's prime ministership. The third and final subsection examines how Pretoria's involvement in the Congo crisis was significantly shaped by its concerns about South Africa's international standing.

### 6.1 Supporting the Katangese secession

Although the South African Consulate in Leopoldville informed the Department of External Affairs in February 1960 that Congo's political future was uncertain, it was convinced that

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<sup>1</sup> 'Suid-Afrika 'n Les Vir Die Wereld', *Die Burger*, 30 August 1960.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Battle for the Congo and the November Aggression', *African Communist*, March 1965, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> See for instance: Ainslie, Davidson, and O'Brien, *The Unholy Alliance, Salazar – Verwoerd – Welensky*, pp. 2-3; 5-7; Mandela, 'Address at the Conference of the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa'; NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, Vol 10, letter from: Union of South Africa, London, to: Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria, *The Congo*, 10 August 1960, p. 3; 'Against the Winds of Change', *Fighting Talk*, 14, 2, July 1962, p. 7.

Leopoldville and Elisabethville would remain South Africa's most important commercial centres in Congo. Working towards maintaining some form of representation at these two major cities would thus be South Africa's main objective, even if only consular or trade representation without formal diplomatic representation.<sup>4</sup> As indicated in Chapter three, the anti-South African position of the main Congolese political parties prior to independence made future friendly relations with the new Congolese government in Leopoldville extremely doubtful.<sup>5</sup> Unlike other Congolese politicians, Tshombe had begun to take up a more defined pro-Western and anti-Communist stance. A seceded Katanga directly opposed Leopoldville's idea of a united independent Congo and such would offer Southern Africa a potential ally in the north.<sup>6</sup>

According to the South African Defence Force (SADF) director of military planning and operations, supporting Katanga would not only promote good relations between the two governments but could later also serve as way of improving relations with other black states.<sup>7</sup> This sentiment was shared by South African High Commissioner in Salisbury, Harold Taswell, who argued that keeping Tshombe close could serve as an example to other black independent countries in Africa to establish friendly relations with South Africa.<sup>8</sup> During the prime ministership of Hendrik Verwoerd, the only independent black African state South Africa had formal diplomatic ties with was Egypt where it had a legation. However, these ties were severed in 1961.<sup>9</sup> The remaining diplomatic representation South Africa maintained in Africa throughout the period of the Congo crisis was with the colonial states of Portuguese Angola and Mozambique, Mauritius and the Central African Federation.<sup>10</sup> Katanga would be a welcome addition to this list, as it would prove to the world that, apartheid notwithstanding, South Africa was able to have formal relations with an independent black state. Such a relationship would be based upon the principle of non-interference in each other's domestic policies, a sentiment shared by the Katangese Minister of Foreign Trade, Bonaventure Makonga. In November 1960, Makonga declared that although he did not support apartheid,

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<sup>4</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 1, Letter from: Consulate-General of the Union of South Africa, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria, *South African Representation in the Congo*, 18 February 1960, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> See, pp. 48-54.

<sup>6</sup> Hughes, 'Fighting for White Rule in Africa', pp. 7-8.

<sup>7</sup> DIRCO, 1/58/5/1, Vol 1, *Voordrag deur die Direkteur van Beplanning en Operasies aan die Kommandant-Generaal, SAW, Wenslikheid van Steun deur Suid-Afrika aan haar Noordelike Buurgebiede*, 15 February 1961, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> SAdoD, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, Letter from: High Commissioner, To: Secretary for External Affairs, Cape Town, *Congo*, 27 January 1961, pp. 2-3.

<sup>9</sup> Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation*, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 14-15.

it was South Africa's issue. 'Katanga', he argued, was 'just interested in good economic relations and would like to trade with [South Africa]'.<sup>11</sup>

Due to its geographical position, and its large settler community, Katanga was regarded by South Africa as part of a strategic buffer zone that separated the white south from the rest of Africa where some African nationalist movements were beginning to assert their independence.<sup>12</sup> This sometimes occurred in a violent manner, as in the case of Kenya's Mau Mau uprising and Algeria's *Front de la Libération Nationale* revolt.<sup>13</sup> After Congolese independence, the South African government had become increasingly fearful that similar anti-white violence and subsequent chaos would eventually spill over south into the frontline states of Portuguese Angola and the Central African Federation. This would severely threaten the status quo of the white minority powers in Southern Africa.<sup>14</sup> Pretoria considered Katanga as the only region in Congo where black and white people were willing to cooperate with one another.<sup>15</sup>

Such anxieties about a possible domino effect of violence are well illustrated in the case of neighbouring Portuguese Angola. After Holden Roberto's *União das Populações de Angola* (UPA) launched its March 1961 offensive from Congo into northern Angola, the Member of Parliament for Etosha in northern South West Africa, Japie Bason, expressed his concerns about the future of South West Africa's security. Bason believed the possibility of violence erupting in South West Africa a result of Angolan unrest was great.<sup>16</sup> In June 1961, Bason noted that the Angolan uprisings had reached the borders of South West Africa when a number of Ovambo attacks occurred in southern Angola. Bason feared that South West

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<sup>11</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 34/5/112, Vol 2, Letter from: Office of the High Commissioner, Salisbury, To: Secretary for Trade and Industries, Pretoria, *Handel met Katanga*, 28 November 1960, pp. 2; 6.

<sup>12</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 24, File '350 political (Congo) classified 1961', Outgoing Telegram, 22 September 1961, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Springhall, *Decolonization since 1945*, pp. 150; 160–166.

<sup>14</sup> DIRCO, 1/58/5/1, Vol 1, *Verskaffing van Militêre Hulp aan die Federatie van Rhodesië en Njassaland*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>15</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 26, '350 political (Congo) classified 1961', Outgoing Telegram, 22 September 1961, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Decimal Files 1960-63, Box 1689, '745a.00/4.2561', Telegram from: American Embassy, Cape Town, To: Department of State, Washington, *External Affairs Debate Reflects Concerns About South West Africa*, 25 April 1961, p. 2.

Africa's Ovambo's were waiting on the success of the Angolan campaign in order to 'free themselves and to drive the whites out of the territory'.<sup>17</sup>

Such fears were further heightened when continuous reports of communist 'technicians' arriving in Congo made the South African government anxious about a future communist backed Congo.<sup>18</sup> Before Congo's independence, South Africa's consul in Leopoldville had already described Lumumba as a 'particular shrewd operator'.<sup>19</sup> He accused him of being influenced by anti-imperialist communists and of having made use of demagogue tactics to win the elections.<sup>20</sup> Once Lumumba was in power, the South African authorities received reports on Congo's political situation that claimed the prime minister was getting assistance from communist advisors. This fear of a communist threat in Congo persisted even after the demise of Lumumba. The SADF's director of military planning and operations wrote to the Commandant General, Pieter Grobelaar, that Antoine Gizenga's forces in Stanleyville were armed with communist weapons and led by East German officers.<sup>21</sup> In reality the influence and involvement of communist states in Congo was more modest than previously believed or commonly reported.<sup>22</sup>

Pretoria was convinced that the eventual conquest of South Africa was the ultimate objective of African nationalist movements supported by communist powers. The fall of Portuguese rule in Angola was regarded as a step on the way to the eventual overthrow of South Africa. Maintaining the buffer zone of Portuguese Angola, the Central African Federation, and Portuguese Mozambique was seen as imperative to counter 'physical and ideological threats to South Africa'.<sup>23</sup> Taswell feared an anti-Western build up in Stanleyville, which he bizarrely linked to the sighting of Russian submarines and fishing fleets off the South African

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<sup>17</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 26, 'political dispatches Jan-Dec 1961 classified 1961', Telegram, from: American Embassy Cape Town, To: Department of State, Washington, *Bason's South West Party Reports Dissatisfaction Among Bastards and Ovambo*, 22 June 1961, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, 'Belgian Congo Political Situation and Development', Vol 8, Telegram from: SA Ambassade, Washington DC, To: Sekretaris van Buitelandse Sake, Pretoria, 20 July 1960, np; SADOd, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, Telex from: Direkteur Beplanning en Operasies, To: Kommandant-Generaal SAW, nd, pp. 1; 2.

<sup>19</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, Vol 2, Letter from: Consul General of the Union of South Africa, Leopoldville, To: Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria, *Official Tour of the Congo and Ruanda-Urundi*, 25 April 1959, pp. 17.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, Letter from: Consul General, Leopoldville, *the Congolese Political Scene*, nd, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> SADOd, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, Letter from: Direkteur Beplanning en Operasies, To: Kommandant-Generaal, nd, pp. 1-2.

<sup>22</sup> See: Namikas, *Battleground Africa*.

<sup>23</sup> SADOd, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/7, 'Verdediginssamewerking RSA-Portugal', Top Secret, *Oorwegings wat Betrekking het op 'n Ooreenkoms met Portugal vir Wederkerige Optrede ter Verdediging van Suid-Afrikaanse en Portugese Grondgebied in Suidelike Afrika*, nd, p. 1.



coast. According to Taswell, this could very well be part of a two pronged strategy consisting of an offensive against South Africa from Stanleyville, as Russian agents would be put ashore at the South African coasts ‘to smuggle in arms and stir up trouble internally’.<sup>24</sup>

The Katangese leadership was aware of these South African anxieties, and attempted to make use of them throughout their interaction with South African government representatives to try to coerce Pretoria into offering direct assistance. Tshombe reminded South Africa’s Trade Commissioner in Salisbury, Johan van Schalkwyk, that most African countries were anti-South African, whilst Katanga wanted to establish friendly relations with South Africa. He further mentioned to van Schalkwyk that ‘now it was time to see who ones true friends are’, warning that ‘if Katanga would fall in the hands of the communists, South Africa would very quickly inherit its problems’.<sup>25</sup> Tshombe pointed out that the Stanleyville forces received large quantities of weapons and supplies from the Soviet government, whilst he only received expressions of friendship from the West. He warned that ‘the West’s attitude of lawfulness would help them fall out of the frying pan into the fire’.<sup>26</sup> The strategy of making use of Cold War discourse to elicit support was a common form of argumentation during South African-Katangese interactions. In a way, this approach was similar to Pretoria’s own rhetoric when defending apartheid against international criticism. During a meeting with the Department of External Affairs in January 1961, Katangese representative Mrs Staquet argued that ‘in fighting the communists in the Congo the Katangese government was serving the interests of [South Africa]’.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Katanga’s Minister of Health, Jean Mwewa, mentioned that it would be beneficial for South Africa to support his government since Katanga would act as a stronghold against communism. If Katanga fell, the rest of the subcontinent would also stand much closer to communism.<sup>28</sup> Such an argument is comparable to Dwight Eisenhower’s 1954 ‘domino theory’. Eisenhower contended that if Indochina would fall to the communists, first its neighbouring countries and then the whole of Asia would follow.<sup>29</sup> Although Pretoria was aware that such anti-communist dialogue was used by Katanga’s representatives as leverage, van Schalkwyk nonetheless concluded that ‘as melodramatic as Tshombe’s claim to being the

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<sup>24</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/5/2, Vol 1, Letter from: Office of the High Commissioner, Salisbury, To: Secretary for External Affairs, Cape Town, *Katanga*, 24 February 1961, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> SADO, AML, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, *Die Katanga se Beroep om Hulp uit die Unie*, 5 August 1961, pp. 3-4.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/5/2, Vol 1, *Memo*, Cape Town, 25 January 1961, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 22/1/112/1, Vol 1, *Memorandum, Besoek van Katanga Minister van Gesondheid M Jean Mwewa*, nd, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Gary Donaldson, *America at War Since 1945: Politics and Diplomacy in Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War* (Westport: Praeger, 1996), pp. 79-80.

West's last bastion against communism in Africa may sound [...] one cannot escape the suspicion that he may, to some degree, be correct'.<sup>30</sup>

While South African government officials realised that Tshombe was thus the best, and only, man to support, Pretoria maintained the opinion that South Africa should not get directly involved in the conflict, despite continuous requests by Katanga. In August 1961, Secretary for External Affairs Gerhardus Jooste, noted that,

There is no doubt that Tshombe's immediate battle is one against the forces of Communism and that he will lose this fight if friendly nations do not put him in a position where he is able to receive the necessary material to fight. It seems that it would be in our favour to assist Tshombe in all possible ways without ourselves ending up being involved in the battle. If he is also able to emerge victorious out of such a battle, it could mean allot for our future position in Africa.<sup>31</sup>

Likewise, Taswell compared the Katanga crisis to a potential 'new Korean or Spanish civil war [...] where the big powers remain in the background but give plenty of support to opposing groups without themselves becoming directly involved'.<sup>32</sup> Taswell argued that any overt support by South Africa would result in accusations of active intervention in the conflict and would endanger its own safety. However, a 'too legalistic and above the board approach would likely antagonise Tshombe'.<sup>33</sup> The consensus in Pretoria was that South Africa's relations with Katanga needed to be conducted with caution and tact.

Pretoria also hoped that supporting the Katangese secession would aid in safeguarding its custodianship over South West Africa. South Africa's control over South West Africa had been contested from as early as 1946, and throughout the 1950s, various committees on the matter were set up at the UN.<sup>34</sup> Liberia and Ethiopia laid a charge with the international court of justice concerning South Africa's administration of South West Africa in 1960. The impending judgment was ongoing whilst the Congo crisis was unfolding.<sup>35</sup> Due to increased international criticism of South Africa's custodianship over South West Africa, there was a fear that the United Nations (UN) would use Congo as a springboard to launch a military

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<sup>30</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/5/2, Vol 1, Letter from: Trade Commissioner, Salisbury, *Visit to Katanga*, 25 January 1961, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, *Die Katanga se Beroep om Hulp uit die Unie*, 5 August 1961, p. 6.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, Letter from: High Commissioner, To: Secretary for External Affairs, Cape Town, *Congo*, 27 January 1961, p. 2.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> John Spence, *Republic under Pressure: A Study of South African Foreign Policy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 109-110.

<sup>35</sup> Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation*, p. 12.

intervention in Portuguese Angola and South West Africa, similar to its deployment of ONUC forces in Congo.<sup>36</sup> In October 1961, Taswell argued that the UN had proved its willingness to act aggressively during their intervention in Congo. He reasoned that what the UN had done to Tshombe it could do to South Africa and more specifically South West Africa. 'To administer peace within one's own borders is not enough', he argued, 'if circumstances are not to the liking of the UN, they themselves will come and sort them out'.<sup>37</sup> In April 1961, Taswell further reasoned that,

The main objective of the Afro-Asian block is surely to obtain complete control of the Congo and Tshombe is the principal obstacle in their way. India probably feels that her troops are more likely to bring about Tshombe's downfall than any other troops. [...] And after the Congo what is the next move? Will it not be an attempt to bring the Ghurkhas into South West Africa? And is that not part of the grand strategy for an Afro-Asian attack on the Union?<sup>38</sup>

India's involvement and presence in Congo as part of the *Opération des Nations Unies au Congo* (ONUC) seem to have been of particular concern to the South African government. van Schalkwyk reported in November 1961 that several Indian ONUC engineers were mining engineers, and that Indian officers stationed in Congo had been gathering information on mining, economic data and farming methods.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, Taswell believed that there was a real possibility that the Indians in Congo were preparing for the settlement of 25,000 of their compatriots who might be displaced after Uganda and Kenya's independence. 'Indians and their motives in Africa', Taswell argued, 'must be viewed with the greatest suspicion'.<sup>40</sup> Hendrik Verwoerd was equally caught up by this 'Indian peril'. He wrote to the South African permanent representative at the UN about his belief that India wanted to colonise Africa. According to Verwoerd, India's strategy was to attack South Africa, while developing fake friendships with and offering assistance to African countries until they controlled them economically, all with the view to 'let loose its colonising masses on Africa'. He argued that

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<sup>36</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 1019, File KG/SVK/4/37/1, Direkteur van Militere Inligting, *Rapport oor toestand in Angola*, 10 January 1963, pp. 1-2; NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Decimal Files 1960-63, Box 1689, '125-3', Airgram from: American Consulate, Durban, To: Department of State, Washington, *The South West Africa Issue: Views Expressed by Alan Paton, Author and Liberal Party Leader*, 24 December 1962, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> DIRCO, 1/58/5/1, Vol 1, Letter from: Office of the High Commissioner, Salisbury, To: Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria, *Verdedeging*, 3 October 1961, p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, Letter from: Office of the High Commissioner, Salisbury, To: Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria, *Sell Out to India?*, 17 April 1961, pp. 2-3.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, Letter from: High Commissioner, Salisbury, To: Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria, *Katanga*, 29 November 1961, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, Letter from: HLT Taswell, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 15 June 1961, p. 2.

India's intervention in Congo was part of this strategy.<sup>41</sup> Pretoria's concerns about India were likely increased by the fact that in January 1961, India had invaded and annexed the Portuguese territories of Goa, Daman, and Diu.<sup>42</sup>

The presence of ONUC and its attempts to end the Katangese secession forcefully drove the South African government to condemn the UN's involvement in Congo. In September 1961, Verwoerd thought that the South African government 'should either do something or do nothing' about the UN's involvement in Katanga. According to Verwoerd, such a stance was not only a way of demonstrating that the South African government stood for order in Africa but also a way of strengthening its own position in case South Africa was confronted with similar threats.<sup>43</sup> The one way the South African government resorted to 'doing something' was to publicly discredit the ONUC mission in Congo as being illegal and against the UN's mandate.<sup>44</sup> Minister of External Affairs, Eric Louw, claimed that conditions in Katanga were economically and politically stable. The UN's military interference in Congo was forcing a political arrangement instead of maintaining order.<sup>45</sup> The South African government was certainly not the only one that was concerned about the UN's action in Congo. The Prime Minister of the Central African Federation Roy Welensky voiced a similar critique, and the matter was extensively discussed in the British press.<sup>46</sup>

Another way of South Africa 'doing something' was to try to cripple ONUC's operational capabilities by showing that the intervention was an expensive, ineffective failure. This was done by continuously refusing to pay for ONUC's huge operational costs, as well as supporting the Katangese secession by keeping its economy and military functioning.<sup>47</sup> At a meeting in Cape Town in March 1963, the Department of External Affairs informed the Americans - who were ONUC's biggest financiers - that Pretoria declined to pay for the UN intervention in Congo. It blamed its reluctance to pay on the increase in anti-UN sentiments

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<sup>41</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, Letter from: Secretary for External Affairs, To: Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations, 16 October 1961, np.

<sup>42</sup> Edward Kofi Quashigah and Obiora Chinedu Okafor eds., *Legitimate Governance in Africa: International and Domestic Legal Perspectives*, (London: Kluwer Law International, 1999), p. 390.

<sup>43</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, Letter from: Prime Minister's Office, Pretoria, To: Sekretaris van Buitelandse Sake, Pretoria 31 August 1961, np.

<sup>44</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, 'Belgian Congo Political Situation and Development', Vol 12, *Speech by Minister Louw at the Fourth Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations held on Monday, 9th September, 1960*, nd, pp. 1-2.

<sup>45</sup> Eric Louw, *The Case for South Africa: As Put Forth in the Public Statements of Eric H Louw Foreign Minister of South Africa* (New York: Macfadden Books, 1963), pp. 80-81.

<sup>46</sup> Cohen, 'A Difficult, Tedious and Unwanted Task', pp. 111-112.

<sup>47</sup> See, pp. 70-78.

among members of the South African public, which had only intensified after the 1962 apartheid resolution at the UN. The Department of External Affairs argued that it was hard to persuade the public to accept the idea of payment to the UN in the atmosphere of sanctions proposed by the UN, since this could be viewed as ‘paying for their own demise’.<sup>48</sup>

The South African government hoped that such a strategy would prevent the UN from deploying a similar peacekeeping force in South West Africa, and in the process gain favour with Tshombe. Pretoria was also worried about allegations that the Afro-Asian members of the ONUC troops in Congo were offering assistance to Southern African liberation movements.<sup>49</sup> There were accusations that ONUC members were supplying arms and ammunition to Angolan rebels stationed in Congo.<sup>50</sup> The Department of External Affairs received reports that Angolan rebels were equipped with weapons from the UN depots at Matadi and Thysville. Furthermore, ONUC Brigadier, Indar Rikhye, explained that ‘... the contingent [...] of the UAR was in the habit of “losing their arms and equipment” [...] adding to the supply floating around the countryside’.<sup>51</sup>

Additionally, on many occasions the Leopoldville government made clear their support for the liberation of Southern Africa. Congolese Minister of External Affairs, Justin Bomboko, declared in August 1962, that ‘the Congo government will assist Angolan nationalists as Tunisia and Morocco assisted Algerians’. He further said, ‘we will stand by our policy of assisting our Angolan brothers ... and we would assist those who could be in the same situation in the future’.<sup>52</sup> As indicated in Chapter four, at the time of the Katangese secession the central Congolese government actively aided Angolan liberation movements.<sup>53</sup> Leopoldville’s assistance to Roberto’s UPA, whose 1961 anti-colonial campaign had targeted white settler farmers in northern Angola,<sup>54</sup> or the *Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola*

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<sup>48</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 28, '312 UN Pretoria 62-63-64', Outgoing Telegram from: American Embassy, Cape Town, 29 March 1963, np.

<sup>49</sup> SADO, AML, Group 3, Box 1019, File KG/SVK/4/15/1, Letter from: Directeur van Militère Inligting, *Huidige Toestand in Katanga*, 13 February 1963, pp. 3-4.

<sup>50</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Belgian Congo & Republic of Congo US Embassy and Consulate, Leopoldville, Classified General Records, 1934-1963, Box 8, '320 Angola 1962', Incoming Telegram, American Embassy Leopoldville, From: Lisbon, 7 January 1962, np.

<sup>51</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, 'Belgian Congo Political Situation and Development', PL Vol 20, Letter from: Permanent Representative of the South African Mission to the United Nations, New York, To: Secretary for External Affairs, Cape Town, *Congo*, 6 February 1961, p. 4.

<sup>52</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/22/1, 'Angola, Political Situation and Developments', Vol 7, *Extract from Africa South of the Sahara, dated 30 August, 1962, No 896, Page 28-29*, nd, np.

<sup>53</sup> See, pp. 83-104.

<sup>54</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution, Vol I*, pp. 130; 134.

(FNLA), who in 1962 aligned itself with the South West Africa's People's Organisation (SWAPO), posed a direct strategic threat to South Africa.<sup>55</sup> The Department of External Affairs also believed that some Congolese National Army soldiers sold weapons from their stockpiles to the Angolans.<sup>56</sup> According to the SADF Military Intelligence Division, increased activity from these nationalist organisations in Congo could be expected 'if and when the Katangese issue [had] been duly settled'.<sup>57</sup> Unlike the Leopoldville government, the Katangese leadership condemned the militant actions of Angolan liberation movements, and had a very close relationship with the colonial administration in Portuguese Angola.<sup>58</sup> Pretoria's decision to aid Katanga not only provided Southern Africa with a friendly independent state that could protect large parts of its northern borders from militant infiltration, but also undermine the Central Congolese government's ability to rule over a unified Congo. This situation could limit the support Leopoldville could provide to Southern African anti-colonial movements. In September 1960, Taswell concluded that it was to South Africa's advantage 'to see that the Katanga and Kasai should be in a position to offer effective resistance to the Leopoldville government' as such a 'protective barrier' would aid in keeping trouble away from South Africa's border.<sup>59</sup>

Despite its willingness to aid Katanga, the South African government was unsure about the Katangese government's ideological sympathies. For all that the Katangese representatives who liaised with South African government officials insisted that they were friendly, it was not clear how pro-South African, pro-Western or anti-Communist the Katangese government actually was. Just after announcing the secession of Katanga, Tshombe had suggested that '... to have relations with South Africa does not mean that I am less opposed to the South African policies. On this question I am in the same position as all other independent African states'.<sup>60</sup> Some of Katanga's ministers were also viewed with suspicion. When visiting Katanga in November 1960, Taswell noted that during a formal dinner the Katangese Minister of Post and Communications, Alphonse Kiela, 'seemed to have experienced difficulties with the handling of his knife and fork, or else he purposefully kept on probing

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<sup>55</sup> SADOd, AMI, Group 3, Box 1019, File KG/SVK/4/37/1, *Factual Intelligence Summary: Angola*, nd, p. 4.

<sup>56</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/22/1, 'Angola, Political Situation and Developments', Vol 8, *Die Opstandsbeweging in Angola*, nd, p. 7.

<sup>57</sup> SADOd, AMI, Group 3, Box 1019, File KG/SVK/4/37/1, *Factual Intelligence Summary: Angola*, pp. 1; 4.

<sup>58</sup> Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution, Vol I*, p. 119.

<sup>59</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, Vol 1, Letter from: South African High Commissioner, Salisbury, To: Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria, *Visit of Kasai Representatives*, 8 September 1960, np.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, Letter from: South African Embassy, Brussels, To: Secretary for External Affairs, *Katanga and South Africa*, 28 July 1960, np.

me continuously with his left elbow in my ribs'.<sup>61</sup> He described Kiela as being not entirely friendly and apparently anti-white. Taswell believed that 'an anti-white feeling is hiding somewhere' among the members of Tshombe's cabinet. He further noted with concern that although Tshombe's current attitude was pro-white, it was not clear what would happen once the Katangese leadership had 'found their feet' and had to manage the governance of Katanga on their own. 'Can anybody guess?' Taswell pondered.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, van Schalkwyk stated that 'he had always strongly suspected that Godefroid Munongo was anti-white and that Jean Baptiste Kibwe was of the same mind and also anti-South African'.<sup>63</sup>

The SADF raised similar concern about Tshombe's commitment. During a presentation, the army's director of operations and planning insisted that

... even if Tshombe would remain standing, it must still be remembered that he is a black nationalist. It is highly doubtful if he will remain on the side of the white man in case the blacks of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia for instance, would rise up against the whites. It is likely that under such circumstances, he would offer his support to his fellow race members and [...] any war material that we give to him will be used against us.<sup>64</sup>

Such caution was warranted when Munongo announced in July 1961 that the Katangese leadership did not care about ideology and was considering sending representatives behind the iron curtain. If communist countries were prepared to help or make investments in Katanga, the Katangese government would accept their offer.<sup>65</sup> Concerns about Katanga's anti-communist position were further amplified when Tshombe became frustrated by the lack of direct aid and support he was receiving from the West and Southern African states. In August 1962, the South African Embassy in Washington reported that 'Tshombe might well make a deal with the Communists [...] If the pressure [from the West] became too much, Tshombe would come to some arrangement with the Russians'.<sup>66</sup> Such uncertainty regarding the true feelings of the Katangese leadership added to Pretoria's reluctance to put its full

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<sup>61</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 34/5/112, Vol 2, Letter from: Office of the High Commissioner, Salisbury, To: Secretary for Trade and Industries, Pretoria, *Handel met Katanga*, 28 November 1960, p. 2.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.

<sup>63</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, Letter from: Trade Commissioner, Salisbury, *visit to Katanga*, 13 June 1961, p. 1. Kimba and Munongo's critical views of dominant colonial ideology are also confirmed in Larmer and Kennes, 'Rethinking the Katangese Secession', pp. 746-747.

<sup>64</sup> DIRCO, 1/58/5/1, Vol 1, *Voordrag deur die Direkteur van Beplanning en Operasies aan die Kommandant-Generaal, SAW, wenslikheid van steun deur Suid-Afrika aan haar noordelike buurgebiede*, 15 February 1961, p. 7.

<sup>65</sup> 'Katanga Sal Rooi Hulp Aaanvaar', *Die Transvaler*, 25 July 1961.

<sup>66</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 3. Letter from: Embassy of South Africa, Washington, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, *Congo*, 17 August 1962, p. 6.

weight behind the secession, and confirmed that it was best to stick to its decision to maintain friendly relations with Katanga, while waiting to see how the Katangese secession would play out.

It soon enough became clear that Tshombe would have to negotiate with Leopoldville and come to terms regarding Katanga's reincorporation into Congo.<sup>67</sup> According to Verwoerd, the American and British attempts to set up negotiations between Leopoldville and Elisabethville were based upon the wrong approach. Verwoerd believed that America and Britain 'made the mistake to mix the ruly with the unruly'.<sup>68</sup> He argued that Katanga was a source of order and Western orientation in Congo and should have been used as the base to establish peace. This would best be done by cooperating in a form of economic union or political confederation, instead of ending Katanga's independence by force.<sup>69</sup> The Department of External Affairs also thought that the UN's use of force in Katanga and the United States' support was unnecessary and tragic, as the Katangese government might have been persuaded to cooperate in a federal system.<sup>70</sup>

Pretoria was uncertain if it would be best to have a unified pro-Western or even neutral Congo that included Katanga, or an independent Katanga that would be in constant conflict with Leopoldville. It argued that the latter option might provide communist countries and members of the Casablanca group endless opportunities to exploit the situation.<sup>71</sup> Doubts about Katanga's future reinforced Pretoria's cautious stance. In June 1961, the Department of External Affairs believed that the South African government had to wait and see if Tshombe's attitude changed towards South Africa, as Tshombe would likely be greatly influenced by the Leopoldville government.<sup>72</sup> Taswell explained that,

If the Central Congolese Government can [...] be swung to the aggressive side of the Afro-Asiatic bloc [...] the whole Congo could become a menace to Angola and ourselves – and the pro-Western Katanga

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<sup>67</sup> See, pp. 34-38.

<sup>68</sup> NASA, SAB, BVV 108, Vol 3, Letter from: Embassy of South Africa, Washington, To: Secretary for External Affairs, *Events in the Congo*, 22 September 1961, p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.

<sup>70</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 26, '350 political (Congo) classified 1961', Outgoing Telegram, American Embassy, Pretoria, 11 December 1961. np.

<sup>71</sup> The Casablanca group or 'Casablanca Block' was an association of left leaning African states with Pan African ideals. NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, 'Belgian Congo Political Situation and Development', Vol 20, Letter from: Ambassador of South Africa, Washington, To: Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria, *Congo*, 10 August 1961, p. 5.

<sup>72</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, Vol 3, *Mnr Huyghe: Elisabethstad: Onderhoud met Mnr Fuchs van die Suid-Afrikaanse Uitsaikorporasie*, 21 June 1960, pp. 1-2.



will have gone. Thus, South Africa's best hope lies in the influence that Tshombe will be able to wield. Without his army, his main strength lies in the inherent powerful financial position of the Katanga. Skilfully used, it could enable him to gain goodwill and confidence of Leopoldville and to exert a moderating influence.<sup>73</sup>

Taswell was aware, however, that this would be the best-case scenario, as the anti-South African sentiment in Leopoldville was pronounced and the pressure to attempt to enforce a trade boycott or oppose South Africa in general was virtually guaranteed.<sup>74</sup> Similarly, van Schalkwyk anticipated that if Tshombe decided to come to a deal, South Africa could expect less independent action from Tshombe when it came to Katanga. He thus advised that 'South Africa should remain circumspect in its dealings with Katanga and concentrate on trade'.<sup>75</sup> Remaining friendly towards Tshombe would enable Pretoria to have a powerful and influential ally in the central Congolese government when Katanga would be reincorporated, without having overplayed their allegiance to Tshombe and damaged beyond repair any possible relationship Pretoria could have had with a future unified Congolese government.

The end of the Katangese secession and the departure of Tshombe from the political scene ended South Africa's hopes of having a friendly ally in Congo. Despite their cautious approach, Pretoria's decision to support the secession had destroyed any possibility of establishing good relations with the Congolese government in Leopoldville whose anti-South African sentiment had only grown.

## **6.2 Supporting Prime Minister Tshombe**

After successfully pacifying the secessionist state of Katanga in January 1963, politicians in Leopoldville found new vigour in publically condemning South Africa and its apartheid policy. This Congolese critique formed part of a wider anti-South African movement that had been building up since the National Party (NP) assumed power in 1948. Verwoerd's implementation of so-called 'grand apartheid' in the 1960s provoked robust condemnation from the growing Afro-Asian block at the UN.<sup>76</sup> As a member of the Afro-Asian block, Cyrille Adoula strongly criticised South Africa's apartheid policy at a UN General Assembly meeting in October 1963. Adoula declared that Congo 'cannot remain indifferent in the face

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<sup>73</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, Letter from: HLT Taswell, Salisbury, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Katanga*, 27 June 1961, p. 1.

<sup>74</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 770, File DMI/37/25/45, Letter from: HLT Taswell, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 15 June 1961, p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3/1, PL Vol 1, *Report on Katanga by Mr Van Schalkwyk Assistant Trade Commissioner*, Salisbury, nd, p. 2.

<sup>76</sup> Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation*, pp. 10-11.

of a persistent policy which raises racial discrimination to the level of a state institution', even stating that apartheid 'strongly recalls Nazism, and everyone knows where that led mankind'.<sup>77</sup> He argued that the only solution to solve South Africa's problems was to grant all 'non-white' South Africans self-determination, as this fundamental principle was in line with the basic charter of the UN. Congo would therefore 'oppose and reject any proposed course of action which departed from this principle and which maintained apartheid South Africa's status quo in any disguised fashion'.<sup>78</sup> Soon after the arrival of the first PAC members at Kinkuzu,<sup>79</sup> Congo's permanent representative to the UN similarly declared during a January 1964 press conference that,

It will require not only Congo vitiated and corrupted by neo-colonialism, but a hostile Congolese government openly siding with colonialism and white supremacy, to prevent independent Africa from using the Congo as a corridor and a base for all possible aid to the people of Angola and Southern Africa fighting for their liberation.<sup>80</sup>

After the reincorporation of Katanga, Leopoldville was slowly transformed into a centre of support for Southern African nationalist movements. Pretoria was well aware of these developments in Congo. In February 1963, a source of the SADF Military Intelligence Division claimed that the Tunisian government had instructed its soldiers serving in ONUC to give all their captured weapons to 'the natives', especially to Angolan freedom fighters. The source further claimed that ten black men from South Africa had arrived in Elisabethville in late January 1963, and had begun training with the Tunisians. According to the report, ONUC's Ethiopian soldiers stationed at Kipushi were also secretly being kept on so that they could meet up with Angolans based in Congo and establish contact with South African freedom fighters.<sup>81</sup> As a result, the South Africa authorities remained suspicious about the motives of Afro-Asian ONUC forces that were left behind to administer peace in Congo. The formation of the Congo alliance and the subsequent activities of its members did not go unnoticed by Pretoria. Between 1963 and 1964, the SADF Military Intelligence Division and the South African Police's (SAP) Security Branch made use of their extensive intelligence

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<sup>77</sup> NASA, SAB, BVV 108, Vol 3, *Eighteenth Session General Assembly Provisional Verbatim Record of the Twelved Hundred and Thirty-Third Preliminary Meeting held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 8 October 1963*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, 4-5.

<sup>79</sup> See, p. 88.

<sup>80</sup> NASA, SAB, BVV 108, Vol 3, *Permanent Representative from Press Attaché: Jan 7 1964*, nd, p. 1.

<sup>81</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 1019, File KG/SVK/4/15/1, Letter from: Directeur van Militaire Inligting, To: Kommandant-Generaal, *Geleentheids Aktuele Inligtingsoorsig, Huidige Toestand in Katanga*, 14 February 1963, pp. 1-2.

network to gather detailed information about the developments of the Pan African Congress (PAC) and SWAPO presence in Congo and any subsequent assistance these movements received from the Congolese authorities. Besides closely monitoring the actions of the subversive groups in Congo, there was little more Pretoria could do, as it did not have any influence over local Congolese politicians.

Leopoldville's public condemnation of South Africa together with Adoula's assistance of Southern African liberation movements temporarily subsided when the Kwilu and Eastern rebellions spread across Congo.<sup>82</sup> The American State Department explained in June 1964 that Congolese political leaders were now preoccupied with their own troubles, and 'had little to no time to devote to issues of apartheid or the future of South West Africa'. It nevertheless believed that Leopoldville would soon enough want to come across as the 'good Africa' by siding on any tough resolution against the South African government at the UN and Organisation of African Union (OAU) especially when it came to the implementation of sanctions.<sup>83</sup> Leopoldville's anti-South African alignment, however, fell away once Tshombe took office as prime minister in July 1964. Meeting with Tshombe during his first months in office, the South African government's liaison officer in Leopoldville, Robbie Robbertze, was informed that 'soon he will counter the Roberto-group'. Munongo, who was Congo's minister of the interior at the time, similarly assured Robbertze that he would make the lives of those so called 'refugees from [South Africa], as well as those of Roberto difficult'.<sup>84</sup> Although the return of Tshombe largely soothed South Africa's anxieties about the Congolese government's previously anti-South African position, Pretoria remained concerned about the communist backed *Comité National de Libération* (CNL) which was rapidly gaining control over large parts of Congo.<sup>85</sup>

Despite the fact that the CNL posed a threat to Adoula's government, Pretoria expected the rebel movement to be even more hostile towards South Africa if they managed to take over power in Congo.<sup>86</sup> According Robbertze, the CNL's organisation was influenced by the People's Republic of China. This once again caused Pretoria to worry about the possibility of

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<sup>82</sup> See, pp. 36-41.

<sup>83</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2637, 'Pol – Political Affairs & Rel. S Afr – A 1/1/64', Incoming Telegram Department of State, from: Leopoldville, 30 June 1964, np.

<sup>84</sup> SADO, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, Vol 1, 'Samewerking RSA-Kongo', Top Secret, *Memo oor Aangeleenthede in Kongo (Leo)*, Pretoria, 19 September 1964, pp. 1; 4.

<sup>85</sup> See, pp. 39-40.

<sup>86</sup> SADO, AMI Group 3, Box 371, ADMI, '26', pp. 20.

a communist aligned Congo on the doorstep of Southern Africa. In August 1964 during a NP conference in Port Elizabeth, Verwoerd explained that the government wanted to help Tshombe prevent a 'communist influenced uprising which received support from "red China" taking over Congo'.<sup>87</sup> Verwoerd warned that if this rebellion were not countered, such a development would spread to Kaunda's Zambia and Banda's Malawi.<sup>88</sup> Later that year, South Africa's Minister of External Affairs, Hilgard Muller, met with American State Department officials and warned that 'a communist-dominated government in the Congo would be a cancer that would cut across the centre of Africa'.<sup>89</sup> Such fears contributed to Pretoria's desire to align itself with Tshombe's government and offer it a significant amount of aid and assistance to counter this perceived communist threat.

Although Pretoria's anxieties about a communist threat were genuine enough, and were regularly raised by South African representatives, it can be suspected that Pretoria also used Cold War rhetoric to justify its renewed aid to Tshombe. When the American State Department criticised South Africa's use of the C-130 military transport aeroplane to deliver aid to Tshombe in August 1964, the South African ambassador in Washington was instructed to inform the Americans that Pretoria had certainly not been eager to transport the aid themselves but wanted to assist by 'any possible means' in countering Chinese communism in Africa. The South African government doubted that other independent African states would get involved in Congo, as 'most of them were at least a bit communistic or wanted to remain neutral about the matter'.<sup>90</sup> Jooste emphasised that Pretoria's only concern was that Tshombe's legitimate and internationally recognised government should defeat the Chinese backed rebels as soon as possible. He bluntly questioned whether the United States had properly considered the consequences, if 'the rebels will win in the Congo under Chinese command'.<sup>91</sup> According to Jooste,

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<sup>87</sup> 'SA Sal Hulp Gee Aan Die Wat Vra', *Die Vaderland*, 27 August 1964; 'Verwoerd Reveals: We Gave Aid to Tshombe', *Rand Daily Mail*, 27 August 1964.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2638, 'Pol S AFR-US 1/1/65', Memorandum of Conversation, 21 December 1964, p. 1.

<sup>90</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, PL Vol 2, Telegram from: South African Embassy, Washington, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 25 August 1964, pp. 1-2. Also includes the written notes on the document.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

The triumph of Tshombe in Congo is so important for the USA's image and the West's influence in Africa that this is the only way in which the USA will be able to draw the other states in Africa to its side [...] all that will matter in the long run is who will win the battle.<sup>92</sup>

Tshombe's prime ministership brought with it renewed hope of South Africa establishing friendly relations with an independent African state. Pretoria's ambitions of achieving such cordial relations had failed during the secession of Katanga. The Department of External Affairs however believed that due to Pretoria's previous relationship with Tshombe, the former Katangese leader's return could finally reconcile South African-Congolese relations.<sup>93</sup> Pretoria was eager to make use of the opportunity to provide aid to the Congolese government with the ultimate aim of establishing political and economic relations between itself and a black independent African state. Although initially Verwoerd remarked that he was uncertain how much advantage South Africa might stand to gain from a 'favourable Tshombe to create a breach in hostile black Africa', he defended Pretoria's decision to support Congo at the opening of NP Cape congress in late August 1964.<sup>94</sup> In front of 4,000 to 5,000 supporters, he argued that South Africa's relationship with Congo was a positive indication that it could establish good relations with African states.<sup>95</sup> The following month Verwoerd optimistically foresaw a future where South Africa would have cordial relations with a number of black and white states in Southern Africa, who would share common interests but would not interfere in each other's policies.<sup>96</sup> Despite such claims of non-interference, Pretoria indirectly tried to steer Congo's domestic policy in a direction favourable to the interests of South Africa and the wider sub-region. When considering the donation of R60,000 to improve Congo's administrative system, the Department of External Affairs explained that it hoped to 'buy friendship and a good word here and there' and 'eventually the goodwill of a [...] anti-communist leader of Africa, on top of a fairly influential prime minister of one of the biggest states in black Africa'.<sup>97</sup> Any amount lower

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<sup>92</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, PL Vol 2, Telegram from: South African Embassy, Washington, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 25 August 1964, pp. 1-2.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, *Onlangse Gebeure in die Kongo: Moontlike Boodskap aan Moise Tshombe*, nd, p. 1.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, pp. 2-3.

<sup>95</sup> 'SA Sal Hulp Gee Aan Die Wat Vra', *Die Vaderland*, 27 August 1964; 'Verwoerd Reveals: We Gave Aid to Tshombe', *Rand Daily Mail*, 27 August 1964.

<sup>96</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 4, *Persverklaring Deur sy Ed die Eerste Minister (vir vrystelling om 12.30 vm op 2-9-64*, nd, pp. 2.

<sup>97</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/185/3, Vol 1, *Skenkings aan Joeloe en Tshombe*, Pretoria, 14 September 1965, p. 2.

that the R60,000, it was argued, could possibly ‘take away from the value and content which we would like to see attached to our gesture’.<sup>98</sup>

Unlike during the Katangese secession, Pretoria actually had leeway to justify its decision to aid Tshombe. In his new political role, Tshombe represented the official and legitimate Congolese government as opposed to a secessionist state. Such a difference reflected partly in its rationale when defining the level of South African assistance. During his August 1964 speech in Port Elizabeth, Verwoerd declared that the South African government would not prevent or intervene in the recruitment drive of mercenaries for V Commando, which had just commenced. He elaborated that ‘it is an old trend for South Africans to serve in the army and navy of other countries’.<sup>99</sup> This declaration was however followed up by a more toned down version in September 1964. Verwoerd issued a statement that elaborated on his previous speech. It read that the South African government ‘did not interfere with people who wanted to assist a legal and internationally recognised government’, but that this was

... with the understanding that it would not affect South Africa’s interests [...] The nature and extent of the recruiting is however now such that it is clearly necessary in the interests of the Republic that limits should be set [...] If those responsible for recruiting volunteers do not of their own accord take heed of this announcement then by pass control or other means limits will be placed on any undesirable nature of extent of exodus from the Republic.<sup>100</sup>

Despite backtracking from his previous laissez-faire outlook, Verwoerd’s clear position on mercenaries differed from Pretoria’s stance a few year earlier when it publically distanced itself from the recruitment of mercenaries for Katanga.<sup>101</sup>

Although the South African government enjoyed more flexibility in defining its relationship with Tshombe, Pretoria remained cautious in its attempts to cement official relations with Congo. In July 1964, Muller explained to the Department of State that the South African government first wanted to make sure that Tshombe ‘could establish himself firmly in power’ before the issue of relations between the two governments was addressed.<sup>102</sup> As a result,

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<sup>98</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/185/3, Vol 1, pp. 3-4.

<sup>99</sup> ‘SA Sal Hulp Gee Aan Die Wat Vra’, *Die Vaderland*, 27 August 1964; ‘Verwoerd Reveals: We Gave Aid to Tshombe’, *Rand Daily Mail*, 27 August 1964.

<sup>100</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/5/1, Vol 1, *Official Attitude in SA Toward Mercenaries Fighting in the Congo*, nd, pp. 2-3; ‘Timely Warning’, *Pretoria News*, 2 September 1964.

<sup>101</sup> See, pp. 80-81.

<sup>102</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2637, ‘Pol – Political Affairs & Rel. S Afr – A 1/1/64’, Incoming Telegram Department of State, from: Pretoria, 22 July 1964, np.

Pretoria's contact with, and aid to, the Congolese government largely remained covert throughout this period. By April 1965, Verwoerd emphasised the South African government's desire to improve its trade relations with Congo. In order to stimulate trade, Verwoerd asked for the establishment of a confidential trade agreement.<sup>103</sup> Writing to Tshombe, he explained that such a request,

Was not to further our own interests, but rather to assist you, Mr Prime Minister, in the development of your country's economy. Being a firm believer in the concept of co-prosperity, I am convinced that a fuller utilisation of the many and rich natural resources of your country will yield great benefits not only to the Congolese people, but ultimately also to your trading partners.<sup>104</sup>

In spite of its covert attempts to support Tshombe's government, Pretoria became increasingly frustrated as Congolese officials frequently criticized South Africa's domestic policies in public. At the International Atomic Energy Agency meeting in September 1964, the Congolese delegate sided with Senegal, Tunisia, Nigeria, Ghana, the United Arab Republic (Egypt), and Gabon in delivering a joint statement condemning apartheid. The statement, which was read out by the Congolese representative, proclaimed that apartheid was irreconcilable with the opinions and wishes of the African member states. It argued that South Africa should not have a place at the organisation's board of governors.<sup>105</sup> Similarly, during the International Labour Organisation's second African regional conference held between November and December 1964, Congo's delegate declared that,

I hope that we may see at the next session of this conference beside us our brothers who are now groaning under the yoke of African counter-revolution as personified by the Boers of Dr Verwoerd, the Portuguese of Dr Salazar and the Rhodesians of Mr Smith.<sup>106</sup>

The following year in June, Congo's representative once again said that his country, together with all other African member states, would boycott the International Labour Organisation if South Africa were to be re-designated.<sup>107</sup> Likewise, at a meeting of the International Civil Aviation Organisation in July 1965, the Congolese representative voted in favour of a

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<sup>103</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, PL Vol 2, Letter from: HF Verwoerd, Pretoria, To: His Excellency Dr Moise Tshombe, Leopoldville, nd, pp. 2-3; *Ibid*, Letter from: Sekretaris van Buitelandse Sake, Kaapstad, To: Sekretaris van Handel en Nywerheid, Kaapstad, *Verhoudings met die Kongo*, 13 April 1965, p. 1.

<sup>104</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, PL Vol 2, Letter from: HF Verwoerd, Pretoria, To: His Excellency Dr Moise Tshombe, Leopoldville, nd, pp. 2-3.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, *Attitude of Congolese (Leopoldville) Towards South Africa (and Portugal) at the Recent IAEA Meeting*, Pretoria, 15 October 1964, np.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, Letter from: South African Ambassador, London, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria and Cape Town, *ILO: Second African Regional Conference*, 17 March 1965, np.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, Cypher OTP Telegram, From: South African Embassy, Vienna, To: Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Cape Town, 17 June 1965, pp. 1-2.

resolution to take away South Africa's membership. The resolution described apartheid as 'a grave and permanent threat to world peace', and called upon the organisation to take action to 'stigmatize the South African policy of apartheid'. According to the Department of External Affairs, Congo's delegate once again took the lead in this protest.<sup>108</sup> Finally, at the September 1965 International Atomic Energy Agency meeting, the Congolese delegate headed the protest against South Africa's presence.<sup>109</sup>

Tshombe himself occasionally made public statements that were critical of South Africa. In a March 1965 interview, he allegedly declared that the Congolese government 'supports all bona fide freedom fighters against Portuguese territories, Southern Rhodesia and other colonial areas', and that it stood 'for total liberation of the African continent'. Tshombe explained that his government 'opposed South African apartheid, did not have any diplomatic relations with South Africa and would cooperate with the OAU boycott'.<sup>110</sup> A possible explanation for such anti-South African utterances by Tshombe was provided by the American Department of State in June 1964, when it indicated its concern about the precarious position Tshombe would find himself in if he established relations with South Africa. Such a relationship, it argued, would tarnish Tshombe's African image 'beyond redemption and undermine his possible political position in Congo'.<sup>111</sup>

Tshombe and Munongo had initially reassured Robbertze that despite any negative press reports and resolutions, they considered Portugal and South Africa 'as their best friends in Africa', a statement that likely held a grain of truth.<sup>112</sup> Despite their initial reassurances, the South African government's frustration grew as the anti-South African public statements by Congolese representatives began to reach Pretoria. The South African government became agitated by the unfavourable line Leopoldville publically adopted and decided to confront Tshombe about the hostile attitude of his representatives. During such confrontations, Tshombe and Munongo would provide a series of explanations as to why its representatives

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<sup>108</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, PL Vol 2, *International Civil Aviation Organization, Assembly-Fifteenth Session Executive Committee Draft Resolution*, nd, 1; DIRCO, BTS 1/185/3, Vol 1, *Hulp aan die Kongo*, 5 October 1965, p. 2.

<sup>109</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/185/3, Vol 1, *Hulp aan die Kongo*, 5 October 1965, p. 1.

<sup>110</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2708, 'Pol 15-1 Head of State the Congo Executive Branch, 1/1/65', Incoming Telegram Department of State, from: Nairobi, *Tshombe Press Interview*, 9 March 1965, p. 1.

<sup>111</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2631, Outgoing Telegram Department of State, 30 June 1964, np.

<sup>112</sup> SADO, KG, Group 5, Box 488, File KG/OPS/12/8/5, Vol 1, Letter from: JH Robbertze, Pretoria, *Memo vir sy Edele Die Minister van Verdedeging*, 2 October 1964, p. 1.



had opposed South Africa. These included that the representative was ‘young and inexperienced’, or had acted independently; or that Tshombe and Munongo were unable to control the representatives because of Joseph Kasavubu’s powerful political position.<sup>113</sup> Whether these were genuine explanations or convenient excuses, Tshombe did take some retroactive measures by removing two representatives from their post. He also promised the South African government that such occurrences would not take place once he had managed to strengthen his political position.<sup>114</sup>

None of this appeased Pretoria’s growing discontent. An internal document of the Department of External Affairs expressed frustration at the fact that ‘although we assist we are still kicked around at the conferences’.<sup>115</sup> The South African government considered telling Tshombe that it would hold back any further aid to Congo unless the situation changed. Pretoria would be inclined to

... reconsider the matter, but only if [Tshombe] provides an official –preferably written- guarantee that he would explicitly send an assignment to all Congolese representatives at all future conferences, to not attack South Africa, and where possible, to take on a helpful stance.<sup>116</sup>

Leopoldville had to be made aware that South Africa’s ‘good will’ was not cost-free. Pretoria was keen on aiding the Congolese government but only if such assistance resulted in a mutually beneficial relationship. The following month, Tshombe was forced into exile and it is not clear if the South African government’s demands had reached him before his political departure. In a final attempt to persuade the South African government to support his plans to regain power in Congo, Tshombe sent a message to Pretoria in September 1966, via a British businessman. In it, he argued that Mobutu’s Congo ‘will blow over to the communist camp’, posing a significant danger to Zambia, Rhodesia, and South Africa.<sup>117</sup> Pretoria politely ignored Tshombe’s warning.

### **6.3 Protecting reputation and justifying policy**

Throughout the Congo crisis, Pretoria’s rationale for its involvement had also been shaped by the need to improve its international standing. This type of strategy was openly stated by South African officials on a number of occasions. One particular instance that stood out was

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<sup>113</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/185/3, Vol 1, *Hulp aan die Kongo*, 5 October 1965, pp. 1-2.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, p. 3.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>117</sup> DIRCO, BTS 1/112/3, PL Vol 3, Letter from: Suid-Afrikaanse Ambassade, London, To: Sekretaris van Buitelandse Sake, Pretoria, *Boodskap van Mnr Moise Tshombe*, 29 September 1966, p. 1.

when the South African government offered to aid Congo's white refugees. During a meeting of the special coordination committee it was argued that if £6,000 (c. £120,000 in today's currency) was used to fly in 100 refugees from Brazzaville 'this money [would be] well spent with the eye on propaganda'.<sup>118</sup> Similarly, after the refugees' initial low interest in the South African government's press announcements in Southern Rhodesia,<sup>119</sup> Taswell noted that

... if the Union's bid for these refugees is played up too much, it could back-fire on our government, in so far as our critics could then well point to the limited response as being indicative of desire on the part of would be immigrants to make the Union their home.<sup>120</sup>

He suggested that South Africa should not publicise the matter in future to avoid potential embarrassment or negative publicity.<sup>121</sup> The Belgian consul in Cape Town accused South Africa's leaders of being quick to exploit the refugee situation by immediately publicising the refugees as model immigrants in order to boost the immigrant status of South Africa.<sup>122</sup> In 1960, the number of white immigrants to South Africa was exceeded by the number of emigrants, a trend that worried Pretoria.<sup>123</sup> That year, 9,805 documented immigrants arrived in South Africa, whilst 12,705 self-declared emigrants left South Africa.<sup>124</sup> The South African government hoped to attract large numbers of white immigrants among the Congo refugees.

Another good example of Pretoria's constant focus on how it would be perceived occurred in late July 1960 when it received a request from the United Nations Children's Funds (UNICEF) to send emergency food relief to Congo.<sup>125</sup> The Department of External Affairs believed that South Africa should approach the matter from a self-interested angle, arguing that it did not 'owe Lumumba's Congo anything'. It noted that 'South Africa could not always play the role of humble hARRY', as it 'apparently does not have effect on the position of

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<sup>118</sup> NASA, SAB, TES 20/1102, Vol 1, *Vergadering van Uitvoerende Komitee oor Vlughtelinge uit die Belgiese Kongo*, nd, p. 1; <http://inflation.stephenmorley.org>

<sup>119</sup> See, p. 60.

<sup>120</sup> NASA, SAB, TES 20/1102, Vol 1, Letter from: Acting Secretary Mr Pakendorf, Pretoria, 14 July 1960, p. 1.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> FPSFA, AA, No Portefeuille Nr, Lias Nr 1514, Letter from: Consul Général de Belgique à Cape Town, To: Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, Bruxelles, *Problème d'Immigration en Union Sud-Africaine*, 30 Septembre 1960, p. 3.

<sup>123</sup> Lodge, *Sharpeville*, p. 171.

<sup>124</sup> Statistics *South Africa*, 'Documented migration, 2003, Report No. 03-51-03 (2003)', p. 1. Retrieved from: <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/Report-03-51-03/Report-03-51-032003.pdf> (accessed on 3 January 2016)

<sup>125</sup> 'Indien S.A. Voedsel Na Die Kongo Stuur, Is Dit Vir Die Belge', *Die Transvaler*, 26 July 1960.

the black states of Africa'.<sup>126</sup> The question arose as to what benefit South Africa would garner from supporting the UNICEF initiative. If Pretoria declined to help, it would not further damage the negative image other African states already had of South Africa. However, if the South African government did help, it would be an indication of its 'sense of responsibility and maturity' as well as Pretoria's ability to 'separate the humanitarian from the political'.<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, the Department of External Affairs contended that it would be advantageous to have South African products marked with clear labels distributed across Congo as a counteraction to the possibility of a boycott of South African products in Congo.<sup>128</sup>

Concerns about South Africa's international image determined the extent to which Pretoria was willing to offer aid. In February 1961, South Africa's permanent delegation to the UN noted that 'our critics would only be to glad if they could seize anything suggesting that the Union is also involved' in supplying Katanga with military aid. As a result, the government was advised not sending through such the sizable consignment of trucks outfitted as ambulances.<sup>129</sup> These concerns were certainly not unfounded. The *Rand Daily Mail* reported that Southern Rhodesian National Democratic Party President, Joshua Nkomo, had sent a letter to Hammarskjöld 'accusing South Africa and the Central African Federation of aggressive action towards the Congo'.<sup>130</sup> Nkomo's complaint specifically referred to the six Piper aeroplanes that had been delivered from South Africa to Katanga via Rhodesian airports.<sup>131</sup> In fact, the consignment of aeroplanes had not been authorised by Pretoria, causing the South Africa authorities to contemplate prosecuting the Pretoria Light Aircraft Company as the supplier. Eventually it let the matter go because of a fear that such legal action would only result in further bad publicity.<sup>132</sup>

The South African Embassy in Washington showed similarly concerns in February 1961, when the first rumours surfaced about the recruitment of Katangese mercenaries. The embassy argued how

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<sup>126</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/3, Vol 2, Letter from: Waarnemende Sekretaris, Pretoria, 22 July 1960, p. 1.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, pp. 1-2.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> See, 76-77; NASA, SAB, BTS 34/5/112, Vol 2, Immediate Telegram from: SA Perm Delegation to UN, New York, To: Secretary for External Affairs, Cape Town, 23 February 1961, np.

<sup>130</sup> 'SA Reported for Aggression', *Rand Daily Mail*, 20 January 1961.

<sup>131</sup> See, p. 74; 'SA Reported for Aggression', *Rand Daily Mail*, 20 January 1961.

<sup>132</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 34/5/112, Vol 2, Letter from: Adjunk-Sekretaris, Pretoria, 11 February 1961, pp. 1-2.

... unfortunately it would be if numbers of South Africans were found to be serving with this force. This would merely provide a basis for accusations that the Union is dabbling in Congo politics and we might be drawn willy-nilly into the whole sorry mess.<sup>133</sup>

During a March 1961 session of the UN General Assembly, members of the Afro-Asian block condemned the presence of South African mercenaries in Congo. The representative of Upper Volta argued that 'it was difficult to understand how the Verwoerd government of South Africa, while pursuing "execrable" policy of discrimination against Negroes at home, had sent 4,000 mercenaries to serve under the Negro Tshombe'.<sup>134</sup> India's representative denounced South Africans as 'bad enough in their own country' and if they were to go to other parts of the continent 'the future is bleak indeed'.<sup>135</sup>

Furthermore, Pretoria also hoped that the chaotic situation that followed Congo's independence would change the international community's negative opinion of South Africa's apartheid policy. During a speech at a NP rally in Beaufort West in July 1960, Louw expressed his belief that the events in Congo 'would have a healthy effect on people in America and Europe who urge equal political rights for South African natives'.<sup>136</sup> Louw's hopes were temporarily realised once the first reports of white people being attacked and fleeing Congo were publicised in the global media. Taswell noted that during a dinner party in Southern Rhodesia he heard the governor-general's wife ask 'if black troops from outside would not do precisely the same as the black troops in the Congo have done?'.<sup>137</sup> According to Taswell, this was a pleasant surprise, as she was known for her liberal views. He argued that her comment showed a change of heart that he hoped would spread.<sup>138</sup> The Department of External Affairs received similar reports from its diplomatic missions across the globe. The South African Embassy in Washington recounted that during the first weeks of Congo's independence 'almost as much attention has been spent on the events in Congo as on South

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<sup>133</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, 'Belgian Congo Political Situation and Development', Vol 16, Letter from: Embassy of the Union of South Africa, Washington, To: Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria, *The Congo*, 16 February 1961, p. 4.

<sup>134</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, 'Belgian Congo Political Situation and Development', Vol 18, Letter from: Permanent Representative of the Union of South Africa to the United Nations organisation, Washington, To: Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria, *The Resumed Session of the General Assembly: Congo Situation*, 11 May 1961, p. 5.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*, p. 11.

<sup>136</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 98, '50 riots Congo unclassified and OOU', Foreign Service Despatch, from: American Embassy, Pretoria, To: Department of State, Washington, *South Africa and the Congo Debacle*, 14 July 1960, p. 1-2.

<sup>137</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, Vol 8, Letter from: Office of the High Commissioner, Salisbury, To: Secretary of External Affairs, Pretoria, *Congo Developments*, 15 July 1960, p. 3.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*.

Africa after the Sharpeville incident'.<sup>139</sup> The embassy believed that such developments would surely cause the American public to 'reflect more deeply about our racial politics'.<sup>140</sup> The South African ambassador to the Netherlands noted that the local daily newspapers contained letters from individuals writing in favour of South Africa's policy. The ambassador pointed out that during his private conversations with prominent Dutch people, Belgians, and foreign diplomats he got the sense that 'the events in Congo [would] place South Africa's policy in a better perspective'. One Dutch judge stated that the events in Congo were 'grist for the mill of the Union's policy'.<sup>141</sup> A few days later, the South African diplomatic representative to Spain noted that local newspapers featured headlines showing 'a distinct friendly bias to both South Africa's 'humanitarian decision' to welcome Belgian refugees from the troubled north into South Africa as well as Mr Louw's speech at Beaufort West'.<sup>142</sup> Finally, the South African ambassador to West Germany stressed that 'it would not be wishful thinking if I were to say that events in the Belgian Congo have made people here more appreciative of the Union's racial problems'.<sup>143</sup>

This does not, however, mean that all opinions regarding South Africa's domestic policies were so easily swayed as a result of the Congo crisis. The Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* published an editorial that remained highly critical of South Africa's policies in relation to the events transpiring in Congo.<sup>144</sup> Similarly, the South African legation in Austria noted in August 1961 that,

There is no disposition as yet to look more kindly on South African racial policies, only a somewhat grudging admission that in the light of what has happened in the Congo there is a case for taking a second look at apartheid.<sup>145</sup>

Although South Africa's public image improved somewhat, it was momentarily, and did not bring about a significant long-term change in the way the international community viewed

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<sup>139</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, Vol 8, Letter from: Embassy of the Union of South Africa, Washington, To: Secretary for External Affairs, *Die Kongo*, 15 July 1960, p. 3.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, Letter from: Embassy of the Union of South Africa, Den Haag, To: Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, *Gebeure in die Kongo*, 15 July 1960, p. 1.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, Letter from: Embassy of the Union of South Africa, Madrid, To: Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria, *Spanish Reaction to Events in the Congo*, 21 July 1960, pp. 1-2.

<sup>143</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, 'Belgian Congo Political Situation and Development', Vol 9, Letter from: Ambassador for the Federal Republic of West Germany, To: Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria, *The Federal Republic and the Belgian Congo*, 25 July 1960, p. 2.

<sup>144</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, Vol 8, Letter To: Secretary for External Affairs, Pretoria, *Mr Louw's Comments on the Congo*, 16 July 1960, np.

<sup>145</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 1/112/1, Vol 10, Letter from: South African legation, Vienna, To: Secretary for External Affairs, *Austrian Reactions to Events in the Congo*, 12 August 1960, pp. 2-3.

South Africa. South Africa was forced to leave the Commonwealth in 1961, and two years later the UN Security Council implemented a voluntary arms embargo against South Africa.<sup>146</sup>

The Congo's decolonisation process and the unrest that followed were regularly used by the South African government to justify its policy of apartheid to the public. Referring to Congo's independence during a May 1960 press conference at South Africa House in London, Eric Louw argued that unlike the Belgians, South Africans could not and would not abdicate. He explained that,

In other parts of Africa the white man is abdicating. He can abdicate [...] The Belgians can go back to Belgium at any time, they are still Belgians. But where must I go to? I am of Dutch extraction, I am a stranger, [...] same with the English people [...] If we had to follow the policy which is being followed in the Belgian and the French territories [...] Then it would mean that we would have to abdicate [...] And as the Whiteman we are not prepared to sacrifice our identity, we are not prepared to be submerged. And that is why we follow this policy of separate and parallel development [...] giving to the Bantu his own territories where he will be able to rule himself.<sup>147</sup>

The American Embassy in Pretoria remarked to Washington that the disorder in Congo strengthened the political position of the NP and its 'extremists'. One NP organiser from Pretoria had informed the embassy that 'to the ordinary voter [...] events were confirming the nationalist position that basic concessions to the non-whites would lead to the submergence of the whites and a return to savagery'.<sup>148</sup> Congo's trouble strengthened the NP's belief that in order to protect South Africa's white minority, its apartheid policy was the correct path to follow. To them, the events in Congo clearly indicated that the white man in Africa was threatened, and it was up to South Africa to defend this persecuted group. Replying to a letter from Belgium's Prime Minister, Gaston Eyskens, concerning South Africa's aid for Belgian refugees from Congo, Verwoerd wrote that it had been 'a privilege for us to offer support [...] because they are among the first victims of the barbarism of those that are out to drive

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<sup>146</sup> James Barber and John Barratt, *South Africa's Foreign Policy: The Search for Status and Security, 1945-1988* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 81-82; Geldenhuys, *The Diplomacy of Isolation*, p. 11.

<sup>147</sup> NRA, 40/36(60), 'The Hon Eric H Louw, Minister of External Affairs, at South Africa House', London, May 4, 1960.

<sup>148</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 98, '50 riots Congo unclassified and OOU', Foreign Service Despatch, from: American Embassy, Pretoria, To: Department of State, Washington, *South Africa and the Congo Debacle*, 14 July 1960, pp. 1-2.

the whites out of Africa'.<sup>149</sup> During a July 1960 speech at the NP rally in Beaufort West, Louw stated that,

The time might come when South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and Portugal would have to stand together. When we see how the whites in African territories are being left to the mercy of the black man [...] we may rightly ask what sympathy and help Southern Africa can expect from the western powers.<sup>150</sup>

Black majority rule was considered an unacceptable prospect, as it would result in a Congo-like situation. Speaking at the Transvaal NP Youth League's annual congress in Johannesburg in July 1960, Albert Hertzog stated that 'the mining capitalists wanted a black government in the Union which they could bribe the way Lumumba reportedly was being bribed'.<sup>151</sup> Hertzog called on the Afrikaans and English speaking South Africans to 'close their ranks and fight side by side'.<sup>152</sup> Returning to the same theme, Hertzog told the NP Youth League's congress in 1961, that 'bands of political gangsters were gaining control in many of the African states which only 15 years ago were guided along in an orderly manner under the French, the Belgians, the British, the Portuguese'.<sup>153</sup> He warned the youth members that,

If South Africans were to avoid this fate, South Africa would have to continue fighting with all her might against the influences of Russian communism and international American materialism because these two forces were at the back of the rapid white capitulation in the African continent.<sup>154</sup>

When a member of the American Embassy met NP Member of Parliament, Fritz Steyn, at a cocktail party in November 1964, Steyn informed the American diplomat that the events in Congo had made Verwoerd extremely popular among white South Africans. According to the American Embassy, the NP also made use of the events in Congo during its electioneering campaign by distributing placards that said 'a vote for the Nats [NP] is a vote against Congo

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<sup>149</sup> NASA, SAB, BTS 122/27, Vol 1, Letter from: Verwoerd, Pretoria, To: Eyskens, Eerste Minister, Brussels, 27 September 1961, np.

<sup>150</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 98, '50 riots Congo unclassified and OOU', Foreign Service Despatch, from: American Embassy, Pretoria, To: Department of State, Washington, *South Africa and the Congo Debacle*, 14 July 1960, pp. 1-2.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 28, '350 Political (Folder 1) Pretoria 62-63-64', Letter from: American Embassy, Pretoria, *Dr Albert Hertzog Attacks US, Russia, and Leaders of African States*, 12 July 1962, p. 1.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

chaos here', or making use of pictures depicting Congolese 'atrocities' from newspapers to garner support.<sup>155</sup>

Pretoria's reference to events in Congo as a justification for apartheid was also employed by South African officials during their conversations with foreign government representatives. Meeting the American ambassador in June 1961, Louw defended South Africa's refusal to grant a universal franchise by arguing that 'the South African government was not going to make the mistake of the Belgians in the Congo; they would not be hurried and would make changes only in their own time'.<sup>156</sup> Similarly, Taswell, who by this time was head of the Department of External Affairs' African division, met with members of the American Embassy in Cape Town in April 1964. During the meeting, Taswell pointed out that although conditions in South Africa were not perfect for the black population, 'the Bantu had experienced great and growing advantages [...] when in contrast during the same period conditions had tragically deteriorated for the blacks of the Congo'.<sup>157</sup> He insisted that if black people in Africa were left to govern themselves they characteristically 'adopted a dictatorial form of government and utilised politics as a means of achieving power or maintaining it'.<sup>158</sup> To illustrate his point, Taswell referred to the situation in Congo.

Although Pretoria thus made extensive use of the Congo crisis to try to improve its precarious international reputation and defend its controversial apartheid policy, its intended outcome was never achieved. South Africa's international standing eroded to the level of pariah state, and the international condemnation of its apartheid policy grew exponentially.

## **Conclusion**

During the secession of Katanga, Pretoria decided to align itself with Tshombe as the Leopoldville government had taken on an anti-South African stance. By doing so, it hoped to show the world that apartheid South Africa could establish friendly relations with a black state. Pretoria also wanted to gain an ally north of Southern Africa's borders, to protect the

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<sup>155</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2632, 'Pol 15-1 Head of State Executive Branch S Afr 1/1/64', Letter from: AJ Tresidder, To: Ambassador, *Report of Conversation with Fritz Steyn, Nationalist MP representing Kempton Park*, 30 November 1964, pp. 1-2.

<sup>156</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 27, '350 Political Affairs Classified 1961 Jan-Jun 1961', Memorandum from: American Ambassador Satterthwaite, To: Mr Wolfe, 7 June 1961, np.

<sup>157</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Foreign Policy Files, 1964-1966, Political & Defense, Box 2632, Pol 15-1 Head of State Executive Branch S Afr 1/1/64', Memorandum of Conversation, 10 April 1964, p. 3.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*



region from African nationalist and communist infiltration. The South African government, however, remained cautious in its dealings with Tshombe and refrained from getting directly involved in the Katangese secession. Tshombe's return to Congo in 1964 allowed Pretoria to support the Leopoldville government. Its motives for doing so were once more similar. The South African government wanted to establish formal and friendly relations with a black state, as well as protect Southern Africa's northern border from subversive forces. Throughout its involvement in the Congo crisis, Pretoria attached great importance to how its involvement was perceived, a factor that influenced most of its decisions. It furthermore used the Congo crisis as a way of defending apartheid and hoped that it would change the world's perspective on its controversial policy. However, Pretoria was not the only one in South Africa who closely followed the events in Congo.

## Chapter Seven

### South African perceptions, 1960-1965

When the South African Whites hang a Bantu murderer there are cries of ‘shame!’ [...] When the Blacks in the Congo kill an American missionary then it’s merely ‘God’s will’. Funny world, isn’t it?

Reader’s letter to the *Cape Times*, 3 December 1964<sup>1</sup>

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#### Introduction

The newspaper *New Age* reported that, on 24 February 1961, ‘African, Indian, White and Coloured youth demonstrated outside the Johannesburg offices of the Belgian Consulate as soon as the horrifying news of the murder of Lumumba became known’.<sup>2</sup> Similar protests and commemorations were organised across South Africa in the days that followed, usually attracting big crowds of black people. As in the case of Lumumba’s murder, the events developing in Congo were closely followed by South Africans from across the racial and political divide who often publically voiced their opinions. This final chapter examines such South African perceptions of the Congo crisis. The chapter’s first subsection provides a chronological analysis of public views regarding the Congo crisis. The second subsection examines South African perceptions of Patrice Lumumba. Finally, the third subsection looks at so-called ‘lessons of the Congo’ for South Africa, and highlights some of the commonly used Congo-related rhetoric.

#### 7.1 Interpreting the Congo crisis

As Belgian Congo’s independence drew near, it attracted significant interest from various sections of South African society. Although there was a shared concern about the effect of the sudden call for emancipation, views differed significantly about the future prospects of an independent Congo. One publication that was highly critical of Congo’s looming independence was the popular Afrikaans family-orientated weekly periodical, *Huisgenoot*. A month before Congo’s independence celebrations on 30 June 1960, *Huisgenoot* featured two articles written by Flemish reporter, Lode Stevens. These articles were extremely sceptical about Congo’s future and made use of overtly racist language in their reporting. In his first article, Stevens lamented that ‘there is no place anymore for whites on the black mainland’ as anti-white feelings had surfaced in Congo, resulting in the pre-emptive departure of many

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Funny World’, *Cape Times*, 3 December 1964.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Protest to Belgian Consul’, *New Age*, 23 February 1961, p. 4.

white people. The article argued that this anti-white sentiment was a direct result of the massive influx of 'primitive' black Congolese who had migrated from 'the jungle' to the urban areas. Among this growing black urban population a silent hatred for the white people had begun to grow which, according to Stevens's, had resulted in Belgium's eventual abdication from Congo and the early 'flight of the civilisers'.<sup>3</sup> At a time when Pretoria was trying to implement its own Bantustan 'solution' to curb South Africa's perceived 'problem' of a growing black urban population, Stevens's article resonated with some of *Huisgenoot's* readership.<sup>4</sup> One man from Beaufort West noted in his letter to *Huisgenoot* that the article had raised his hairs, and had made him lay awake an entire night. Despite his unsettled night's rest, he concluded that such an exercise was positive as 'we must lay awake ... and think, and think ... until we South Africans have found a practical solution for our own misery'.<sup>5</sup>

In his follow up article, Stevens attacked Congo's future black political leadership, particularly Joseph Kasavubu. He described Kasavubu, or 'Kasa-Voeboe' as he phonetically spelled it in the article, as a 'black chief with the non-Christian name which is reminiscent of black magic, an ebony-wood-coloured Mussolini, raised to undisputed leadership by the obtuse loyalty of a hundred thousand followers'.<sup>6</sup> Stevens further implied that Kasavubu suffered from an inferiority complex comparable to that of Mussolini and Hitler.<sup>7</sup> Such negative personal portrayals of Congo's future president were not restricted to *Huisgenoot* alone. South African born anti-apartheid activist, Colin Legum, wrote a series of articles in the non-sectarian periodical, *Africa South*. This publication featured articles by liberals, socialists, academics and journalists who were critical of the apartheid government. Although originally published in South African, at the time of Legum's contribution the periodical was printed in London and New York. In one of his articles, Legum described Kasavubu as 'short and squat, with mongoloid and Bantu features, he is suspicious and unforthcoming [...] He has a sly humour'.<sup>8</sup> Such rhetoric was not unique to South African print media, as references to particular unflattering physical characteristics or making use of negatively loaded

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<sup>3</sup> 'Dolle Vlug van Blankes uit Die Kongo', *Huisgenoot*, May 1960, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> A Bantustan or Homeland was a specific territory that was set aside for black inhabitants of South Africa and South West Africa by the South African government during apartheid. The various Bantustans were divided according to ethnic group.

<sup>5</sup> 'Hoendervel oor die Kongo', *Huisgenoot*, May 1960, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> 'Swart Koning van Kongo', *Huisgenoot*, May 1960, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> 'The Belgian Congo (ii) Towards Independence', *Africa South*, September 1960, pp. 83-85.

adjectives were commonly used by the Belgian and American press to delegitimise the political capabilities of Congolese leaders such as Lumumba.<sup>9</sup>

Although other South Africans considered Congo's approaching independence an exciting prospect for Africa, they generally remained sceptical about its relative success. In the left leaning political and literary periodical *Fighting Talk*, anti-apartheid activist Albie Sachs expressed his concerns about the apparent lack of unity among Congolese political parties.<sup>10</sup> *Fighting Talk* had initially been published by the Springbok Legion, which was an organisation for South African ex-servicemen. Over the years, it had aligned itself with the Congress Alliance. It described itself as a 'monthly journal for Democrats in Southern Africa'. Like Sachs, Legum argued in *Africa South* that 'the crux of Congo politics lies in the struggle between nationalism and tribalism'.<sup>11</sup> Such concerns were shared by the popular monthly journalism and lifestyle magazine, *Drum*, which at the time catered for an urban black readership. *Drum* argued that the Congolese population was divided among too many political parties that were based upon orthodox outdated tribal thinking, and highlighted that no clear consensus had been reached on what type of government should be formed.<sup>12</sup> It further contended that 'although the speedy decision to grant independence was welcome', as a result of the past lack of training of Congolese Africans to take over the machinery of government, the difficult task of creating a stable and integrated nation lay ahead.<sup>13</sup> For others, like the left leaning Congress Alliance affiliated newspaper, *New Age*, the monopoly of Belgian companies in Congo was of concern, not the Congolese politicians or population. *New Age* suspected that the Belgians would 'fan the flames of tribalism' if they feared that the profits of their companies would be affected.<sup>14</sup> Regardless of the difference in uncertainty about the future of the Belgian colony, the consensus among South Africans was that Congo's independence was not guaranteed to run smoothly.

South African writer Lewis Nkosi, who was a reporter for the *Golden City Post* (a Johannesburg newspaper targeting a black audience), noted that at local *shebeens* (illicit

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<sup>9</sup> Dunn, *Imagining the Congo*, pp. 83–84; 91–92.

<sup>10</sup> 'Africa Round-Up', *Fighting Talk*, March 1960, p. 11.

<sup>11</sup> 'The Belgian Congo (ii) Towards Independence', *Africa South*, September 1960, p. 78.

<sup>12</sup> 'Congo: Really Explosive?', *Drum*, June 1960, p. 41.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> 'Congo Free on June 30', *New Age*, 25 February 1960, p. 7.

drinking establishments) ‘Lumumba’s Republic was being triumphantly toasted’.<sup>15</sup> However, black and white South African’s earlier scepticism about the future of Congo materialised when in the first week of its independence the *Force Publique* mutiny broke out. The popular National Party (NP) aligned Afrikaans newspaper for the Cape Province, *Die Burger*, explained that the violent mutiny that was spreading rapidly across Congo had removed ‘the comforting thought that the formidable military power with its white officers’ was still in charge of Congo, and could protect the white minority. *Die Burger* argued that the perceived growing anti-white sentiments among the Congolese, in tandem with the violent and chaotic actions of the mutineers, exacerbated the existing uncertainty of an independent Congo, and ushered the young republic into a dangerous situation.<sup>16</sup> The periodical *Contact*, which had close ties with the Liberal Party of South Africa (LPSA) was also critical of the developing chaos, and referred to it as ‘mob rule and anarchy’, wishing ‘success to the forces of law and order’.<sup>17</sup> *Huisgenoot* was less measured in its reporting. It announced that the powder keg of Congo had exploded and had resulted in a sudden bloodbath.<sup>18</sup> *Huisgenoot* contended that ‘with the sight of blood the primitive instincts of the natives were again awakened’, and that Congo had ‘dropped to a level of a century ago’.<sup>19</sup> This, for *Huisgenoot*, was clear proof that the Congolese were unable to deal with full independence.

South Africans of all shades and walks of life stated a variety of reasons why such violence and chaos had occurred, and who was responsible for it. One *Die Burger* reader shifted the blame for what had happened in Congo to the Belgian government. He argued that Brussels had been mostly concerned with the material benefits that they could attain from Congo, and in the process, it had abandoned its own citizens when granting its colony independence. The reader believed that this betrayal had resulted in a lack of respect for white people by black Congolese, as the Belgian government had ‘bartered justness and decency for material profits’.<sup>20</sup> In a similar manner but from an opposite ideological perspective, the Marxist-Leninist South African Communist Party (SACP) periodical *African Communist* (which was published in London due to the SACP’s banning) argued that Belgium’s transfer of power

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<sup>15</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 98, ‘350 riots Congo unclassified and OOU’, Copy #5 Enclosure 1 to Despatch No. 130 Amembassy, Pretoria, np.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Muitery in die Kongo’, *Die Burger*, 7 July 1960.

<sup>17</sup> ‘The Congo’, *Contact*, 16 July 1960, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Hartseer-Vlug uit die Kongo’, *Huisgenoot*, 29 July 1960, p. 14.

<sup>19</sup> ‘Swart Furie in die Kongo’, *Huisgenoot*, 26 August 1960, p. 19.

<sup>20</sup> ‘Geen Benul van Afrika nie’, *Die Burger*, 26 August 1960.

during the independence celebrations was a neo-colonial exercise in ‘window dressing’.<sup>21</sup> This facade allowed the continued exploitation of Congo’s resources by imperialists such as the Société Générale de Belgique.<sup>22</sup>

One popular explanation seems to have been a lack of preparation of the Congolese to take over control. In its periodical *Counter Attack*, the South African Congress of Democrats argued that it was Belgium’s stifling of organised politics for black Congolese that was at the root of the ‘intense reaction of the Congolese population after independence’.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, the popular liberal English newspaper for the Cape Province, *Cape Times*, concluded that Africa’s political emancipation would fail, ‘if men, methods or attitudes’ were not properly developed, as had been the case in Congo. It believed that this was especially true when political consciousness among black people was channelled into tribal institutions that did not share ‘a common nationalism, a common loyalty and a common interest in stability’.<sup>24</sup> *Contact* also blamed the sudden reversal of Belgium’s Congo policy without the existence of a proper foundation of political concessions. It however argued that such chaos should not be attributed to the inability of black people, but rather the inherent and universal effect of the collapse of authority.<sup>25</sup> The President of the LPSA, Alan Paton, contended that Belgian Congo’s ‘colonial system, with its colour bar and its arrogance, had corrupted’ the Belgians, and resulted in them realising the inevitable too late, leaving Belgium with no other alternative than to immediately hand over complete power.<sup>26</sup>

Whilst South African newspapers were filled with articles about the chaos, destruction and violence that had taken over the new republic, the stream of white refugees fleeing from Congo became an important and emotionally debated topic among white South Africans. With its usual flair for dramatic language, *Huisgenoot* noted that the ‘beautiful dreams and the fruits of years of hard work have turned into ashes’ by Congo, ‘the dragon that spew hatred and death’.<sup>27</sup> *Huisgenoot* placed particular emphasis upon children, women, and other ‘helpless’ individuals when reporting on the refugees who had to flee from this ‘dragon’. In one of its articles, it quoted a conversation between one elderly man saying to a young child

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<sup>21</sup> ‘The Congo Marches to Freedom’, *African Communist*, September 1960, p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Congo Crisis’, *Counter Attack*, July 1960, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Congo Chaos’, *Cape Times*, 11 July 1960.

<sup>25</sup> ‘The Congo’, *Contact*, 16 July 1960, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> ‘The Congo’, *Contact*, 30 July 1960, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> ‘Hartseer-Vlug uit die Kongo’, *Huisgenoot*, 29 July 1960, pp. 14–15.

‘there is no tomorrow for us, my child. We are refugees’.<sup>28</sup> One of its articles featured a photograph of neutral looking Congolese men standing in a group with the caption ‘with hatred, contempt and triumph these Congolese watch how whites hurry to the airport to flee from Congo via aeroplane’.<sup>29</sup> *Die Burger*’s column ‘Uit my politieke pen, deur Dawie’, which was written by *Die Burger*’s editor Piet Cillié with contributions by Afrikaans journalists Schalk Pienaar and JJJ Scholtz, argued that ever since the ‘winds of change’ had swept across Africa delivering independence, white minorities had fled because of ‘black terror’. The column explained that those who wanted to drive the white man out of Africa were busy celebrating the events in Congo, as ‘for them even crawling abdication is not enough: the settled whites must go out entirely!’<sup>30</sup>



**Figure 3: Uhuru: the Second Week.**  
Retrieved from, *Die Burger*, 13 July 1960.

The picture that was painted by such reports was that independent Congo was as hostile place for white people, and nearby settler states safe-havens of refuge. This dichotomous view of decolonising Africa was well exemplified in a *Huisgenoot* article that reported on a group of Congo refugees reaching the Northern Rhodesian border. At the border post, a member of the Northern-Rhodesian mobile unit allegedly exclaimed to the exhausted and dusty refugee children ‘Run fast. It’s safe. These are your own people’.<sup>31</sup> A similar depiction of a new independent Congo being an unwelcome place was illustrated by a cartoon in *Die Burger*. The cartoon titled ‘Uhuru: the Second Week’ (see Figure 3) depicts a long stream of visibly sad and destitute white people on foot streaming out of Congo under a banner which reads ‘welcome to our freedom celebrations’ whilst dark plumes of smoke in the distant background loom above the jungle’s canopy.<sup>32</sup> Such a depiction of destitute, tired, and dirty refugees on foot

<sup>28</sup> ‘Hartseer-Vlug uit die Kongo’, *Huisgenoot*, 29 July 1960, pp. 14–15.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Swart Koning van Kongo’, *Huisgenoot*, May 1960, p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> ‘Uit My Politieke Pen’, *Die Burger*, 9 July 1960.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Hartseer-Vlug uit die Kongo’, *Huisgenoot*, 29 July 1960, pp. 14–15.

<sup>32</sup> Cartoon in: *Die Burger*, 13 July 1960.

stands in direct contrast to the report on neat looking refugees arriving in Ndola in ‘swanky’ motorcars mentioned in chapter three.<sup>33</sup>

Regardless of the media’s questionable portrayal of the refugees’ state of wellbeing, South African newspapers expressed consideration for their plight. *Die Burger* urged all to not think about the rule of law and regulations and help the refugees as ‘these people need us, and we need them’.<sup>34</sup> The last part was a reference to South Africa’s desire to attract white immigrants. Similarly the *Cape Times* requested South Africans to ‘work together with unity of purpose’ to aid the Congo refugees who had to ‘flee from their homes and careers’.<sup>35</sup> However, unlike *Die Burger* it emphasised that such aid should not be based upon the selfish need to strengthen South Africa’s yearning for ‘desirable immigration’.<sup>36</sup> Although expressing their understanding for the difficult situation the refugees were in, many periodicals and newspapers critically discussed the cause of the refugee crisis, and were generally less compassionate in their conclusions.

In a surprisingly liberal opinion piece in *Die Burger*, Edwin Munger reported that despite few attacks and little plundering in the capital city, the white population’s hasty departure from Leopoldville could be attributed to the fact that Congo (with the exception of the Kivu and Katanga Provinces) did not have an established settler society. Munger further argued that most white people resided in Congo on contractual basis, and did not have a ‘deep love for their country or sense of responsibility towards its population’.<sup>37</sup> In Elisabethville, the shock of stories from the southern part of the Leopoldville Province where the mutiny broke out, in tandem with relative proximity of the Rhodesian border, caused the departure of the city’s white population. Munger also blamed the Belgians themselves for the sudden panic. It was they who had circulated many, often imagined, stories of what would happen when independence would occur.<sup>38</sup> In a follow up article, Munger further argued that despite the low number of officially reported cases, the fright was mainly due to fears of the sexual molestation of white women.<sup>39</sup> Frank Barber similarly suggested in *Africa South* that the Belgian’s initial mistrust aided in ‘creating the very situation they professed to fear’.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> See, p. 59.

<sup>34</sup> ‘Die Vlughtelinge’, *Die Burger*, 14 July 1960.

<sup>35</sup> ‘Helping the Refugees’, *Cape Times*, 16 July 1960.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> ‘Belge het nie in die Kongo Wortelgeskiet nie’, *Die Burger*, 4 August 1960.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> ‘Lot van Blanke Vroue in die Kongo’, *Die Burger*, 5 August 1960.

<sup>40</sup> ‘Return to the Congo’, *Africa South*, December 1960, p. 90.



Likewise, *Contact* concluded that although some whites fled from genuinely dangerous situations, many fled because of rumours. The violence that was directed towards white people was a way of humiliating and ridiculing the former masters instead of massacring them; describing the raping of women as ‘the supreme humiliation’.<sup>41</sup> Although not justifying the ‘atrocities’ that were occurring in Congo, one reader of the *Cape Times* partially attributed them to the past colonial atrocities of the Belgians, which formed part of the collective memory of the Congolese.<sup>42</sup> In the same vein the *African Communist* argued that the few casualties from the ‘pent-up anger of Africans’ was nothing compared to the ‘ghastly years of Belgian colonial rule’.<sup>43</sup> *Fighting Talk* believed in a more conspiratorial cause, and argued that the exodus of white people from Congo was a result of a deliberate attempt by Belgium to ‘create alarm’ and spread panic among its white subjects, so that Congo would plunge into chaos, and Belgium rule could be restored.<sup>44</sup> Whilst critically reflecting on the first two weeks of independence, the *Cape Times* noted that with the small number of white deaths and the undetermined number of white women raped, ‘one may wonder whether, of all the Congo atrocities, the press reports did not constitute the worst’.<sup>45</sup>

Although much of the public interest in Congo refugees had ceased a few months after independence, when the murder of Patrice Lumumba was announced to the world in February 1961 some directed their anger towards Belgian refugees who were residing in South Africa.<sup>46</sup> One Cape Town reader wrote a letter to *New Age* explaining that,

Some may say the Belgian ‘refugees’ here had nothing to do with it. But why do they deserve our hospitality when their friends and themselves have a hostile attitude towards any person of colour? What cheek they have! They ask for money for ‘refugee funds’ and they arrive in our cities in big cars.<sup>47</sup>

Frustration and anger towards refugees seems to have not just been confined to vocal acts alone. In early March 1961, *Die Burger* featured an article which noted a series of suspicious cases of malicious damage to automobiles with Congolese licence plates in the Cape Town neighbourhood of Mouliepoint. It reported that in the last six weeks, one car’s tyres were

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<sup>41</sup> ‘The Congo’, *Contact*, 30 July 1960, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> ‘The Congo Atrocities’, *Cape Times*, 25 July 1960.

<sup>43</sup> ‘The Congo Marches to Freedom’, *African Communist*, September 1960, p. 15.

<sup>44</sup> ‘The Newspaper War for the Congo’, *Fighting Talk*, October 1960, pp. 11; 14.

<sup>45</sup> ‘The Heart of Darkness’, *Africa South*, December 1960, p. 1.

<sup>46</sup> See, pp. 55-64.

<sup>47</sup> ‘Belgians don’t Deserve our Hospitality’, *New Age*, 23 February 1961, p. 2.

pierced with a knife, an attempted car breake-in was reported, and a brand new Mercedes Benz went up in flames.<sup>48</sup>

Another topic that stimulated debate among many South Africans was the United Nations' (UN) intervention in Congo. Two weeks into independence, *Contact* appealed to the UN 'to waste no time, and to send a large emergency force to take over' and restore order. Such an intervention, *Contact* argued, was in the interest of the world, Africa, and Congo.<sup>49</sup> Although *Die Burger* acknowledged that a request for outside intervention to restore order and peace was logical, the situation was complicated as Congo was an independent and sovereign state. Similar to Pretoria's position, *Die Burger* argued that any disorder or conflict was the responsibility of the Congolese government and the only external interference that was acceptable was 'if the security of non-Congolese were compromised'.<sup>50</sup> This exception indirectly referred to the Belgian troops that had been sent to Congo by Brussels.<sup>51</sup> *Die Burger* feared that Leopoldville's decision to ask for foreign intervention could escalate into a dangerous international situation.<sup>52</sup> *Die Burger's* unsupportive stance on the UN's intervention in Congo can be linked to the increased condemnation of South Africa at the UN. If Congo's domestic affairs resulted in a UN force being sent to restore order, a similar fate could await South Africa or South West Africa.

Although the *Cape Times* agreed with *Die Burger* that the UN's intervention showed how easily a domestic affair could turn into an international issue, it considered the decision to send UN troops to Congo as a positive development.<sup>53</sup> The *Cape Times* reasoned that if the UN's intervention was successful in establishing peace, stability, and general prosperity in Congo, it could serve as an example that 'world race relations have in fact become international relations'.<sup>54</sup> In a column in the *Cape Times*, Anthony Delius made the quasi-paternalistic argument that if successful in its Congo mandate, the UN could be considered 'the official guardian angel of independence in Africa', and could become the 'governess to brawling and emerging Africa' guiding the continent to maturity.<sup>55</sup> The notion that, like

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<sup>48</sup> 'Vlugteling uit Kongo se Motor Verniel in Kaap', *Die Burger*, 8 March 1961.

<sup>49</sup> 'The Congo', 16 July 1960, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> 'Inmenging in die Kongo', *Die Burger*, 13 July 1960.

<sup>51</sup> See, p. 27.

<sup>52</sup> 'Inmenging in die Kongo', *Die Burger*, 13 July 1960.

<sup>53</sup> 'UN in Africa', *Cape Times*, 15 July 1960.

<sup>54</sup> 'Congo Lesson', *Cape Times*, 25 July 1960.

<sup>55</sup> 'UN as New Power in Africa', *Cape Times*, 25 July 1960.

children, the Congolese population needed tough fatherly guidance was reminiscent of perceptions of Congo's former colonial administration.<sup>56</sup>



**Figure 4: Cartoon of Lumumba and Hammarskjöld.** Retrieved from, *Cape Times*, 17 August 1960.

The *Cape Times*' sympathetic stance towards the UN intervention in Congo was clearly reflected in many of its cartoons. Such cartoons usually depicted the UN as a saviour and a defender of justice and an implementer of order and peace, whilst portraying Congo as a dark continent inhabited by primitive people in need of help and guidance. One particular cartoon (see Figure 4) that illustrates this well depicts a calm, collected, and heroic Dag Hammarskjöld in bathing costume carrying in his arms a visibly upset and complaining wet-suited Patrice Lumumba to shore, after he had saved him from a sinking ship. The cartoon's caption read 'I have lost confidence in you! Put me down'.<sup>57</sup> The belief that the UN was an organisation that fought for a noble cause was also shared by *Drum*. *Drum* complimented the Afro-Asian members of the *Opération des Nations Unies au Congo* (ONUC)

particularly commending the Ghanaian troops for their swift and selfless action in coming to the plea for assistance of an African state.<sup>58</sup> *Drum*, which at the time also distributed its magazine in Ghana, described the Ghanaians as 'the back bone of the United Nations' who were perceived by the Congolese as their protectors. They were honest, fair and above all, polite.<sup>59</sup> *New Age* disagreed with the view that the UN was the guardian of the world's oppressed people, and argued that its intervention and actions in Congo were a 'disgraceful farce'.<sup>60</sup>

Much disagreement existed about the efficiency of the ONUC intervention. *Die Burger* argued that after six months of trying to restore order to Congo, the UN was unable to handle the crisis. It believed that the international organisation had only become further divided on

<sup>56</sup> Dunn, *Imagining the Congo*, p. 70–71.

<sup>57</sup> Cartoon in: *Cape Times*, 17 August 1960.

<sup>58</sup> 'They Surprised the World', *Drum*, November 1960, p. 57.

<sup>59</sup> 'Crack African Troops in Congo', *Drum*, November 1960, pp. 53; 55.

<sup>60</sup> 'UN Is Failing Africa', *New Age*, 8 December 1960, p. 2.

the matter, as it was unable to decide what it wanted to achieve.<sup>61</sup> *Die Burger* even suggested that if Congo did not manage to gain control of its own affairs, the UN would take back what Belgium gave on 30 June 1960 by implementing a new ‘colonial reign’.<sup>62</sup> *Huisgenoot* was equally critical of ONUC’s operation, citing its seemingly passive nature and stating that the UN ‘strikes a pitiful image’.<sup>63</sup> Similar to *Die Burger*, *Huisgenoot* argued that the UN was not serious about bringing stability to Congo and questioned if it was trying to become a colonising power.<sup>64</sup> Unlike the two Afrikaans publications, the *Cape Times* argued that even if it might seem that the UN was being elevated to the position of a ‘super state’, its intervention was the only alternative to prevent an outright civil war.<sup>65</sup> Likewise, in its official party organ, *Liberal Opinion*, the LPSA acknowledged the UN’s ‘obvious weaknesses’ that were revealed while in Congo, but suggested that Congo’s and even Africa’s situation would have been far worse if the UN had not intervened.<sup>66</sup>

Coupled to the UN intervention in Congo was a shared anxiety that the local crisis would be elevated to a full-blown transnational Cold War encounter. The difference was that for some South Africans the UN’s intervention would cause such conflict, whilst for others its intervention would prevent it. *Die Burger* warned that the UN’s decision to intervene was a dangerous precedent that could spur on other African leaders to manipulate the existing Cold War dynamics and use the UN as an instrument to advance themselves or their political party.<sup>67</sup> Such argumentation by *Die Burger* proved to be not entirely unfounded. The American ambassador in Pretoria reported that at a dinner party organised by South African novelist Nadine Gordimer, short-story writer Can Temba, had described the UN as a ‘a debating society’ where the grievances of Africans were discussed but never addressed. Citing Congo as an example, Temba argued that as a result Africans could only turn to Russia and explained that ‘Khrushchev’s willingness to send troops to back Lumumba to fight white men has had a profound effect all over the continent’.<sup>68</sup> *Die Burger* also believed that the UN’s intervention made it significantly more difficult for the West to influence the

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<sup>61</sup> ‘Die Kongo’, *Die Burger*, 6 January 1961.

<sup>62</sup> ‘VVO ‘Kolonialisme’’, *Die Burger*, 15 August 1960.

<sup>63</sup> ‘Pres Tshombe se Wit Troepe’, *Huisgenoot*, 12 May 1961, p. 11.

<sup>64</sup> ‘So het Katanga Gelyk’, *Huisgenoot*, 22 September 1961, p. 13.

<sup>65</sup> ‘UN and Congo’, *Cape Times*, 23 February 1961.

<sup>66</sup> ‘The United Nations in Africa’, *Liberal Opinion*, September 1961, p. 4.

<sup>67</sup> ‘Kommer Oor die VVO’, *Die Burger*, 27 July 1960.

<sup>68</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 25, ‘350 Political July, August, September Classified 1960’, Letter from: American Embassy, Pretoria, To: Department of State, Washington, *Can Temba, African Intellectual*, 21 July 1961, p. 1.

developments in Congo directly, as any Western action in Congo outside of the UN ‘would solicit critique’. In contrast, the Soviet Union was not bound to the UN, and could act outside of the organisation’s mandate without any fear of reprisal.<sup>69</sup> For others, however, the UN’s intervention would prevent Congo from turning into a Cold War battleground. The *Cape Times* believed that if the crisis was left unchecked by the UN, Congo’s escalating violence would exacerbate the East-West standoff that was developing in the heart of Africa.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, *Contact* argued that if the UN were successful in taking control of the situation, it would positively contribute to protecting Africa ‘from communist imperialism’.<sup>71</sup>



**Figure 5: Brussels-Sprouts.**  
Retrieved from, *New Age*, 12 January 1961, 7.

On the other side of the ideological spectrum, some South Africans instead linked their fears of Western imperialism to the UN intervention. *New Age* accused the Western powers of dictating the UN’s Congo policy. It argued that the influence of the West over the UN was reflected by the organisation’s lethargic stance on action when it came to issues such as, gaining control over Katanga; the political disposal and subsequent arrest of Patrice Lumumba; or the temporary transfer of power to the ‘stooge’ Joseph Mobutu. For *New Age*, the UN’s action in Congo enabled imperialism to re-gain its presence in Congo and drown ‘the aspirations of the people [...] in blood’.<sup>72</sup> *New Age*’s notion that the UN’s presence in

Congo worked in favour of Western imperialism was well illustrated in a cartoon (see Figure 5) that depicted UN Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld, watering a small tree sprouting branches that bore the fruits of big business and its two so-called stooges, Kasavubu and Joseph Mobutu. Its caption humorously read ‘Brussels-Sprouts’.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, at the January 1962 National Conference of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) in Pietermaritzburg, NEUM founding member Janub ‘Jane’ Gool accused Belgium together with other ‘imperialist nations’ of using the UN as a tool for ‘the defence of finance capital

<sup>69</sup> ‘Russe se Taktiek in Die Kongo’, *Die Burger*, 7 September 1960.

<sup>70</sup> ‘UN and Congo’, *Cape Times*, 23 February 1961.

<sup>71</sup> ‘UN Must Stay in the Congo’, *Contact*, 30 July 1960, p. 4.

<sup>72</sup> ‘UN is Failing Africa’, *New Age*, 8 December 1960, p. 2.

<sup>73</sup> Cartoon in: *New Age*, 12 January 1961, p. 7.

invested in the Congo'.<sup>74</sup> Besides arguing that the UN allowed Belgium to re-establish itself as a colonial power in Katanga, the *African Communist* criticized the organisation for its passive role in the murder of Lumumba, even accusing it of collaborating with and subsidising Lumumba's murderers.<sup>75</sup> It furthermore considered the UN intervention as an illegal action that was fundamentally against its own charter.<sup>76</sup> *Fighting Talk* argued that by not defending Katanga from the secessionist forces, the UN did not fulfil the mandate of defending the independence and unity of Congo; and subsequently played to the hand of imperialists.<sup>77</sup>

In many of the discussion around the UN intervention, Hammarskjöld and his role was the subject of much contested debate. *Die Burger* placed the responsibility of the UN's intervention squarely on the secretary general, arguing that it was Hammarskjöld alone who determined and influenced the Security Council's Congo policy.<sup>78</sup> The most vocally critical of Hammarskjöld's role in Congo was *New Age*. In one of its articles, the secretary general's background as a chairman of the Sveriges Riksbank bank was identified as the source to explain the UN's decision to 'set a tough policy towards Premier Lumumba, who opposes foreign monopolies', whilst setting 'a soft policy towards Moïse Tshombe, the Katanga mining stooge'.<sup>79</sup> Hammarskjöld was similarly accused by the *African Communist* of being an agent of the imperialist powers, which highlighted that although it supported the UN 'one must not confuse the essence and purpose of the UN with its temporary officials. If there is a choice between the future of the organisation and one man, the man must go'.<sup>80</sup>

Even when on 18 September 1961, Hammarskjöld's airplane crashed in Ndola under mysterious circumstances, criticism of his role in the Congo crisis continued. *New Age* featured an article with the headline 'Q: Who Killed Dag? A: Dag', in which it argued that Hammarskjöld died as a result of a 'trap' which he partially had helped to create. The article reasoned that the secretary general had allowed Tshombe's secession to continue and its

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<sup>74</sup> Non-European Unity Movement, 'The International Situation in 1961 by Jane Gool: Being an Analysis Presented at the Conference of the Non-European Unity Movement Held at Edendale Pietermaritzburg in January 1962', p. 6. Retrieved from: <http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/international-situation-1961-jane-gool-3-5-january-1962> (accessed on 3 October 2014)

<sup>75</sup> 'The Congo and the United Nations', *African Communist*, July 1961, pp. 7–8.

<sup>76</sup> 'The Martyrdom of the Congo', *African Communist*, July-September 1964, p. 28.

<sup>77</sup> 'The Congo Crisis and the United Nations', *Fighting Talk*, 23 August 1960, p. 8.

<sup>78</sup> 'VVO 'Kolonialisme'', *Die Burger*, 15 August 1960.

<sup>79</sup> 'A Banker Directs UN Activity in Congo ... And His Name Is Dag Hammarskjöld', *New Age*, 9 February 1961, p. 6.

<sup>80</sup> 'The Congo and the United Nations', *African Communist*, July 1961, p. 9.

military force to grow. If the UN had given Leopoldville its full support to restore Congo's territorial integrity, than the secession would have quickly seized, and Hammarskjöld would still be alive. It was thus argued that Hammarskjöld bore a 'large degree of responsibility' for his own death. The article ended by coldly stating that 'history has affected a grim retribution for Dag's betrayal of the people of the Congo'.<sup>81</sup> Unlike *New Age*, *Drum* declared that 'the people of Africa should mourn' the death of Hammarskjöld, as he was 'the champion of all small nations, and an honest man with humane objectives' who slowly but surely had managed to re-establish order to Congo. In diametric contrast to the ideas proclaimed by *New Age* or the *African Communist*, *Drum* argued that the secretary general's 'biggest defeat' was that 'his weapon of peace had become a weapon of aggression' in his fight 'against the might of money'.<sup>82</sup> It contended that the blame for his death lay on Belgium and the mining companies who supported the Katangese secession.<sup>83</sup>

Seeing that the secession of Katanga was arguably the most contested development during the first three years of Congo's independence, it was fiercely debated among South Africans. Objections against the Katangese secession sometimes came from surprising corners of society. In February 1961, the South African Bantu Football Association turned down an invitation to participate in a soccer tournament in Elisabethville.<sup>84</sup> *Fighting Talk* was one of the few periodicals that highlighted British and South African business interests in Katanga, including those of South African industrialist Harry Oppenheimer.<sup>85</sup> In an article which was likely based upon Rosalynde Ainslie's pamphlet *The Unholy Alliance: Salazar – Verwoerd – Welensky*,<sup>86</sup> *Fighting Talk* blamed the 'great gold and diamond companies in South Africa with their huge influence over the Southern African region' for the secession of Katanga. The article described the complicated network of mining interest that connected across the subcontinent.<sup>87</sup> It explaining how Oppenheimer's Anglo American was connected to Tanganyika Concession Limited, which owned over 90 per cent of the Benguela Railway Company that controlled the flow of copper out of Katanga, and also owned a large portion of shares with *Union Minière Haut Katanga* (UMHK). According to *Fighting Talk*, Southern Africa's white minority governments together with Katanga's black government had formed

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<sup>81</sup> 'Q: Who Killed Dag? A: Dag', *New Age*, 28 September 1961, p. 6.

<sup>82</sup> 'Dag-Champion of the Small Powers', *Drum*, October 1961, p. 97.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> 'SA Bantu Football Association Rejects Tshombe Initiative, Fed Up with Stooges', *New Age*, 9 February 1961, p. 2.

<sup>85</sup> 'The British Stake in the Belgian Congo', *Fighting Talk*, 23 August 1960, p. 8.

<sup>86</sup> Ainslie, Davidson, and O'Brien, *The Unholy Alliance*.

<sup>87</sup> See, p. 28.

a regional alliance that acted in the interests of white capital stretching from the Cape to Katanga.<sup>88</sup> In a similarly conspiratorial manner, *New Age* argued that ‘Roy Welensky, the British right wing Tories, the French ultras and the South African racialists’ were the major proponents for an independent Katanga. It judged their claim to support Katanga’s right to self-determination as hypocritical, as on all other occasions they had been opposed to African’s freedom struggles.<sup>89</sup>

The *Cape Times* was equally critical of Katanga’s secession. It believed that the secession was based upon a tribal division of Congo that would further divide the nation. It correctly predicted that Tshombe would not receive much support from other African leaders.<sup>90</sup> Similar scepticism about Katanga’s future was expressed by *Die Burger*. Even though *Die Burger* reasoned that Katanga’s struggle towards independence could be rationally justified, its decision to break away from Congo would have ‘significant consequences for the future’ of Congo, which was dependent on Katanga’s material wealth. If Katanga seceded, Congo would become a destitute state unable to support itself, and Leopoldville would do all it could to recapture its former most profitable province. *Die Burger* argued that, in its constant quest to re-incorporate Katanga, the Congolese government would more than likely look towards outside powers for assistance, which could possibly result in ‘a second Korea’.<sup>91</sup> *Die Burger* feared a similar armed confrontation emerging between the Central Congolese government and the Katangese government as between North and South Korea in the 1950s. However, if Katanga did not have an independent existence, Lumumba’s rule would stretch to the border of Northern Rhodesia, which *Die Burger* considered not reassuring in light of Lumumba and his followers’ apparent anti-Western sentiment.<sup>92</sup> Of all publications, *Huisgenoot* was probably the most positive about the future of Katanga and described it as well organised, civil and smoothly running, as opposed to the chaos in the rest of Congo.<sup>93</sup> Despite Katanga never being official recognised by any foreign state, one of *Huisgenoot*’s articles actually referred to it as ‘an independent neighbouring state of Congo’, and described the secessionist state as a ‘progressive bastion against communism’.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> ‘Against the Winds of Change’, *Fighting Talk*, July 1962, 7-9.

<sup>89</sup> ‘Tshombe Must be Punished’, *New Age*, 21 September 1961, p. 5.

<sup>90</sup> ‘Congo Confederation?’, *Cape Times*, 14 March 1961.

<sup>91</sup> ‘Die Vraagstuk van Katanga’, *Die Burger*, 20 July 1960.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> ‘Pres Tshombe se Wit Troepe’, *Huisgenoot*, 12 May 1961, p. 9.

<sup>94</sup> ‘So het Katanga Gelyk’, *Huisgenoot*, 22 September 1961, p. 13.



The various discussions about the Katangese secession were often dominated by the contested person of Tshombe. In line with its positive perception of Katanga, *Huisgenoot* considered Tshombe a calm leader who ‘made the lives of whites in his area so pleasant that they will not even think of returning’ home.<sup>95</sup> Similarly, one reader of the *Cape Times* also praised Tshombe, and explained that the Katangese president was ‘the only black politician who has behaved as a responsible man’, but predicted that Tshombe would unfortunately be ‘sold down the river’ by the UN and the West.<sup>96</sup> Others South Africans were, however, extremely critical about Tshombe, and depicted him as a ‘stooge’ and ‘puppet’ of the West. The Indian National Congress aligned periodical *Indian opinion*, which had been co-founded by Mohandas Ghandi for the social and political advancement of the South African Indian community, described the Katangese president as a lowly educated trader who, six weeks prior to Congo’s independence, ‘was approached by Belgian anarchists to form a political party’. It somewhat bizarrely argued that Tshombe had lived in dire poverty for years and was subsequently tempted by the promise of extreme wealth and fame.<sup>97</sup> In reality, Tshombe came from a well-established family, and his father had been a successful businessman.<sup>98</sup> *Indian Opinion* concluded that Tshombe had been used by Belgian and other Western imperialists to secede the wealthy province of Katanga from Congo.<sup>99</sup> Harmel similarly argued in the *African Communist* that Tshombe was ‘a puppet president controlled by the imperialists’ who made use of Katanga’s ‘factitious independence’ to conceal their continued economic dominance of Congo.<sup>100</sup> In the same vein, *Fighting Talk* described Tshombe as a ‘stooge and hireling par excellence’ who had a ‘big mouth [...] and complete lack of any national pride’. The magazine argued that he was ‘the black hope of white South Africa’ and was owned ‘lock, stock and barrel by Verwoerd, Welensky and Anglo-American’.<sup>101</sup> In *Africa South*, Legum rightly opposed such simplified depictions of Tshombe. He argued that referring to Tshombe as a mere stooge was convenient, but incorrect. ‘Tshombe’, Legum explained, ‘was fundamentally an opportunist, whose opportunism’ was based upon clear and concrete ideas. As a tribal nationalist, Tshombe had always sought to secure the interests of the people of Katanga against ‘outsiders’, and as a traditionalist and a businessman he wanted

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<sup>95</sup> ‘Pres Tshombe se Wit Troepe’, *Huisgenoot*, 12 May 1961, p. 9.

<sup>96</sup> ‘Bitter Lesson of the Congo Rioting’, *Cape Times*, 5 August 1960.

<sup>97</sup> ‘More Facts about the Murder of Lumumba’, *Indian Opinion*, 10 March 1961, p. 10.

<sup>98</sup> Colvin, *The Rise and Fall of Moise Tshombe*, 35.

<sup>99</sup> ‘More Facts about the Murder of Lumumba’, *Indian Opinion*, 10 March 1961, p. 10.

<sup>100</sup> ‘Forms and Methods of Struggle in the National Liberation Revolution’, *African Communist*, January 1962, p. 12.

<sup>101</sup> ‘The United Nations, Katanga and the Congo’, *Fighting Talk*, October 1961, p. 3.

to maintain close ties with Belgium. According to Legum, the mere fact that many of Katanga's Belgian *colons* (settlers) shared Tshombe's aspiration did not mean that he was controlled by them. The secession of Katanga suited the interests of both Tshombe as well as the *colons* equally.<sup>102</sup>

Tshombe's image as a 'stooge' was however strengthened due to his dependency on white foreign mercenaries to defend Katanga. In January 1961, when the recruitment of mercenaries had commenced in Brussels and France,<sup>103</sup> *New Age* featured a short article claiming that the 'imperialist stooge' Tshombe could no longer rely on the local Katangese population to defend its secession, and was forced to make use of 'brutal white troops' that were recruited by Belgium and armed by Western nations.<sup>104</sup> Two months later, it was revealed that the recruitment of mercenaries for Katanga had largely shifted towards South Africa. Such a development naturally resulted in opposing debate. During an Africa Day meeting at the Grand Parade in Cape Town in March 1961, 5,000 people listened as Sachs lambasted those South Africans who enlisted to fight in Congo; calling them traitors to South Africa who were fighting for the 'traitor to Africa' Tshombe.<sup>105</sup> Although many publications remained surprisingly silent about South African mercenary recruitment, the *Cape Times* did argue that the South African government's laissez-faire attitude concerning the matter, needed to change. Pretoria's position, the *Cape Times* reasoned, could be interpreted by the international community as a cloaked government approval to let those 'would be warriors' join the 'comic-opera' army in the Congo; something that would further harm South Africa's already fragile reputation. The *Cape Times* believed that Pretoria should clearly and categorically condemn such activities and threaten to cancel or invalidate the passports of those who ignored the ban.<sup>106</sup> Not surprising, one of the few publications that positively reported on Katangese mercenaries was *Huisgenoot*, which described how the mercenaries were fighting 'a bloody bush-war against Patrice Lumumba's followers' and dramatically reported that some even returned from the bush with 'bloody bite-marks'.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> 'The Congo (iii): After Independence', *Africa South*, December 1960, pp. 77; 81.

<sup>103</sup> See, p. 33.

<sup>104</sup> 'Imperialists Pleased with Congo Chaos', *New Age*, 26 January 1961, p. 7.

<sup>105</sup> '5,000 in Cape Town', *New Age*, 20 April 1961, p. 3; NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Decimal Files 1960-63, Box 1689, '745A.00/4.2561', Letter from: American Embassy, Cape Town, To: Department of State, Washington, *Liberal Party's Mainly Non-White Rally in Cape Town Calls for Demonstrations and Unity*, 26 April 1961, p. 2.

<sup>106</sup> 'S. African 'volunteers'', *Cape Times*, 14 April 1961.

<sup>107</sup> 'Pres Tshombe se Wit Troepe', *Huisgenoot*, 12 May 1961, p. 8.

From late 1961 onwards, general interest in the events unfolding in Congo waned. Although there were occasional moments of renewed debate for events such as the death of Hammarskjöld or the end of the Katangese secession, it was not until Tshombe returned to Congo as prime minister during the second half of 1964, that the topic of Congo once more dominated much of the public discourse. The *African Communist* described the return of Tshombe as a new grim ‘chapter in the tortured tale of the Congo’, and blamed it on the machinations of the United States and its Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). It argued that their successful attempt to have Tshombe take on the role of prime minister was ‘spit in the face of African independence and dignity’.<sup>108</sup> The *African Communist*, however, somewhat ominously warned that Tshombe’s allies should not rejoice too soon, as instead of Tshombe uniting Congo, his return might unite Congo against Tshombe. According to the article Tshombe’s allies consisted of: then former Prime Minister of the Central African Federation, Roy Welensky; South Africa’s Prime Minister, Hendrik Verwoerd; Portugal’s Prime Minister, Antonio de Oliveira Salazar; Rhodesia’s Prime Minister, Ian Smith; United States Senator, Barry Goldwater; and British Conservative Party member, Lord Salisbury.<sup>109</sup> Soon after Tshombe’s return, the African National Congress (ANC) criticised ‘Africa’s hesitancy to close up her ranks and crush Tshombeism’.<sup>110</sup> If this was not done soon, it ‘might be a fatal stab in the back of her revolution for which her sons and daughters have sacrificed and died for’ potentially transforming Congo into a second South Vietnam.<sup>111</sup> Similar to the SACP, the ANC considered the interference by the ‘imperialists and colonialists’ in Congo as a ‘naked military intervention’ that saw the forceful installation of Tshombe as leader of the Congolese people.<sup>112</sup>

Some of South Africa’s exiled liberation movements also openly sided with the leftist *Comité National de Libération* (CNL). The SACP declared its support for the CNL by stating in the *African Communist* that,

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<sup>108</sup> ‘The Martyrdom of the Congo’, *African Communist*, July-September 1964, p. 27.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

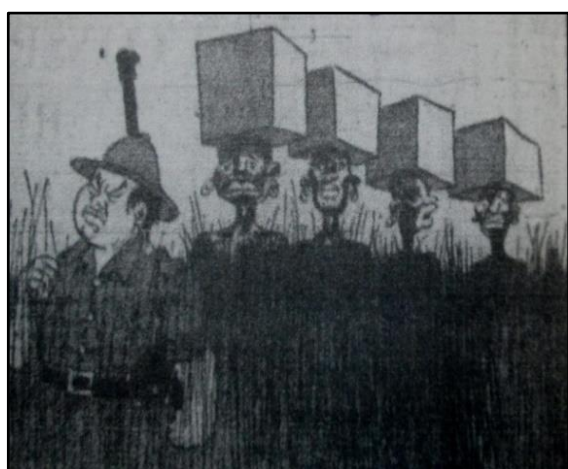
<sup>110</sup> National Arts and Heritage Cultural Studies Centre (hereafter NAHECS), ANC Morogoro Office, ‘Military Matters’, Programme: Umkonto, 28 August 1964, pp. 1-3.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, Programme, Umkonto, 4 September 1964, pp. 1-2.

We who fight apartheid in South Africa are side by side with the brave guerrillas of the Revolutionary Government of the Congo; they are fighting our battle against white domination in South Africa, and we are fighting their battle as well as our own.<sup>113</sup>

The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) likewise proclaimed its backing. In its periodical, *Izwe Lethu*, the PAC argued that the rebels formed part of a wider African revolution that fought against exploitation and oppression, and that CNL's president, Christophe Gbenye, was supported by 'our revolutionary movements and its allies'.<sup>114</sup> It considered the Stanleyville government as representative of the aspirations of the African people of Congo and the only true successor to the Lumumba regime.<sup>115</sup>



**Figure 6: Cartoon of China in Africa.**  
Retrieved from, *Cape Times*, 26 August 1964.

Among white South Africans in particular there was, however, much opposition towards the CNL, especially because of its perceived support from, and links to, communist states. According to *Huisgenoot*, it was the Soviet Union and Cuba's efforts to keep the spirit and name of Lumumba alive, that had caused the formation and increasing popularity of the CNL, which was responsible for the 'gruesome deeds' across Eastern Congo.<sup>116</sup> The CNL's perceived relationship with the communist

People's Republic of China seems to have been particularly worrying. A column in the *Cape Times* predicted an increase in Chinese interference in Congo in the form of technical staff and advisors; either to exploit the troublesome situation or 'even to take full command of events there'.<sup>117</sup> *Die Burger* noted that the potential interference of China 'in the heart of Africa' was a warning to those who 'are still in slumber'.<sup>118</sup> Similarly, the *Cape Times* described the rebels as 'strongly dissatisfied tribesmen' who were trained in guerrilla warfare by military experts from the People's Republic of China, and feared that the subversion campaign by 'Eastern adventurers' could spread across the region.<sup>119</sup> The *Cape Times*'

<sup>113</sup> 'The Frontiers of Freedom', *African Communist*, January-March 1965, p. 8.

<sup>114</sup> 'Comment on the Congo', *Izwe-Lethu*, December 1964, pp. 7-8.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>116</sup> 'Ons Red Blanke Gyselaars', *Huisgenoot*, 9 April 1965, p. 16.

<sup>117</sup> 'China's Stake in Congo', *Cape Times*, 24 August 1964.

<sup>118</sup> 'Huursoldate vir die Kongo', *Die Burger*, 25 August 1964.

<sup>119</sup> 'Complicated Africa', *Cape Times*, 1 September 1964.

concerns were well illustrated by a cartoon (see Figure 6) that depicted a stern looking uniformed man of Asian descent with a rifle flung over his shoulder, leading a quartet of worrisome shirtless black men carrying boxes on their head, through chest-high grass. The cartoon's caption read 'Doesn't this make you feel all colonial again?'<sup>120</sup> The *Cape Times* argued that such potential Chinese communist infiltration in the heart of Africa should be prevented by as many African countries as possible.<sup>121</sup>

According to the *Cape Times*, the close proximity of African states, and their intimate knowledge of Congo exceeded that of any Western or Eastern country. It initially believed that the solution to Congo's problems was for other African states to support Tshombe's government.<sup>122</sup> The idea that the conflict in Congo should be solved by Africans was also supported by the ANC. In September 1964, the ANC welcomed the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) resolution to set up a commission that would aid Congo to achieve national reconciliation and bring about normal relations between itself and its neighbours.<sup>123</sup> Although *Die Burger* agreed that the idea of the OAU solving Congo's problem instead of a 'neo-colonial' intervention sounded nice in principle, it expressed its concerns about the organisation's lack of unity. It believed the OAU did not have the ability 'to gather a sufficient army' to end the rebellion.<sup>124</sup> The fact that Tshombe remained despised by many African leaders who wanted to see his downfall as Congo's prime minister was also not forgotten by *Die Burger*.<sup>125</sup> The newspaper reasoned that other African states loathed Tshombe because he aligned himself with one side (the West) unlike other African leaders who played the world's two power blocks against each other.<sup>126</sup> In this regard, *Die Burger* noted the importance of Leopoldville's request to the South African government to supply humanitarian aid. Although it recognised that this decision would likely be interpreted as a neo-colonial move that would result in significant criticism, it commended Tshombe's 'bravery' and hoped that it could inspire other African leaders to follow suit.<sup>127</sup> In contrast, the *Cape Times* was critical of South Africa's decision to send the Congolese government aid, especially when it knew that such a decision would raise much critique, and would

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<sup>120</sup> Cartoon in: *Cape Times*, 26 August 1964.

<sup>121</sup> 'Help for the Congo', *Cape Times*, 26 August 1964.

<sup>122</sup> 'African Meeting', *Cape Times*, 19 September 1964.

<sup>123</sup> NAHECS, ANC Morogoro Office, 'Military Matters', Programme: Umkonto, 18 September 1964, pp. 1-2.

<sup>124</sup> 'Afrika-Verdeeldheid', *Die Burger*, 8 September 1964.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> 'Die Geval Tshombe', *Die Burger*, 12 October 1964.

<sup>127</sup> 'Hulp aan die Kongo', *Die Burger*, 24 August 1964.

alienate those African states that were contemplating cooperating with the Congolese government.<sup>128</sup>

One event that resulted in significant debate at the time was the Stanleyville offensive on 24 November 1964.<sup>129</sup> A *Huisgenoot* article, written by a South African mercenary who participated in the liberation of Stanleyville, described how angry he was when he saw the maimed bodies of white hostages in the streets, and the bloody and dazed groups of people at the airport. He exclaimed that that molestation of nuns and barbaric attacks on woman and children were committed in idolisation of Lumumba, and ended his article with the cryptic statement that ‘the rebels had been identified as molesters of whites in Stanleyville ... no mercy was shown’.<sup>130</sup> *Die Burger* supported the offensive, and argued that Belgium’s intervention had been the only available option to prevent ‘the feared butchering of thousands of people’ held as hostages.<sup>131</sup> It believed that the incompetence of the rebels was the only reason why more hostages had not been killed. For *Die Burger* the condemnation of the Stanleyville offensive by many African states was not due to the intervention itself, but rather because of the ease at which a small white force overthrew the black rebel army. It argued that this victory, in tandem with the past inability of Congo’s black government troops to pacify the rebellion, demonstrated the ‘weakness and inability of black people’ across the continent, who were ‘already tormented by a huge inferiority complex’. It contended that this did not imply that the West should make use of a force ‘to keep in check the young African states’, but believed that it should cultivate the understanding that ‘there is a line over which the black people of Africa cannot cross with impunity’.<sup>132</sup> Although it commended the success of the Stanleyville offensive, *Die Burger* expressed its concern over the immediate departure of the Belgian forces; which it argued was ‘an attempt to appease black Africa’. *Die Burger* further noted that their presence was still needed as many white refugees remained hostages in non-liberated areas.<sup>133</sup> Such disappointment was shared by a reader of the *Cape Times* who believed that the Belgian troops were abandoning the remaining white

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<sup>128</sup> ‘SA-Congo Aid Enigma’, *Cape Times*, 25 August 1964.

<sup>129</sup> See, pp. 40.

<sup>130</sup> ‘Ons Red Blanke Gyselaars’, *Huisgenoot*, 9 April 1965, pp. 16; 18.

<sup>131</sup> ‘Die Misdaad’, *Die Burger*, 23 November 1964.

<sup>132</sup> ‘Met Huiwering’, *Die Burger*, 27 November 1964.

<sup>133</sup> ‘Afrika-Diktatuur’, *Die Burger*, 2 December 1964.

hostages to the ‘savages’ who ‘have murdered and even eaten (so it is reported)’ their captives.<sup>134</sup>

The offensive on Stanleyville was, however, also perceived by some as yet another act of neo-colonialism in Congo. This was true for the *African Communist*, who believed that intervention formed part of a ‘savage war of destruction’ by the West against the Congolese people who were represented by the CNL. The offensive on Stanleyville was ‘a clear continuation of international imperialism to gain control of Congo and smash Lumumba’s dream’. More controversial was Harmel’s claim in the *African Communist* that the hostage situation in the revolutionary government’s capital was nothing more than a propaganda tactic by the ‘imperialist media’, to create a ‘humanitarian cover’ for blatant Western intervention in an African state.<sup>135</sup> Such views were also expressed by the PAC in its periodical *Izwe-Lethu*, which was printed outside of South Africa. Besides referring to the captured missionaries as American spies,<sup>136</sup> The PAC believed that as a result of their great economic stake in Congo, the British and Americans aided the raid on Stanleyville by providing aeroplanes and arms and a place to launch the operation, all ‘under the cloak of rescuing white hostages’.<sup>137</sup>

After the Stanleyville offensive, support for the CNL significantly grew among members of the Afro-Asian block and the communist aligned states. *Die Burger* argued that the Congo debate in the UN Security Council had become symbolic of the opposing battle between the world’s West and anti-West camps, and that most of Africa had already positioned itself on the anti-Western side. It predicted that in order to ‘demonstrate their ideological purity’ in future one of the targets for the anti-Western camp would no doubt be South Africa. *Die Burger* also feared that Western governments would join in criticising South Africa, as they did not want to ‘lose even more black friends’.<sup>138</sup> Like *Die Burger*, the *Cape Times* strongly criticized the pro-rebel stance of many African countries whose reactions in the UN it described as ‘ungrateful and even racist’.<sup>139</sup> Although more optimistic, it expressed its concern about the increasing internationalisation of the Congo crisis. The *Cape Times* warned that the West should carefully weigh out if ‘outright armed intervention’ was going to ‘play

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<sup>134</sup> ‘Paratroopers Still Needed’, *Cape Times*, 7 December 1964.

<sup>135</sup> ‘The Battle for the Congo and the November Aggression’, *African Communist*, January-March 1965, p. 25.

<sup>136</sup> ‘PAC Stand on the Congo’, *Izwe-Lethu*, December 1964, pp. 8–9.

<sup>137</sup> ‘The Congo, lest we Forget’, *Izwe-Lethu*, December 1964, p. 1.

<sup>138</sup> ‘Skerper Stryd om Afrika’, *Die Burger*, 18 December 1964.

<sup>139</sup> ‘Tshombe in Africa’, *Cape Times*, 23 December 1964.

into the hands of opposing strategists'. It believed the Western block could not afford Tshombe to be overthrown by the communist backed rebels, as such a development could result in a wider regional 'bloody quagmire of intrigue' that would be as permanent and even more dangerous than the Vietnam affair.<sup>140</sup> One reader of the *Cape Times* supported this notion, and argued that Tshombe was 'valiantly' trying to save Congo from communism, and if Congo would fall, the whole of 'Africa may come under communist domination.'<sup>141</sup> From the other ideological perspective, the *African Communist* similarly argued in June 1965, that Congo had become a springboard from where regional aggression and intrigues 'ranging from the bombing of Ugandan villages to the staging of a rightists comeback in Khartoum' were planned and executed.<sup>142</sup>

Although the *Cape Times* considered Tshombe the best option for Congo at that moment, it remained sceptical of the prime minister's leadership. The *Cape Times* criticized Tshombe's negotiation methods by noting how he often did not fulfil his promises, or how he made the excuse that he had been misunderstood. It furthermore accused the Leopoldville government's army of acting in the same savage manner as the rebels, which made the *Cape Times* doubt if its forces were up to the task of cleaning up Congo. In conclusion, the *Cape Times* remarked that Tshombe's time as prime minister had brought more 'ghastlier upheaval [...] than the tediously slow previous attempt to find some sort of political and constitutional solution under Mr Adoula's guidance'.<sup>143</sup> Such critique of Tshombe was not supported and appreciated by its entire readership. One reader of the *Cape Times* opposed its call for a policy of negotiations, which had 'been tried *ad nauseam*', and accused the newspaper of having a vendetta against Tshombe who he described as a 'God-fearing upright man' who had been successful in 'driving back the communist supported rebels with the aid of white troops'.<sup>144</sup>

Tshombe's decision to make use of white mercenaries from South Africa once more sparked widespread debate. When, in August 1964, the recruitment of mercenaries for V Commando in South Africa was exposed, *Die Burger* forecasted 'significant international fuss' by leftist and anti-white groups. *Die Burger*, however, tried to justify such recruitment. It argued that oppositionists often implemented a double standard; considering those who want to fight for

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<sup>140</sup> 'Western Advocates of Impatience', *Cape Times*, 10 December 1964.

<sup>141</sup> 'Tshombe is Anti-Red Bulwark', *Cape Times*, 8 January 1965.

<sup>142</sup> 'The US War in Vietnam', *African Communist*, April-June 1965, p. 10.

<sup>143</sup> 'Mr Tshombe's Methods', *Cape Times*, 30 December 1964.

<sup>144</sup> 'Tshombe is Anti-Red Bulwark', *Cape Times*, 8 January 1965.



communism as ‘volunteers’ with high motives, whilst accusing those who want fight against communism of being oppressors of the people. To add strength to its argument, the Afrikaans newspaper noted that even the UN (of which many members condemned mercenary recruitment) made use of a similar ‘scavenged army’. To an extent, *Die Burger* was right in arguing that Tshombe had only opted for white mercenaries because other African states were slow to provide Congo with military aid. Regardless of the unavoidable opposition, *Die Burger* believed that the recruitment of mercenaries was a step in the right direction, as Congo’s conflict could only be won if it is ‘internationally elevated to greater heights’.<sup>145</sup> Somewhat out of character, the *Cape Times* also supported the notion that the recruitment of mercenaries was a positive development, and argued that it formed part of the West’s policy to try to stem Chinese influence in Africa. The unfortunate consequence was that Tshombe would once again be cast in the role of a puppet of Verwoerd; subsequently increasing the African continent’s support for the rebels, and potentially spurring on the Chinese to send their own ‘volunteers’ to support the CNL. The *Cape Times* did however believe that the use of mercenaries could not solve the problem alone, and rather proposed to keep pressuring the OAU to assist the Congolese government.<sup>146</sup>

As predicted by *Die Burger*, the use of white mercenaries resulted in widespread condemnation, including by South Africans. One particular accusation that was often made by those opposing the recruitment of South African mercenaries was that it had been sanctioned by Pretoria. The ANC believed that the South African government had decided to intervene in Congo and use it as ‘a wonderful training ground’ where they could have military exercises that prepared them for future battles in Southern Africa.<sup>147</sup> It further argued that Pretoria had felt pressured to hide the fact that ‘these so-called mercenaries come from the South African Defence Force (SADF) and went to the Congo on the instructions of the Verwoerd Government’.<sup>148</sup> Likewise, according to the *African Communist*, South African mercenary involvement was based upon former German General-Major Friedrich von Mellenthin’s military strategy that proposed that a permanent striking force should be stationed in South Africa, in order to be deployed across the continent whenever needed. The first use of such a force comprised of V Commando’s action in the Congo. The *African Communist* compared the South African mercenary unit to the Nazi Condor Legion in

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<sup>145</sup> ‘Huursoldate vir die Kongo’, *Die Burger*, 25 August 1964.

<sup>146</sup> ‘Help for the Congo’, *Cape Times*, 26 August 1964.

<sup>147</sup> NAHECS, ANC Morogoro Office, ‘Military Matters’, Programme, Umkonto, 4 September 1964, pp. 1-2.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, Programme: Umkonto, 11 September 1964, pp. 1-2.

Spain's national civil war, as like the Condor Legion, V Commando was 'cautiously camouflaged' by a smoke-screen of 'self-organising international foreign legionaries'.<sup>149</sup> Member of the All-African Convention and founder of the NEUM, Isaaq Bangani Tabata, made a similar statement when he delivered an address to the UN Committee in Lusaka on 26 May 1965. Tabata argued that Mellenthin (who was living in South Africa at the time) had been sent to South Africa on a special mission, and that the South African mercenaries fighting in Congo were 'professional military officers seconded by the South African government [...] to learn about guerrilla methods and to fight in the defence of South Africa with its baaskap'.<sup>150</sup>

Besides accusing the South African government of authorising and organising V Commando, the SACP and ANC regularly lashed out against the South African mercenaries fighting in Congo. The *African Communist* condemned the action of the 'hired assassins', but warned that they would never be able to 'cease smouldering and flaring up in the Congo until Lumumba's vision of independence [was] realised and his murders brought to justice'.<sup>151</sup> Harmel, vehemently opposed the mercenaries in the *African Communist*, referring to them as: 'fascist scum', 'the worst enemies of African freedom', 'anti-African white terrorists', and 'hired gangsters', who 'raped and looted at will'. He argued that these willing volunteers had been 'incubated from childhood with fanatical anti-African race prejudice, and only too eager to join in the jolly sport of shooting down blackskins'.<sup>152</sup> Similarly the ANC called them 'game hunters' and 'psychopaths to whom the murder of the African is a game', and who go to Congo to 'vent their bloodlust'.<sup>153</sup> In a December 1964 New Year's letter to Algeria's President Ben Bella, Deputy President of the ANC Oliver Tambo wrote that the occurrences in Congo were the 'most brazen imperialist crime against the people of African revolution'.<sup>154</sup> He further noted how the 'fascists and racialists of South Africa were deeply involved' as they had provided Tshombe's mercenary force that was 'murdering and

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<sup>149</sup> 'Danger to Africa', *African Communist*, October-December 1964, pp. 21–22.

<sup>150</sup> Isaaq Tabata, *An Address Delivered to the United Nations Committee, Lusaka, 26 May 1965* (Lusaka: All-African Convention and Unity Movement of South Africa, 1965), p. 2.

<sup>151</sup> 'The Frontiers of Freedom', *African Communist*, January-March 1965, p. 3.

<sup>152</sup> 'The Battle for the Congo and the November Aggression', *African Communist*, March 1965, p. 24.

<sup>153</sup> NAHECS, ANC Morogoro Office, 'Military Matters', Programme: Umkonto, 18 September 1964, pp. 2-3.

<sup>154</sup> NAHECS, ANC Lusaka Mission, Part 2, Box 43, File 1, 'Letters by O Tambo', Letter from: OR Tambo, Deputy President of the African National Congress, South Africa, To: His Excellency, President Ben Bella, President of the Republic of Algeria, Algiers, *Message to the President and People of Algeria on the Occasion of New Year, 1965*, 29 December 1964, p. 1.

plundering the African people'.<sup>155</sup> Joe Slovo, who used the alias 'Sol Dubala' when writing for the *African Communist*,<sup>156</sup> bemoaned that,

The arrogant white herenvolk are given license under African patronage to strut about with a gun in hand killing Africans-many of whom are patriots of undoubted sincerity [...] the sooner these fascist thugs are sent back to their homes, the easier it will be to end the imperialist-staged tragedy which is the Congo.<sup>157</sup>

The Stanleyville offensive had marked the steady decline of the CNL's eastern revolt, and South Africa's interest in the Congo crisis had gradually faded away by the end of 1964.

## 7.2 Patrice Lumumba

One of Congo's most discussed individuals at the time of the crisis was Patrice Lumumba, whose brief office as prime minister and subsequent arrest and murder resulted in strong but varied opinions. Many (predominantly black) South Africans considered Lumumba as an inspiring African leader who personified Pan Africanist ideals. Wilson Ngcayiya, from Johannesburg, argued in *Drum* that Lumumba's plans for Congo's unification and prosperity were so advanced that they surpassed 'those of the baby politicians like Kasavubu and Tshombe' who were 'suffering from the effects of backwards tribalism'.<sup>158</sup> Similarly, a *New Age* reporter mentioned that he had overheard a man at a bus stop who was reading *New Age* exclaiming to his friend 'Look how nice that "laaitie" old Patrice Lumumba is. The real [...] leader of the Congo'.<sup>159</sup> To *New Age* Lumumba personified the Congolese people's demands for 'Uhuru', the freedom to rule over their own country and benefit from Congo's abundant wealth.<sup>160</sup> The young Congolese leader was an inspiration for black South African's own emancipation.

However, there were also many (mostly white) South Africans who strongly disapproved of Lumumba, attributing Congo's problems directly to his prime ministership. One seemingly angry reader of the *Cape Times* accused the prime minister of 'having unleashed plunderers

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<sup>155</sup> NAHECS, ANC Lusaka Mission, Part 2, Box 43, File 1, 'Letters by O Tambo', Letter from: OR Tambo, Deputy President of the African National Congress, South Africa, To: His Excellency, President Ben Bella, President of the Republic of Algeria, Algiers, *Message to the President and People of Algeria on the Occasion of New Year, 1965*, 29 December 1964, p. 1.

<sup>156</sup> Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades Against Apartheid*, p. 58.

<sup>157</sup> 'Africa: Notes on Current Events', *African Communist*, First Quarter 1966, p. 75.

<sup>158</sup> 'Lumumba', *Drum*, November 1960, p. 77.

<sup>159</sup> 'Patrice Lumumba: They Can't keep Him Down', *New Age*, 22 September 1960, p. 7.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

and rapists' across Congo, and then demanding the world undo his own 'handiwork'.<sup>161</sup> Even more outspoken was *Die Burger's* feature *Uit my politieke pen, deur Dawie* that argued that Lumumba was much more than just a 'dagga smoker'. Lumumba personified 'the red-eyed, confused, elemental, revolutionary force in black Africa'.<sup>162</sup> The column claimed that 'like a wild ape' Lumumba had 'jumped out of the forest' and had begun to 'climb around unstoppably' – instantly forcing all to choose to be with him or against him.<sup>163</sup> At the time of independence, many Belgians similarly linked Congolese people's behaviour to savages who had only recently evolved from living in trees like monkeys.<sup>164</sup> *Huisgenoot's* portrayal of Lumumba was equally offensive. It described him as an office clerk-glass wearing 'black little demigod' who understood 'the art to whip up his millions to fanatical blood thirst'.<sup>165</sup> The article ominously accused Lumumba of not only reading Marx but also having intimate knowledge of 'all of Africa's magic formulas'.<sup>166</sup> Slightly more positive was Legum's description of Patrice Lumumba, who he called 'earnest and tough and capable' although still comparing his movements to 'those of a praying mantis'.<sup>167</sup>

On at least one occasion, such expressions of discontent about Lumumba went beyond bigoted discourse. In January 1961, 21 year old Pieter Andries Pieterse, who worked as a mechanic at a filling station in Germiston, begun to curse Congo, and shouted to one Philip Molefe who had stopped at the filling station, 'Go back to Congo, Lumumba'. When Molefe raised an objection to this verbal insult, Pieterse hit Molefe on the mouth and wiped his oily hands on Molefe's clothes. The case went to trial, and Pieterse was fined R20 or twenty days in jail for his assault. During sentencing, it was reported that the magistrate informed Pieterse that 'your attitude is unfortunately that of many young whites. In your eyes no native is worth civilised treatment. You expect that they must kneel before you. If they do not do this they are assaulted or insulted'.<sup>168</sup>

One month into independence, *Die Burger* explained that although there was consensus across the globe that Lumumba 'must go', there was no clear understanding of how his political departure should be achieved. *Die Burger* predicted that any direct intervention by

<sup>161</sup> 'Bitter Lesson of the Congo Rioting', *Cape Times*, 5 August 1960.

<sup>162</sup> 'Uit My Politieke Pen', *Die Burger*, 18 February 1961.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> Dunn, *Imagining the Congo*, 70.

<sup>165</sup> 'Pres Tshombe se Wit Troepe', *Huisgenoot*, 12 May 1961, pp. 8–9.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> 'The Belgian Congo (ii) towards Independence', *Africa South*, September 1960, pp. 83-85.

<sup>168</sup> "Lumumba' Aangerand in Germiston', *Die Burger*, 7 January 1961.

the UN would have serious implications for both the organisation as well as for those who openly called for his dismissal. It was sure that the communist world would capitalise on this dilemma, and make it as painful and difficult as possible for those who wanted Lumumba gone.<sup>169</sup> *Die Burger's* prediction came true soon afterwards.

Lumumba's dismissal as prime minister in September 1960 caused significant protest by those South Africans who had earlier supported the Congolese leader.<sup>170</sup> Many sent letters to *New Age* expressing their disappointment and anger. One female reader from Queenstown requested other African states to 'take speedy action to punish the Congo sell-outs, Mobutu, Tshombe and Kasavubu'.<sup>171</sup> She warned African leaders that they should not let the illegal disposal of a democratically elected man become a precedent, and if they did not react to this injustice 'the enemy' would soon replace them with 'stooges'.<sup>172</sup> A reader from Johannesburg voiced his disappointment in Kasavubu's decision to denounce Lumumba, arguing that the prime minister could only be voted out by the Congolese people. He made an appeal to the Congolese population to not listen to 'agitators' such as Kasavubu, Tshombe and Albert Kalonji whose only aim was to divide Congo into small independent provinces, and in doing so aid the Belgian's reconquest of their former colony. The reader further pleaded,

Fellow Africans in Congo! Please stand by Lumumba; he is the only man to build Congo. He is patriotic, and to lose him is to lose your independence. His policies are only designed to clean the Congo of the agitations who are on good terms with the Belgians.<sup>173</sup>

Another reader rightfully questioned whether 'if a helpless man in chains can be brutally assaulted to the point of being murdered in the presence of the United Nations forces, one begins to wonder what is meant by law and order'.<sup>174</sup> In line with its readership, *New Age* described the dismissal of Lumumba as a carefully crafted plot between the Belgian and French governments, who received the backing of the UN.<sup>175</sup> Unsurprisingly, it blamed Hammarskjöld personally for Lumumba's disposal and subsequent 'shameful' and 'humiliating' imprisonment; only to be replaced by Mobutu's 'military dictatorship'.<sup>176</sup> In its publication *Indian Opinion*, the South African Indian Congress likewise lamented the violent

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<sup>169</sup> 'Die Lumumba-Spektakel', *Die Burger*, 18 August 1960.

<sup>170</sup> See, p. 31.

<sup>171</sup> 'African States Must Intervene in Congo', *New Age*, 2 February 1961, p. 2.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> 'Stand by Lumumba', *New Age*, 22 September 1960, p. 2.

<sup>174</sup> 'Imperialists Pleased with Congo Chaos', *New Age*, 26 January 1961, p. 2.

<sup>175</sup> 'How Col Mobutu Seized Power in the Congo', *New Age*, 22 September 1960, p. 7.

<sup>176</sup> 'The Two Faces of Dag Hammarskjöld', *New Age*, 12 January 1961, p. 2.

treatment of Lumumba, which it argued was ‘comparable to Nazi war methods’.<sup>177</sup> Following his ‘house arrest’ and later imprisonment, the release of Lumumba became a rally point, and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) organised a meeting in Port Elizabeth in late January 1960 where it discussed the matter. During this meeting, the organisers called on all ‘democratic people’ across the world to unite and demand Patrice Lumumba’s freedom.<sup>178</sup> However, SACTU’s call for the release of Lumumba was quickly followed by the announcement in February 1961 that Congo’s first democratically elected prime minister had been murdered.

Although *Die Burger* argued that ‘murder is murder’, it proclaimed the international outcry about Lumumba’s alleged murder by the Katangese government ‘a curious almost pathological phenomena’. *Die Burger* also did not understand how Lumumba, whose so-called incompetence and recklessness as prime minister had only led to disaster, had been elevated to a ‘mystical haze’ shrouded martyr for Black nationalism.<sup>179</sup> One reader complained that the *Cape Times* gave banner headline treatment to ‘the demise of an irresponsible tyrant’ whose death has spared the world; ending his letter with the Latin phrase ‘*Sic semper Tyrannus!*’ (Thus always to tyrants).<sup>180</sup> *The Cape Times* noted that it had received several similar letters, and argued that Lumumba’s political abilities or moral qualities should not be brought into the discussion concerning the prime minister’s ‘uncivilised’ murder.<sup>181</sup> Perhaps more oddly disturbing was the report that some students at the University of Stellenbosch reportedly mocked Lumumba’s murder during their residence initiation ceremony. A procession of junior students clad in black tights and black jerseys shuffled into the residence dining hall whilst chanting, ‘Lumumba is dead, Lumumba is dead’, at the same time as a sheet-covered ‘ghost’ allegedly spoke of nationalism and communism.<sup>182</sup> Others were critical but more sympathetic in their expressions. *Drum* featured a commemorative article by its editor, Tom Hopkinson, which described Lumumba ‘devoted to his idea of the Congo’ and the only leader who had a notion of a unified Congo whilst other had been stuck in tribal ideas and tribal hostilities. Although Hopkinson commended Lumumba’s eloquent speech and bravery, he argued that the late prime minister did not have a long-term vision for his dream of a united Congo, and had been too impatient

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<sup>177</sup> ‘More Facts about the Murder of Lumumba’, *Indian Opinion*, 10 March 1961, p. 10.

<sup>178</sup> ‘PE Workers out to Win’, *New Age*, 2 February 1961, p. 1.

<sup>179</sup> ‘Die Lumumba – Moord’, *Die Burger*, 15 February 1961.

<sup>180</sup> ‘Lumumba’s Murder’, *Cape Times*, 16 February 1961.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> ‘Lumumba ‘Mourned by Maties’, *Cape Times*, 28 February 1961.

to achieve it. According to Hopkinson, Lumumba was arrogant, impatient of opposition and others who had different beliefs, and despite being a patriot, was irresponsible.<sup>183</sup>

Nonetheless, there were many who condemned the murder of Lumumba. *Africa South* pointed the finger for Lumumba's death at Western capitalists, and blamed the Belgian government, describing it as a 'covert accomplice' that had been indifferent whether Lumumba was killed or not. *Africa South* also implicated the UN in Lumumba's murder. It argued that the organisation had not properly followed its mandate, unnecessarily dragged on the crisis, and ignored the fact that Lumumba had been Congo's legally and democratically elected prime minister.<sup>184</sup> The South West African National Union (SWANU) published a statement in *New Age* that similarly lambasted the UN and conveyed the party's 'deepest sympathy for the murder of Premier Lumumba'. It noted SWANU's decreased confidence in the UN's role in the decolonisation of Africa by stating that 'as exemplified by Lumumba's murder the UN would betray Africa'.<sup>185</sup> SWANU ended its statement with the sentiment that 'neither name nor might will obliterate from our minds the noble cause for which you stood and died. The sons and daughters of Africa shall not rest until this ideal has been realised'.<sup>186</sup> In Johannesburg, the recently banned ANC distributed leaflets 'to mourn the death of Africa's great son, Lumumba'.<sup>187</sup> In that same week, the Continuation Committee of African Leaders sent two telegrams - one to Antoine Gizenga and the other to the secretariat of the All-African Peoples' Conference in Accra. These telegrams conveyed 'the shock and sympathy of Africans in South Africa with people of Congo concerning the brutal murder of Premier Lumumba by agents of imperialists'. They also pledged the committee's solidarity with the Congolese patriots in their fight against 'imperialist intrigues'.<sup>188</sup>

Lumumba's death was often described as a close and personal loss by those South Africans in mourning. One woman on the streets of Johannesburg explained to a *New Age* reporter that 'we feel we are part of the Congo, and in Lumumba we lost a leader'.<sup>189</sup> Similarly, *New Age* described the death of Patrice Lumumba like the loss of 'their own leader-or a brother'.<sup>190</sup> Such a notion of closeness to Lumumba was also expressed by the PAC's chief representative

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<sup>183</sup> 'The Tragic Life Story of Patrice Lumumba', *Drum*, April 1961, pp. 51–52; 55.

<sup>184</sup> 'Case History in Suicide', *Africa South*, June 1961, pp. 1–4.

<sup>185</sup> 'South West Africa blames UN', *New Age*, 23 February 1961, p. 4.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> 'ANC Leaflet on Lumumba', *New Age*, 23 February 1961, p. 4.

<sup>188</sup> 'SA Mourns Patrice Lumumba', *New Age*, 23 February 1961, pp. 1; 4.

<sup>189</sup> 'More Condolences on Lumumba's Death', *New Age*, 16 March 1961, p. 2.

<sup>190</sup> 'SA Mourns Patrice Lumumba', *New Age*, 23 February 1961, pp. 1; 4.

in East Africa, Charles Lakaje, who in 1966 reflected that South Africans were struck with grief when the news of Lumumba's death, as 'Lumumba had been one of us – fighting courageously to the bitter end'.<sup>191</sup>



**Figure 7: Judas 1961.**  
Retrieved from, *Cape Times*, 26 August 1964.

On various occasions, Lumumba's murder was described by using biblical references, in particular the story of the betrayal and subsequent death of Jesus Christ. Irene Malaoa wrote a letter to *New Age* titled 'Lumumba died for us', stating that 'today a second Jesus has popped up in Africa, whose name was Patrice Lumumba and who also sacrificed for his people [...] to live in peace'.<sup>192</sup> Another noted 'that Jesus Christ was also beaten up by his captors, without mercy'.<sup>193</sup>

Likewise, one reader argued that Lumumba was 'not willing to sell the riches of his country for his own personal safety, and as the Belgian coloniser hoped, for 30 pieces of silver';<sup>194</sup> whilst another professed that like Judas Iscariot 'who sold our lord for 30 shillings' the murderers of Lumumba would not get away with their action.<sup>195</sup> The story of Judas's betrayal of Jesus inspired *New Age* to publish a cartoon (see Figure 7) titled 'Judas 1961', which depicted a cloaked Dag Hammarskjöld concealing a bag of coins whilst navigating through a crowd of black people. The cartoon's caption read 'who betrayed Lumumba for 30 pieces of Western silver'.<sup>196</sup>

South African sympathy, shock, and anger for the death of Lumumba were not confined to statements in newspapers and periodicals alone. Popular singer Dorothy Masuka wrote a song about Lumumba that was inspired by his murder. The song resulted in a police raid of her studio and forced Masuka into exile.<sup>197</sup> *New Age* reported that in commemoration of Lumumba, the treason trial's 29 accused wore black mourning ribbons and 'stood with heads

<sup>191</sup> NHCSC, PAC London, 'Pac News and Views 1965-1969', *PAC News & Views*, 3, 1, 31 January 1966, *PAC Pays Tribute to Patrice Lumumba*, p. 8.

<sup>192</sup> 'Lumumba Died for Us', *New Age*, 13 April 1961, p. 2.

<sup>193</sup> 'Congo Murderer', *New Age*, 23 February 1961, p. 2.

<sup>194</sup> 'Dag Must Answer', *New Age*, 23 February 1961, p. 4.

<sup>195</sup> 'Our Readers Condemn Lumumba's Murder', *New Age*, 23 September 1961, p. 2.

<sup>196</sup> Cartoon in: *New Age*, 2 March 1961, p. 5.

<sup>197</sup> Lara Allen, 'Commerce, Politics, and Musical Hybridity: Vocalizing Urban Black South African Identity during the 1950s', *Ethnomusicology*, 47, 2 (2003), p. 236.



bowed in a silent demonstration during the morning tea break'. In a display of respect, nurses and clerks working at a large Orlando clinic also wore black mourning buttons.<sup>198</sup> Similar to Lumumba commemoration protests across the world, a group of demonstrators parading with various placards had gathered outside of the Belgian Consulate in Johannesburg on 14 February 1961.<sup>199</sup> This protest action reportedly resulted in a crowd of several hundred congregating in front of the consulate, whilst two representatives of the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress presented the consul with an open letter. The letter blamed the Belgian government together with the 'Tshombe-Mobutu-Kasavubu faction' for the murder of Lumumba. The Transvaal Indian Congress proclaimed that treason had been committed against the people of Africa, and demanded an immediate investigation into the Congolese leader's death. Although *New Age* reported that the consul had declared that he would not send the letter to Brussels, the consul's correspondence indicates that he did send through a copy to the Belgian minister of External Affairs.<sup>200</sup> The Belgian ambassador in Cape Town reported to Brussels that although he had not received any written documents from members of the public, he had received a multitude of threatening phone calls. The ambassador further noted that a similar protest to that in Pretoria had been held in Durban, where approximately 50 demonstrators from the Congress Alliance demanded the expulsion of the consul.<sup>201</sup>

Throughout the country, various meetings and public gatherings were also organised in commemoration of Lumumba. In Newclare SACTU, the Transvaal Indian Congress, the South African Coloured People's Congress (SACPC), and the Congress of Democrats (all members of the Congress Alliance) organised a meeting and called upon the Afro-Asian countries to withdraw their forces from ONUC. During their meeting, the crowd reportedly sang '*Lihambile iQhawe Lama Qhawe u Lumumba*' (Lumumba the Hero of Heroes is No More). One of the day's speakers, Aziz Kazi, who was treasurer of the Transvaal Indian Congress, called Lumumba a 'great leader of African liberations', 'a martyr' and a 'staunch

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<sup>198</sup> 'More Condolences on Lumumba's Death', *New Age*, 16 March 1961, p. 2.

<sup>199</sup> van Reybrouck, *Congo*, p. 327.

<sup>200</sup> 'Protest to Belgian Consul', *New Age*, 23 February 1961, p. 4.

<sup>201</sup> FPSFA, AA, Portefeuille Nr 14586 (1961), Letter from: Monsieur P Vanderstichelen, Ambassadeur de Belgique en Union de l'Afrique du Sud, Cape Town, To: Monsieur P Wigny, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, Bruxelles, *Manifestations Lumumbistes*, 21 February 1961, pp. 1-2; Ibid, Letter from: J Davaux, Consul Général de Belgique, Johannesburg, To: P Wigny, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, Bruxelles, *Manifestations à l'Occasion de la Mort de M Lumumba*, 20 February 1961, p. 1.

and unflinching fighter for African freedom'.<sup>202</sup> The representative of the Congress of Democrats likewise explained that Lumumba

... stood for African independence and African unity against oppression. To us he represented the spirit of those objectives for which we in South Africa are struggling. And when he was struck down, his murderers were trying to strike down the spirit of African freedom.<sup>203</sup>

A similar meeting by members of the Congress Alliance was organised at Durban's Bantu Social Centre. According to *New Age* the venue was packed to capacity with an 'angry but solemn crowd' whilst thousands of others were waiting outside of the centre in the streets. Former Organising Secretary of the ANC in Natal, George Mbele, and South African Indian Congress President, Gagathura Naicker, gave speeches. Naicker declared that Hammarskjöld 'must answer to the people of the Congo and the world for this bestial crime'.<sup>204</sup>

At a Cape Town meeting organised by the SACPC and the Congress of Democrats, more than a thousand people gathered on the Grand Parade. SACPC member, Alex la Guma, chaired the gathering, and the day's speakers included, National Chairman of the SACPC, George Peake; SACTU founder and treason trial accused, Archibald 'Archie' Sibeko; Simon Makheta; and Tory Bardien.<sup>205</sup> Similarly, at Veeplaas near Port Elizabeth, a reported 5,000 people also gathered. ANC and SACP leader and one of *New Age's* editors, Govan Mbeki, was the main speaker. Mbeki accused the Belgians, supported by the United States, Britain, and France, of having worked together with Tshombe, Mobutu, and Kasavubu to eliminate Lumumba. He demanded that the Belgians and their 'hired army of racist desperadoes' should be removed from Congo, and that Lumumba's murderers and accomplices be swiftly brought to justice. During the meeting, Mbeki also referred to Hammarskjöld as 'the supporter and protector of the imperialists in the Congo and the Nationalist racials in South Africa', and demanded his resignation as UN secretary general.<sup>206</sup> Likewise, a meeting in Pietermaritzburg, which was attended by 600 people, passed a resolution that demanded the resignation of Hammarskjöld and the arrest and trial of Mobutu, Kasavubu, and Tshombe.<sup>207</sup>

However, not all public protest in South Africa was in remembrance of Lumumba. In front of Johannesburg's city hall, a small group of members of the 'Belgian Refugee Association' put

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<sup>202</sup> 'Newclare Meeting', *New Age*, 23 February 1961, p. 4.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>204</sup> 'Dag Must Answer', *New Age*, 23 February 1961, p. 4.

<sup>205</sup> 'Cape Town', *New Age*, 23 February 1961, p. 4.

<sup>206</sup> '5,000 at PE Protest', *New Age*, 23 February 1961, p. 4.

<sup>207</sup> Caption underneath picture: *New Age*, 9 March 1961, p. 3.

up posters stating ‘to hell with Lumumba and his communist friends. Why should we mourn for his death?’<sup>208</sup> The association reportedly consisted of various nationals who had fled Congo, and was led by Portuguese national, Nuno de Sousa Cabral Calvet de Magalhães, who referred to Lumumba as a criminal.<sup>209</sup> According to his letter to Verwoerd, Magalhães left Congo as a result of the UN’s ‘unfortunate idea’ of wanting to ‘help’ Congo, and chose to move to South Africa as he thought it was a big country ‘with a big future in front of it’ and a true defender of settlers.<sup>210</sup> The anti-Lumumba protest was not appreciated by all. Irene Molaoa from Kenilworth exclaimed in *New Age* that,

These people must not interfere here in South Africa. If we, non-whites or whites, want to mourn for our hero of the Congo it is none of their business, and they are still going to move out of South Africa very soon, the same way they moved out of the Congo. They have no say here in the Union.<sup>211</sup>

For those who had considered Lumumba as Congo’s true democratically elected leader, Gizenga embodied new hope for genuine Congolese nationalism, and his Stanleyville government was often linked to the late prime minister. Gizenga’s arrest and incarceration by the Leopoldville government in January 1962 resulted in similar demands for justice as when Lumumba had been arrested.<sup>212</sup> *New Age* highlighted the complicity of the UN in the transfer of Gizenga to the Leopoldville government, and demanded his freedom as well as the arrest of Tshombe and all others responsible for the murder of Lumumba.<sup>213</sup> Harmel argued in the *African Communist* that it was ‘imperialism that murdered Lumumba and now threatens the life of imprisoned Gizenga’.<sup>214</sup> In February 1962, the South African Peace Council wrote an urgent appeal to the UN and to Congolese Prime Minister Cyrille Adoula, demanding the release of Gizenga. Their message stated that ‘No longer deceived by colonialist trickery, we people of Africa detect in Gizenga’s arrest another attempt to silence the fighters for African independence’, and

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<sup>208</sup> ‘Belgians Will Quit Union Soon’, *New Age*, 2 March 1961, p. 2.

<sup>209</sup> ‘Anti-Lumumba Protests’, *Cape Times*, 20 February 1961.

<sup>210</sup> Archive for Contemporary Affairs (hereafter ACA), PV 93, 1/30/1/14, ‘Nasionale Party’, Letter from: Nuno Calvet de Magalhães, Johannesburg, To: HF Verwoerd, Cape Town, 31 January 1962, pp. 1-2.

<sup>211</sup> ‘Belgians Will Quit Union Soon’, *New Age*, 2 March 1961, p. 2.

<sup>212</sup> See, p. 32.

<sup>213</sup> ‘Congo’s Interior Minister Kept from Seeing Gizenga’, *New Age*, 15 February 1962, p. 7.

<sup>214</sup> ‘Africa and World Peace’, *African Communist*, August 1962, p. 48.

... therefore bearing in mind the cruel murder of Patrice Lumumba, and fearing that Gizenga's life is similarly threatened we demand his immediate release and the restoration of all his civil rights as a deputy of the Congolese assembly.<sup>215</sup>

### 7.3 Congo- lessons and rhetoric

When the Congo crisis broke out in June 1960, South Africa was preparing for the national referendum on becoming a republic in October that year. Additionally, it was to hold its general election in October the following year. During this time significant comparisons with, and references to, South Africa's socio-political trajectory were made when discussing the events in Congo. Many made use of so-called 'lessons of the Congo' to substantiate their envisioned path for the country and its people. NP Member of Parliament, Fritz Steyn, informed the American Embassy in Pretoria that 'to the ordinary voter [...] events [in the Congo] were confirming the nationalist position that basic concessions to the non-whites would lead to the submergence of the whites and a return to savagery'.<sup>216</sup> He proudly claimed that every day more white citizens joined the ranks of those who would 'never accept black domination'. Similarly, United Party Member of Parliament, Jack Masson, had argued that in his constituency of Sea Point 'voters are linking the Congo incidents with crimes of violence committed by non-whites against whites in the Union'.<sup>217</sup>

A fitting portrayal of such white anxieties that had their roots in the events in Congo was a *Huisgenoot* article on the formation of a women's shooting club in the Transvaal Province. The article argued that the recent riots in South Africa (referring to Langa, Sharpeville and Cato Manor) and the Central African Federation (referring to Salisbury, Bulawayo, Gwelo) had been the impulse for the club's formation. Congo's *Force Publique* mutiny had only further fastened its pace. It reported that the woman 'wanted to defend themselves' as they were informed daily by the media about the state in which female refugees from Congo arrived in South Africa. These included stories of molestation and abuse, and mothers who were helpless whilst their children were maimed and murdered. Club member Isabel Engelbracht explained that even though she did not believe that such events would ever occur

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<sup>215</sup> 'Release Gizenga!', *New Age*, 1 March 1962, p. 7.

<sup>216</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 98, '350 riots Congo unclassified and OOU', Foreign Service Despatch, from: American Embassy, Pretoria, To: Department of State, Washington, *South Africa and the Congo Debacle*, 14 July 1960, pp. 1-2.

<sup>217</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 98, '350 riots Congo unclassified and OOU', Foreign Service Despatch, from: American Embassy, Pretoria, To: Department of State, Washington, *South Africa and the Congo Debacle*, 14 July 1960, p. 3.

in South Africa, the women wanted to be prepared and ready if similar incidents did take place.<sup>218</sup>

The notion that the status quo of Southern Africa needed to be defended from a similar fate as Congo was regularly highlighted by white South Africans. One Springs resident complained to Verwoerd; asking him when South Africa would be prepared to take military action to ensure the future of the white man in Africa instead of waiting until, like in the case of Congo, the other Southern African states would 'fall in the hands of the natives by means of the UN'.<sup>219</sup> He argued that the only way to protect the white man was by forming a powerful alliance with Portugal, the Central African Federation, and Katanga.<sup>220</sup> Likewise, *Huisgenoot* argued that because of the troubles brewing in places such as Congo, Southern African states (including Katanga) should unite themselves into a confederation that would safeguard their future.<sup>221</sup> In the *Cape Times*, Pierre Bosman from Parow suggested the drastic approach that as a 'good neighbourly' gesture, the South African government should 'offer a few of our Saracens [armoured vehicle] and a couple of contingents of the by-the-English-Press-much-maligned South African Police!' in order 'to restore law and order' in Congo.<sup>222</sup>

For many white South Africans the sudden independence of Congo and the chaos and violence that occurred after having granted the Congolese population the franchise, confirmed that South Africa should continue developing apartheid. Such a deduction was in line with the NP's perceptions on the Congo crisis. *Die Burger* questioned whether, in the light of the occurrences in Congo, it was possible for whites in a country like South Africa to 'implement a policy of emancipation which would result in a partnership'.<sup>223</sup> It concluded that there were no examples in Africa that indicated that such a partnership was possible, and further argued that South Africans also did not 'have a Belgium or a Britain to flee to'. *Die Burger* therefore contended that the only future for whites South Africans was a policy of separate development with clear distinct self-rule.<sup>224</sup> Similarly, one *Huisgenoot* reader whose letter was titled 'White man wake up!' highlighted that the violent developments in Langa, Sharpeville, and Congo, and indicated Africa's course of direction. As a result, he believed

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<sup>218</sup> 'Vroue Gryp die Roer', *Huisgenoot*, 23 September 1960, p. 24.

<sup>219</sup> ACA, PV 93, 1/30/1/14, Letter from: O van der Berg, Springs, To: HF Verwoerd, Pretoria, 11 December 1961, p. 1.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>221</sup> 'So het Katanga Gelyk', *Huisgenoot*, 22 September 1961, p. 72.

<sup>222</sup> 'Goodwill Gesture', *Cape Times*, 19 July 1960.

<sup>223</sup> 'Die Kongo en Ons', *Die Burger*, 11 July 1960.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

that the only solution to safeguard South Africa was to implement a policy of independent homelands. Failing to do so, he argued, would ‘mean that we will no longer be boss in our own home [...] We are sitting on a boiling pot’.<sup>225</sup> If no action was taken to implement complete separate development, the reader predicted the possibility of a ‘second Blood River’. He, however, warned that such a direction would require sacrifice and hard work from white South Africans, and that he himself was ‘prepared to struggle with a PhD in nuclear physics, and do plumbing and washing’ in order to achieve this goal.<sup>226</sup>

In light of the Congo crisis, some white South Africans perceived that the formation of independent homelands would guarantee control over their own affairs. One self-proclaimed British South African in Sea Point wrote to Verwoerd, arguing that ‘black domination is the worst “poison arrow” we have to fight and FIGHT we must’.<sup>227</sup> He believed that the battle was against the ‘Bantu’s’ so-called ignorant demand for self-rule, which had brought nothing but misery to ‘the white pioneers in the Belgian Congo, Algeria and Kenya’.<sup>228</sup> He further exclaimed that ‘it would be sheer suicide to permit the infiltration of black rule over us and our children’.<sup>229</sup> Another Cape Town resident similarly argued in the *Cape Times* that ‘the white future is black if Bantustans fail’, as Bantustans were the only ‘practical alternative to black dictatorship’. According to his line of argument, Belgium could have avoided much of the trouble in Congo if they had ‘made separate territorial provision including self-government for their natives’.<sup>230</sup>

Although *Die Burger* supported the idea of continuing apartheid, it argued that the chaotic occurrences in Congo would not change the mind-set of those abroad who opposed it. Unlike the hope expressed by Pretoria,<sup>231</sup> *Die Burger* predicted that ‘there will be a lot of sympathy for [Congo] the stumbling baby who is learning to walk’.<sup>232</sup> Such a notion was shared by some white South Africans. One reader of *Die Burger* noted that ‘the white man in Africa who comforts himself by the Congo, has a deep necessity for comforting’.<sup>233</sup> Another reader

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<sup>225</sup> ‘Witman, Word Wakker!’, *Huisgenoot*, 2 September 1960, p. 8.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.* The Battle of Blood River was an important nineteenth century battle where a group of outnumbered Afrikaans Voortrekkers defeated a large Zulu army.

<sup>227</sup> ACA, PV 93, File 1/30/1/16, ‘Nasionale Party’, Letter from: P Broadhurst, Sea Point, To: HF Verwoerd, Cape Town, 30 May 1962, p. 2.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>230</sup> ‘Congo and the Black Vote Question’, *Cape Times*, 13 July 1960.

<sup>231</sup> See, pp. 160-162.

<sup>232</sup> ‘Die Brand by Ons Bure’, *Die Burger*, 7 July 1960.

<sup>233</sup> ‘Kongo Bied Skrale Troos vir Blankes van Afrika’, *Die Burger*, 25 August 1960.

argued that the perception that ‘the outside world will start to realise our problems’ and appreciate South Africa’s apartheid as the solution to solve these problems, was an illusion that would not make a difference. For him, Congo only served ‘as a warning for [white South Africans] to strengthen our unity and determination [...] and sacrifice more at home on the path that we have chosen’.<sup>234</sup>

Despite the NP’s increase of the share of the popular vote at the general election in October 1961, not all South Africans believed that further developing apartheid would solve the country’s racial problems.<sup>235</sup> One Advocate Lawrence argued in *Die Burger* that similar to the Congolese protesters, black South Africans opposed the government out of frustration. Lawrence believed that the only way to decrease such growing discontent was to ‘discard of any of the grievances and frustrations of the natives’, and for white South Africans to consider ‘urban natives as a permanent part of our white civilisation’. He did not mean giving ‘political rights for the natives’, but merely providing ‘those things that allow him to live a normal human life, like a decent degree of freedom and movement, choice of work and the security of a own house for him and his family’.<sup>236</sup> Some leaders of industry also expressed this sentiment of material upliftment without political emancipation. Successful South African businessman, Anton Rupert, urged that the Congo events ‘serve as a warning to multi-racial South Africa to pay greater attention to sociological and anthropological issues’.<sup>237</sup> Similarly, former chairman of the Federated chamber of Industry, CS Marx, argued that ‘an improvement of the living standard of the Union’s Bantu population is the most important way to make sure that South Africa will not get uproar and difficulties’.<sup>238</sup> He justified his argument by noting that in Katanga, where there was greater prosperity than in the rest of Congo, there was more resistance to follow suit with the rest of the country.<sup>239</sup>

Others like the Progressive Party (PP) believed that the events in Congo indicated a need to steer away from apartheid by introducing a qualified franchise to South Africa’s ‘non-white’ population. During a PP meeting in Pietermaritzburg, party leader, Jan van Steytler, warned that ‘unless the Europeans of South Africa successfully sold the concept of democracy to all the people in the country and gained their friendship as allies, the country would experience

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<sup>234</sup> ‘Kongo Los vir ons Niks op nie’, *Die Burger*, 27 September 1960.

<sup>235</sup> Newell Stultz and Jeffrey Butler, ‘The South African General Election of 1961’, *Political Science Quarterly*, 78, 1 (1963), p. 86.

<sup>236</sup> ‘Inboorlinge in Kongo was Vryel’, *Die Burger*, 19 July 1960.

<sup>237</sup> ‘Congo Events Warn of Complacency, Says Industrialist’, *Cape Times*, 20 July 1960.

<sup>238</sup> ‘Inmigrasie kan SA Red van ‘n Kongo’, *Die Burger*, 2 September 1960.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*

the events of the Belgian Congo and Kenya'.<sup>240</sup> PP Member of Parliament, Zacharias de Beer, argued in the *Cape Times* that Belgium had underprepared the Congolese and when forced to extend rights to its colonial subject it provided 'universal suffrage' and political control to people who were 'utterly unready for it'. Instead, de Beer proposed that it was 'the duty of the more highly-civilised section in any multi-racial society to extend civilisation progressively to those who become equipped to carry the corresponding responsibilities, based upon those who deserve them'.<sup>241</sup> The following year in April, executive PP member PV Pistorius addressed a meeting in Port Elizabeth during which he explained that,

The world did not demand a Congo-like surrender but was waiting for the slightest sign that South Africans were prepared to judge their fellow South Africans on the basis of individual merit and not in terms of irrelevant things such as colour, race and the myth of racial superiority.<sup>242</sup>

This line of thinking was regularly expressed. One reader of the *Cape Times* argued that if South Africa wanted to avoid a fate similar to that of the Congo, its educated black middle class should be accommodated for in public life and politics. Such a decision would eventually result in a gradual power-sharing model. However, the reader emphasised that he neither proposed that 'Africans should run' South Africa, nor that political concessions should be granted to the 'mass of uneducated Africans'.<sup>243</sup> South African industrialist, Harry Oppenheimer, expressed a similar view when he explained that 'although the Congo situation does not mean that Africans are not fit to govern, it does illustrate that primitive, uncivilised people cannot be trusted with the running of a modern state'.<sup>244</sup> Only those who had a 'reasonable standard of education and civilisation' were equal to the task.<sup>245</sup> One Rondebosch reader of the *Cape Times* believed that when the Congolese, who only recently 'emerged from primitive savagery' gained independence, they were led by 'demagogues' because Belgium had failed to produce suitable and 'sufficiently advanced and responsible men'. The LPSA's 'unrealistic idea' of one man one vote was, however, detrimental to 'the Bantu' and even 'criminally irresponsible'. According to the reader 'the real and basic lesson of the Congo' was that 'the Bantu' should be represented in the central legislature by members of

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<sup>240</sup> 'Steytler's Congo Warning', *Cape Times*, 9 July 1960.

<sup>241</sup> 'Progressives are 'Safe Course between Extremes'', *Cape Times*, 28 July 1960.

<sup>242</sup> NARA, RG 59, General Records of the Department of State, Central Decimal Files 1960-63, Box 1689, File '745A.00/4.2561', Letter from: American Consulate, Port Elizabeth, To: Department of State, Washington, *Professor Pistorius Addresses Port Elizabeth Progressives*, 7 April 1961, p. 1.

<sup>243</sup> 'Congo has a Lesson for South Africa', *Cape Times*, 27 July 1960.

<sup>244</sup> 'Lessons of Congo' – Oppenheimer', *Cape Times*, 23 July 1960.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*



their own community. Such a concession would ‘insure against a “Congo” in South Africa’.<sup>246</sup> In much of the same vein, the Black Sash’s Hildegard Spottiswoode believed that South Africa should grant opportunities to ‘qualified non-whites’ as Congo was a ‘object-lesson in the necessity for laying a solid foundation’ before the demands for universal suffrage were met.<sup>247</sup>

Finally, there were also those who used the events in Congo to support the need for universal suffrage. In *Contact*, Paton argued that even though one should not compare the situation in Congo with that of South Africa, there were three dangers of the Congo crisis that needed to be avoided. First, ‘non-white’ people needed to share fully in South Africa. Secondly, South Africa needed to implement change before it was forced upon them. Thirdly, such change needed to be substantial and not with bribes of ‘bread and butter, blankets and beer’. Paton ended his argument by noting that ‘the Belgians did not fail in the Congo because they failed to apply apartheid. They failed because in the crucial areas of administration and public responsibility they applied it only too well’.<sup>248</sup> LPSA councillor Jack Lewsen, however, noted in *Liberal Opinion* that those critics of the LPSA incorrectly assumed that the party’s ‘acceptance of the unqualified franchise is the be all and end all’ of its policy. He argued that such a deduction was an oversimplification, as equally important to the LPSA was ‘parliamentary procedures and those legal, constitutional and traditional safeguards for individual personal liberties, without which universal franchise can become the path to dictatorship, totalitarianism and, in a multiracial society, racial domination and chauvinism’.<sup>249</sup> When discussing the danger of universal franchise, Lewsen believed that any reference to Congo was irrelevant as ‘there was no democracy in Lumumba’s government, where universal franchise was used to bring about mob rule to pay off old scores against the previous ruling white minority’.<sup>250</sup>

The call for the complete disbandment of the apartheid system and the extension of voting rights to all South Africans was also supported by black South Africans such as Nkosi. Nkosi argued that the one lesson Congo could teach South Africa was that refusing to share government responsibility with non-whites, or using the failure of others across the continent ‘as a big stick to beat African leadership, will not produce the desired effects of undermining

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<sup>246</sup> ‘Delayed Development Upset Congo’, *Cape Times*, 19 July 1960.

<sup>247</sup> ‘The Lesson of the Congo’, *The Black Sash*, August 1960, pp. 3; 13.

<sup>248</sup> ‘The Congo’, *Contact*, 30 July 1960, p. 5.

<sup>249</sup> ‘Liberalism and Democracy’, *Liberal Opinion*, October 1962, p. 6–7.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6–7.

the demand for full participation in a multi-racial state'.<sup>251</sup> Some South Africans directly targeted the NP government, and warned that if it did not abandon apartheid South Africa would soon experience a Congo-like situation. Wilson Ngcayiya from Orlando West, who would later become a member of the ANC's military wing *Umkonto we Sizwe*, complained that Congo was experiencing uproar because of the 'unchristian law of apartheid', and argued that the 'Nat government is so dunderheaded that it can still not realise the fate of the law, even from the present situation of Congo?'.<sup>252</sup> Similarly, one *New Age* reader warned Verwoerd to 'wake up! What's happening in Congo will happen in this country before 1963. Unless you change your policies now, you will find yourself and your government in the rut'.<sup>253</sup> This argument was also raised by South West African People's Organisation's (SWAPO) when its Ludertiz branch sent a petition to the UN in November 1961. SWAPO called for a UN committee to visit South West Africa to assess the dire and oppressive situation. In order to add value to its statement, SWAPO Secretary Erasmus Erastus argued 'Surely you do not want another Congo?'.<sup>254</sup> Likewise, a *New Age* reader from Bloemfontein warned that the South African government's plan to transform Transkei into an independent homeland 'should not try to bluff outside opinion with what in the long run may result in a crisis similar to that of the Congo'.<sup>255</sup>

The South African government's implementation of the 1951 Bantu Authorities Act (which increased the power of chiefs in their respective homelands) together with the proposed formation of independent Bantustans, were lambasted by many black South Africans whose discourse often included Congo-inspired rhetoric. One Nyanga resident noted that 'We know that the Union is permeated with Tshombes, Mobutus and Kasavubus. Many of the chiefs in the reserves fall in this category. Political ferment is mounting and soon Verwoerd and his stooges will be compelled to accept integration'.<sup>256</sup> References to Tshombe were particularly common. The PAC spoke of those Africans who decide to become African leaders in the apartheid state as 'Tshombe-type traitors', and declared that such 'Tshombean betrayals' would be opposed by the PAC.<sup>257</sup> At the NEUM Conference in January 1962, the argument

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<sup>251</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 98', '350 riots Congo unclassified and OOU', Copy #5 Enclosure 1 to Despatch No. 130 Amembassy Pretoria, np.

<sup>252</sup> 'Apartheid Is Jungle Law', *New Age*, 22 September 1960, p. 2.

<sup>253</sup> 'Stand by Lumumba', *New Age*, 22 September 1960, p. 2.

<sup>254</sup> 'Petition to UN', *New Age*, 9 November 1961, p. 2.

<sup>255</sup> 'Our Readers Condemn Lumumba's Murder', p. 2.

<sup>256</sup> 'Union also has its Mobutus', *New Age*, 4 March 1961, p 2.

<sup>257</sup> 'A Virus Without a Name', *The Africanist*, February 1965, p. 10.

was made that in the Transkei Verwoerd armed abusive paramount chiefs with power because he wanted to ‘build up his Tshombes’ in South Africa.<sup>258</sup> One *New Age* reader from Rondebosch argued that,

The people of the Transkei should be wary of [Kaizer] Matanzima. He is selling them to Verwoerd and his pro-Nazi ministers. He went to Pretoria to represent himself not the people. Let us not forget Tshombe in the Congo and Botha Sigcau of Pondoland.<sup>259</sup>

Similarly, the *African Communist* called Kaiser Matanzima in the Transkei a ‘running dog’ and the ‘Tshombe of the Transkei’.<sup>260</sup> Matanzima, however, declared that he did not ‘have any regard whatever for the sort of “foreign aid” like in Congo’.<sup>261</sup>

Accusations of being ‘Tshombeists’ were not reserved for paramount chiefs alone and were extended to all who were considered ‘sell outs’ and ‘stooges’. According to an article by Howard Lawrence in *Fighting Talk*, some in the PAC made use of Congo discourse to draw distinctions between its members. Lawrence argued that the party’s more radical Poqo group referred to those PAC members who ‘openly flirt with the Liberal Party and its members’ as ‘the Katangese’.<sup>262</sup> Likewise, Frank Manana from East London stated in *New Age* that Grahamstown had its own Tshombes and Mobutus. Manana specifically referred to two alleged police informers, one of whom he claimed was a former member of the ANC executive who had lost his seat and had become embittered towards political movements. He ended his letter by exclaiming ‘you had better go back to the Congo, you stooges!’<sup>263</sup> One noteworthy example where such references to Tshombe were made was during SACTU’s national minimum wage campaign in February 1962. One of the actions during the campaign included SACTU members holding up placards at various railway stations along Johannesburg’s industrial routes. The protesters main slogan was ‘Don’t be a Tshombe’ and the placards included statements such as: ‘it’s a pity to spy on your brothers. Don’t be a Tshombe. Join a SACTU Union now!’; ‘Tshombe sold the freedom of the Congolese. Don’t

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<sup>258</sup> SADO, AMI, Group 3, Box 360, File 148/5/1/1, VI, ‘PAC Activities’, Secret, unknown speech at the January 1962 Non-European Unity Movement Conference, p. 4.

<sup>259</sup> ‘Beware of Matanzima’, *New Age*, 12 April 1962, p. 2.

<sup>260</sup> ‘The Revolutionary Way Out’, *African Communist*, June 1963, p. 14.

<sup>261</sup> NARA, RG 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Union of South Africa US Embassy & Legation, Pretoria, Classified General Records, 1931-1963, Box 30, ‘350 Transkei Pretoria 1962-63-64’, Outgoing Telegram, from: American Embassy, Pretoria, 16 November 1963, pp. 1-2.

<sup>262</sup> ‘Poqo’, *Fighting Talk*, February 1963, p. 4.

<sup>263</sup> ‘S. Africa Has got her Tshombes’, *New Age*, 31 August 1961, p. 2.

sell yours, Join SACTU now'; and 'The bosses bully you. Don't be a Boss's 'boy' like Tshombe. Join SACTU'.<sup>264</sup>

The trend of referring to 'sell-outs' as 'Tshombes' was not restricted to South Africa alone, but was popular across the region. One *New Age* reader noted that like Tshombe, Barotseland's '[Mwanawina] Lewanika and certain chiefs in Basutoland [...] still trust in imperialist constitutions which will disappear in the end'.<sup>265</sup> Likewise, secretary of the Swaziland Progressive Party, Ambrose Zwane, complained that the Swazi King was surrounded by 'Tshombe like stooges'. According to Zwane, the only way to save the Swazi was to vote so that these stooges could be booted out 'before they perform the Tshombe atrocity on the Swazi people'.<sup>266</sup> Similar Tshombe-related discourse was commonly used by Zimbabwean nationalists in Southern-Rhodesia in the early 1960s.<sup>267</sup>

## Conclusion

Many South Africans followed the Congo crisis with great interest and concern, regular voicing their opinions about topics that were seemingly close to their hearts. These topics ranged from Congo's independence and the liberation of Stanleyville, to white refugees and mercenaries. Of particular interest to South Africans was the contested figure Lumumba who was condemned by many white South Africans. Many black South Africans, however, praised Lumumba and showed great remorse for his death, staging various protests and memorial services in honour of the late Congolese leader. South Africans from across the racial and political spectrum regularly used the Cong crisis to juxtapose their own socio-political realities against and project their future trajectory on. Finally, some black South Africans' used Congo-related rhetoric when expressing their views on those black people they considered being in collaboration with the apartheid government. Along with the authorities in Pretoria, many South Africans thus paid close attention to the events that were developing during Congo's First Republic.

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<sup>264</sup> 'Flying Start to SACTU Campaign', *New Age*, 15 February 1962, p. 1.

<sup>265</sup> 'Chiefs Are like Trees', *New Age*, 25 January 1962, p. 2.

<sup>266</sup> 'One Man One Vote' for Swaziland', *Fighting Talk*, October 1961, p. 11.

<sup>267</sup> Scarnecchia, 'The Congo Crisis, the United Nations, and Zimbabwean Nationalism', pp. 75-77; West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, p. 218.

## Chapter Eight

### Conclusions

The preceding chapters examined in detail South Africa's relationship with Congo during its First Republic. Information previously known about this connection was re-examined and strengthened with new primary material. What follows are the conclusions that can be drawn about this relationship. These are guided by the thesis' three sub questions, namely: how was South Africa involved in the crisis; what was the rationale for its involvement; and how did it perceive the crisis.

The narrative of South African involvement in the Congo crisis is dominated by Pretoria's relationship with Moïse Tshombe. This relationship commenced when Tshombe announced that Katanga would secede from the newly established republic. Congo's sudden call for independence pushed forward South Africa's conundrum of how to approach future relations with decolonised African states that were headed by black leaders. Although certainly aware of some of the impracticalities it would be faced with, Pretoria initially did not want to break of ties with Congo once it gained independence.<sup>1</sup> The South African government was keen on establishing formal relations with African governments.<sup>2</sup> Such a desire was not driven by ideological motives, but by self-serving interest. In a climate where international condemnation of South Africa's apartheid was steadily growing, any indication that Pretoria had formal relations with an African state could prove beneficial to South Africa's tarnished image. Theoretically, Congo could be aligned to the left as long as it did not oppose South Africa or did not criticize its internal policies. However, the many instances of anti-South African protests in Congo, and utterances made by Congolese politicians during the run up to independence, confronted Pretoria with the reality that in future Congo more than likely would break off relations with South Africa.<sup>3</sup> Whilst the South African government was still hopeful that a relationship with Leopoldville could be established, it had taken note of the rumours that the Katanga Province might split away from Congo. It was, however, only after Leopoldville's announcement to cease South Africa's consular representation in Congo that Pretoria directed its focus towards Katanga, eventually aligning itself with Tshombe's secessionist state.<sup>4</sup> Although supporting Katanga was thus not Pretoria's first choice, it was

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<sup>1</sup> See, pp. 46-48.

<sup>2</sup> See, pp. 138-139; 153-155.

<sup>3</sup> See, pp. 48-54.

<sup>4</sup> See, pp. 54-55; 65-81.

its only option to maintain some type of relationship with Congo. Pretoria's initial position on the decolonisation of Belgian Congo therefore differs to that of Salisbury. Matthew Huges has highlighted that prior to Congo's independence the Central African Federation had extensive contact with Katangese settlers to discuss the possibility of a political union.<sup>5</sup>

Although never officially recognising Katanga as an independent state, the South African government established a clear relationship with it. During the three years of the Katangese secession, contact between South African and Katangese officials and representatives occurred regularly, despite Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd refusing to meet President Tshombe.<sup>6</sup> Pretoria also publically expressed support for Katanga's right to self-determination, and economically buttressed the secessionist state.<sup>7</sup> In this regard, Pretoria's overt and indirect support to Katanga was very similar to that of Salisbury.<sup>8</sup> South Africa's military support of Katanga was more complex, but no evidence was found that Pretoria directly supplied explicit war material such as weapons and ammunition or military vehicles, as claimed by some publications.<sup>9</sup> Examples were uncovered where non-lethal material that ended up being used by the Katangese military was delivered by Pretoria, or received permission from it to pass through South Africa, even when it knew that the nature of these consignments was questionable.<sup>10</sup> Although the South African government had contact with mercenaries that were fighting in Katanga and closely monitored their activities, no evidence was found that it was directly involved in their recruitment.<sup>11</sup> Whilst it allowed such recruitment to take place in South Africa virtually unobstructed, Pretoria publically distanced itself from their enlistment.<sup>12</sup> Stephen Clarke's argument that Pretoria condoned the recruitment of mercenaries for Katanga so that it could test international reactions and assess its own capacity as a regional military power is challenged in this thesis.<sup>13</sup> Although clearly tolerating mercenary recruitment, evidence suggests that it was not entirely pleased with it, as it placed the South African government in an embarrassing situation. Neither did any

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<sup>5</sup> Hughes, *The Central African Federation, Katanga and the Congo Crisis*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>6</sup> See, pp. 66-69.

<sup>7</sup> See, pp. 70-73.

<sup>8</sup> Hughes, *The Central African Federation, Katanga and the Congo Crisis*, p. 18.

<sup>9</sup> Mockler, *The Mercenaries*, p. 223; Gleijeses, "Flee! The White Giants are Coming!", p. 224; Cohen, "A Difficult, Tedious and Unwanted Task", pp. 112-113; Hughes, *The Central African Federation, Katanga and the Congo Crisis*, pp. 2; 34.

<sup>10</sup> See, pp. 73-77.

<sup>11</sup> See, p. 80.

<sup>12</sup> See, p. 81.

<sup>13</sup> Clarke, *The Congo Mercenary*, pp. 34-35.

evidence indicate that Pretoria considered South African mercenaries fighting in Katanga as an unofficial extension of the South African Defence Force (SADF) as claimed by Clarke.

Pretoria's support of the Katangese secession was partly an attempt to prevent a similar United Nations (UN) intervention as in Congo from being implemented in South West Africa, allowing South Africa to continue its contested custodianship over the territory.<sup>14</sup> Rodney Warwick correctly suggests that the South African government was particularly wary of *Opération des Nations Unies au Congo's* (ONUC) large contingent of Afro-Asian troops, which it believed could be used at a later stage to liberate the Southern African region from white minority control.<sup>15</sup> It was especially suspicious about the presence of Indian troops.<sup>16</sup> Unlike some of ONUC's forces or the Leopoldville government, Katanga did not support any Southern African nationalist movements, and at least on face value appeared friendly towards South Africa.<sup>17</sup> By aligning itself with Tshombe's secessionist state, Pretoria hoped to prevent the wave of anti-colonial counter violence and the displacement of white settlers from flowing over the borders of the frontline states of Portuguese Angola and the Central African Federation. Safeguarding the white minority governments of these buffer states would enable South Africa to retain its own minority power.<sup>18</sup> Clarke is thus correct in stating that South Africa's decision to support Katanga was partly geo-strategic.<sup>19</sup>

Even though there are indications that the Katangese leadership might not have been as pro-South African as it often proclaimed to Pretoria, the isolated secessionist state realised that it was essential for its own survival to establish relations with other states.<sup>20</sup> From its side Elisabethville tried to coerce Pretoria into directly supporting its secession by playing into South Africa's known anxieties regarding communism and anti-colonial as well as anti-South African sentiments that were associated with African independence.<sup>21</sup> Such a tactic was meant to enable the Katangese leadership to retain control over the province of Katanga and establish an independent state. Katanga's leaders acted independently during their dealings with Pretoria, supporting Miles Larmer and Erik Kennes' rejection of Katanga as a mere

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<sup>14</sup> See, pp. 142-143.

<sup>15</sup> Warwick, 'White South Africa and Defence 1960-1968', pp. 15; 54.

<sup>16</sup> See, pp. 143-144.

<sup>17</sup> See, pp. 145-146.

<sup>18</sup> See, pp. 139-141.

<sup>19</sup> Clarke, *The Congo Mercenary*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>20</sup> See, pp. 146-148.

<sup>21</sup> See, pp. 141-142.

puppet state.<sup>22</sup> The relationship between Katanga and South Africa appeared on both sides to have been based upon serving self-interests, rather than a common ideological alignment as claimed by Roger Pfister.<sup>23</sup> Pretoria was wary of Katanga's true ideological sympathies, which, at least in part, affected its reluctance to support the secession fully.<sup>24</sup> From the beginning, the South African government also considered the prospects for the success of an independent Katangese state as low, further contributing to its general policy of caution.<sup>25</sup> As negotiations were inevitable, Pretoria's preferred scenario was that Katanga would retain some form of autonomy, and that Tshombe would secure an influential position in Congolese politics.<sup>26</sup> If this transpired, the South African government hoped that its past support of Tshombe's secession would translate into having an influential ally in Leopoldville who could limit Congo's anti-South African stance. The Hammarskjöld Commission's claim that Pretoria had reasons not to welcome the UN's policy to bring about a reunited Congo is therefore not entirely correct.<sup>27</sup> Although the South African government supported the secession of Katanga, it was not averse to the idea of a unified Congo.

Pretoria's backing of Katanga was clearly an attempt to protect its own interests. While it did form a close relationship with the secessionist state, a close reading of the archival records indicates that Pretoria's policy vis-à-vis Katanga was not based upon a clearly defined grand strategy, but was rather a fluid and improvised policy. Contrary to the contemporaneous unholy alliance claims, Pretoria's policy was more narrowly conceived and implemented.<sup>28</sup> No evidence was found in either South African, Belgian, British, or American archives that reveals close concerted cooperation between South Africa and Portugal, the Central African Federation, or any other external actors. Additionally, no evidence surfaced that Pretoria's policy towards the secession of Katanga was based upon the rationale of safeguarding the region's mining interests. The available archival documents of the South African government contain no explicit or implicit statements about protecting South African mining interests in

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<sup>22</sup> Larmer and Kennes, 'Rethinking the Katangese Secession'.

<sup>23</sup> Pfister, *Apartheid South Africa and African States*, pp. 33–34.

<sup>24</sup> See, pp. 146–148.

<sup>25</sup> See, pp. 148–149.

<sup>26</sup> See, p. 148.

<sup>27</sup> The Hammarskjöld Commission, 'Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Whether the Evidence Now Available Would Justify the United Nations in Reopening Its Inquiry into the Death of Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld', p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> See for instance: Ainslie, Davidson, and O'Brien, *The Unholy Alliance, Salazar – Verwoerd – Welensky*, pp. 2–3; 5–7; Mandela, 'Address at the Conference of the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa'; *Fighting Talk*, July 1962, p. 7; 'The Battle for the Congo and the November Aggression', *African Communist*, March 1965, p. 25.



Congo, and make minimal reference to economic imperatives. Pretoria's role in the secession of Katanga cannot be described as an external force that together with other foreign agents masterminded the secession in order to protect the region's mining interests. This does not, however, rule out the possibility that regional mining companies other and beyond *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga* (UMHK) may have had individual self-serving relationships with the Katangese government, but additional research is needed to prove this hypothesis.

Similarly, no evidence was uncovered that provides any indication of a South African connection to the murder of Dag Hammarskjöld, as highlighted by Susan Williams.<sup>29</sup> Although certainly no stranger to political assassination during the 'total onslaught' era, the likelihood that Pretoria would have agreed to let such a precarious initiative take place seems contradictory to its policy of caution during the Congo crisis. Possibly implicating itself in such a high-profile murder would be counterproductive to its efforts to try to fix its crumbling international reputation. South African government documents also did not indicate a significant dislike of Hammarskjöld that would warrant Pretoria's approval of his assassination by private citizens. Such an assessment supports the conclusion of the latest UN report, which suggests that any South African involvement in the death of the secretary general is highly doubtful.<sup>30</sup> Without concluding evidence the possibility remains, but it is highly unlikely that Pretoria would have let such an assassination happen if it knew about it.

The end of the Katangese secession in January 1963 and Tshombe's subsequent exile brought a halt to the Pretoria's ambitions to establish relations with Congo, and little hope existed that this would change in the near future. After the South African government's support of the secession, Leopoldville's anti-South African stance was re-adopted with new vigour.<sup>31</sup> Pretoria's initial fear that Congo would be used as a springboard wherefrom African nationalist movements could launch their offensive on Southern Africa came true when Prime Minister Cyrille Adoula established the Congo alliance. The Congo alliance marked a polar-opposite shift in South African-Congolese relations.<sup>32</sup> Instead of Pretoria's attempt to defend Southern Africa's white minority control, the alliance wanted to overthrow it. Pretoria was unable to counter the Congo alliance, and was forced to observe how the Pan Africanist

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<sup>29</sup> See Chapters 16, 17, and 18 in: Williams, *Who Killed Hammarskjöld?*.

<sup>30</sup> United Nations, 'Report of the Independent Panel of Experts Established pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 69/246', pp. 14; 46.

<sup>31</sup> See, pp. 149-150.

<sup>32</sup> See, pp. 83-105.

Congress (PAC) and South West African Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO) established offices in Leopoldville and sent some of their members for training at the Kinkuzu camp.

However short lived, the Congo alliance was significant to both the history of Congo as well as the history of Southern African liberation movements in exile. The Congo alliance momentarily transformed Leopoldville into a centre of African nationalism. The establishment of the Kinkuzu training camp by the *Governo revolucionário de Angola no exílio's* (GRAE) army in August 1962 predates Tanzania's famous Kongwa camp by more than a year and a half. The Congo alliance was also the first time a South African or South West African liberation movement received permission from an African government to set up a base in exile to train its recruit. Furthermore, it was one of the first attempts by Southern African nationalist movements to join forces in order to liberate the subcontinent militarily.<sup>33</sup> However, persisting leadership problems among the PAC and GRAE and bad logistical organisation and planning, combined with Leopoldville's own political instability, made the Congo alliance a short-lived affair.<sup>34</sup> Despite its novelty, it was never able to establish itself properly or fulfil its mandate to liberate the region.

This study of the PAC and SWAPO's participation in the Congo alliance ties into the recent compilation of work on Southern African nationalist movements that highlight the fluidity of resistance movements' cooperation and ideological alignment.<sup>35</sup> Notwithstanding the Congo alliance, the allegiances and orientations of its members completely turned around in later years.<sup>36</sup> The examination of the PAC's presence in Congo also contributes to Gregory Houston, Thami ka Plaaitjie, and Thozama April's argument that right from the start the PAC's military camps never reached their full potential. Military training was usually neglected or negatively affected as a result of internal leadership problems, a characteristic which continued throughout the organisation's time in exile.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, by highlighting the formation of the Congo alliance this thesis has indicated that Congolese politics during the First Republic was not merely concerned with its own internal struggles as commonly focused on in the literature on the Congo crisis, but also tried to assert itself as a regional actor. Although John Marcum's suggestion that Adoula's decision to form the Congo alliance was an attempt to get rid of his image as a puppet of the West may be partially true, Adoula

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<sup>33</sup> See, pp. 86-87.

<sup>34</sup> See, pp. 97-105.

<sup>35</sup> White and Larmer, eds., 'Mobile Soldiers and the Un-National Liberation of Southern Africa'.

<sup>36</sup> See, p. 105.

<sup>37</sup> Houston, Ka Plaaitjie and April, 'Military Training Camps of the Pan Africanist Congress of South Africa, p. 50.

had shown clear signs of being concerned about the oppression of Southern Africans in the Congolese Senate, long before he became prime minister.<sup>38</sup> Although this study has provided a more detailed understanding of the Congo alliance, especially of the PAC's involvement, further research needs to be conducted on the participation of other members, and on the role of the Congolese government. The breakdown of the Congo alliance ushered South African-Congolese relations into its third and final phase.

As the alliance was on the verge of collapse, Tshombe unexpectedly returned to Congo to serve as prime minister. Once in office, he promised Pretoria that the Leopoldville government would stop supporting the Congo alliance, in return for aid to overthrow the rebel movements.<sup>39</sup> Pretoria once more had an influential ally in Congo who could act in their interests. With Tshombe as prime minister, Pretoria could now align itself with the head of a legitimate government instead of an opposing secessionist leader, a relationship with considerably better prospects. This development brought with it new hope for Pretoria to finally forge official relations with a black African state.<sup>40</sup> Another reason for its support was that the Leopoldville government was counteracting the communist backed rebels who posed a threat to not only Congo but also the wider Southern African region. Although such a Cold War scenario was certainly a motivating factor, evidence suggests that at the time Pretoria was primarily concerned with trying to establish courteous relations with Leopoldville.<sup>41</sup>

Even though Pretoria's relationship with Tshombe was now more easily defensible than during the secession of Katanga, it remained controversial. The South African government was perceived by many as a racist and oppressive white minority regime, whilst Tshombe was considered by some as a tribal secessionist leader who was a puppet of the West and responsible for Patrice Lumumba's murder. As Pfister correctly suggested, Pretoria remained cautious in its dealings with Tshombe due to this fact.<sup>42</sup> The South African government realised that its international image was tainted, and that Tshombe's political position was fragile. Any relations that were too overt could potentially do more harm than good to the reputation of both. Patience was in order until Tshombe could establish himself more securely. In the meantime, the South African government sent a number of official liaison

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<sup>38</sup> See, pp. 52-53.

<sup>39</sup> See, p. 151.

<sup>40</sup> See, pp. 152-155.

<sup>41</sup> See, pp. 151-154.

<sup>42</sup> Pfister, *Apartheid South Africa and African States*, pp. 35-36.

officers to Leopoldville to establish a direct relationship with the Congolese government.<sup>43</sup> Pretoria's dealings with Leopoldville were however largely confined to Tshombe and Godefroid Munongo. Although forming part of the Congolese government, the two were aware of their fragile political positions and considered Katanga as their emergency plan. As a result, many of Tshombe's requests to Pretoria were specifically meant to support his Katangese gendarmes who had been incorporated in the Congolese National Army.<sup>44</sup> Pretoria did however have a limit to its support, and did not always fulfil Tshombe's requests.<sup>45</sup>

Although certainly not as successful as the Americans or Belgians in influencing Leopoldville's politics, Pretoria tried its best to capitalise on its relationship with Tshombe. Verwoerd's cabinet allocated R250,000 (c. R18 million in today's currency) to aid Tshombe's government in various ways, just over half of which was used in the end.<sup>46</sup> Pretoria also clearly admitted that it wanted to buy favour from the prime minister when it considered donating money to improve Congo's administrative system.<sup>47</sup> The South African government's attempt to establish a relationship with Congo during Tshombe's prime ministership is similar to its later efforts from the second half of the 1960s onwards to establish a relationship with Malawi during Hastings Banda's presidency.<sup>48</sup> Despite its best efforts to take advantage of Tshombe's political position, the results were poor. South Africa continued to be publically condemned by Congolese representatives at international conferences.<sup>49</sup> Although the South African government was certainly aware of the limitations of its relationship with Leopoldville, it expected it to be mutually beneficial.<sup>50</sup> Pretoria's increased frustration with Tshombe's lack of commitment to South Africa likely attributed to its apprehensive attitude to providing aid to Tshombe during his final years in exile, a position it also took during Tshombe's previous time in exile.<sup>51</sup> To the South African government, Tshombe was only useful to support when he was in a position of power. Despite its best efforts, Pretoria once again failed to fulfil its intended desire to establish cordial relations with Congo. The limited influence Pretoria had over Leopoldville, disappeared with Tshombe's exit from Congo's political theatre. Any remote possibility of

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<sup>43</sup> See, pp. 124-126.

<sup>44</sup> See, pp. 122-124.

<sup>45</sup> See, pp. 121; 131.

<sup>46</sup> See, pp. 122; 124.

<sup>47</sup> See, p. 131.

<sup>48</sup> Pfister, *Apartheid South Africa and African States*, pp. 40-43.

<sup>49</sup> See, pp. 155-156.

<sup>50</sup> See, p. 157.

<sup>51</sup> See, pp. 120-121; 131-133.

renewed relations was removed when Tshombe died in Algeria, marking the end of South African-Congolese relations in the 1960s.

Apart from Pretoria's efforts to renew its relations with Tshombe, South Africa's involvement in Congo at the time was also characterised by V Commando's role in countering the Eastern rebellion.<sup>52</sup> From his stint as president of Katanga to his eventual imprisonment in Algeria, Tshombe had been greatly reliant upon white mercenaries, many of whom were South Africans, for his political manoeuvres. This precarious decision both aided and obstructed his political trajectory. Tshombe was forced to make use of mercenaries to defend the secession of Katanga,<sup>53</sup> to fight off the rebels during his prime ministership,<sup>54</sup> and to try to get back into a position of power whilst in exile.<sup>55</sup> This constant reliance upon white mercenaries was, however, an albatross around Tshombe's neck that stained his reputation and delegitimised his political ambitions.

To an extent, Clarke rightly suggested that the large contingent of South African recruited mercenaries indirectly proved 'the military potential of South Africa to the rest of the continent'.<sup>56</sup> V Commando became representative of South Africa's aspirations in Congo, even if Pretoria was not responsible for its recruitment. As had been the case during the secession of Katanga, the South African government allowed their recruitment to take place virtually unobstructed. Although initially it publically defended the mercenaries, Pretoria soon became annoyed by them and once again tried to distance itself.<sup>57</sup> This change in attitude was not because it did not believe that they were useful in fighting the rebels, but because of V Commando's bad organisational planning and growing negative reputation.<sup>58</sup> Despite the glorification of V Commando in the mercenary accounts of Michael Hoare, Jerry Puren, or Hans Germani, the available evidence has shown that the famous mercenary unit significantly struggled with logistical and disciplinary issues throughout its existence.<sup>59</sup> Pretoria was reluctant to come to the aid of its nationals who had joined V Commando but who were in need of assistance, generally passing on the responsibility to the mercenaries

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<sup>52</sup> See, pp. 107-120.

<sup>53</sup> See, pp. 79-80.

<sup>54</sup> See, pp. 107-120.

<sup>55</sup> See, pp. 107-108; 118-120.

<sup>56</sup> Clarke, *The Congo Mercenary*, p. 35.

<sup>57</sup> See, pp. 133-134; 154.

<sup>58</sup> See, pp. 112-117; 133-134.

<sup>59</sup> See for instance: Hoare, *Congo Mercenary*; Puren and Pottinger, *Mercenary Commander*; Germani, *White Soldiers in Black Africa*; Smith, *Mad Dog Killers*.

themselves or the Congolese government.<sup>60</sup> Pretoria became increasingly bothered by the mercenary unit. Although V Commando remained operational after Tshombe's departure, its existence was more of a cause of worry for the South African government than a source of hope to retain some influence in Congo.

The claim by Pierro Gleijeses that members of the SADF served in V Commando on authority of Pretoria does hold some truth, but is certainly less conspiratorial than the ANC, South African Communist Party, and Isaaq Tabata's proposed version.<sup>61</sup> The available evidence suggests that Tshombe and Joseph Mobutu initially requested Pretoria to make available a small specialised military reactionary force to fight the rebels.<sup>62</sup> This request was considered by Pretoria, and although it could not overtly supply such a unit, a plan was made to integrate SADF members into V Commando covertly. The intent to do so is specified in the statement by Commanding Officer of the SADF First Parachute Battalion, Willem Louw, and Minister of Defence Jacobus Fouché's order that authorised the incorporation of a number of SADF members into the Congolese national army.<sup>63</sup> These two key documents clearly prove that plans were put in place to infiltrate South African soldiers into V Commando. However, no proof was found that this initiative was ever implemented. It is more than likely that the Americans and Belgians, who both exercised significant control over Leopoldville and the Congolese National Army, thwarted Pretoria's military inroads.<sup>64</sup> Further research, however, needs to be conducted to prove this hypothesis. Although it is not clear if SADF members actually integrated into V Commando, Pretoria indirectly influenced the mercenary recruitment process and maintained an extensive information network among mercenaries.<sup>65</sup> It also used its mercenary connections to gather military material from Congo to aid its knowledge on subversive groups in Africa.<sup>66</sup>

Despite its extensive attempts to exert political influence and shape the Congo crisis' trajectory, Pretoria failed to make much headway. The South African government was significantly handicapped by the fact that Tshombe was a precarious political figure with whom to side. More importantly, Pretoria's ambitions were overshadowed by larger powers such as the United States and the Soviet Union, which were closely involved in determining

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<sup>60</sup> See, p. 115.

<sup>61</sup> Gleijeses, "Flee! The White Giants are Coming!", p. 224; See, pp. 189-190.

<sup>62</sup> See, p. 125.

<sup>63</sup> See, pp. 125-126.

<sup>64</sup> See, p. 126.

<sup>65</sup> See, pp. 128-129.

<sup>66</sup> See, p. 129.

the outcome of the Congo crisis. This argument ties into Raimo Väyrynen's work about the limitations of regional powers in the developing world.<sup>67</sup> According to Väyrynen, regional powers such as South Africa play an 'important intermediate role in a sphere of influence by dominating a region, while still being subordinate to major actors at the centre of global feudal networks'.<sup>68</sup> Although unsuccessful in achieving its aim, one of the reasons for Pretoria's involvement in the Congo crisis was to bolster white minority rule across Southern Africa. The wider point here upholds Douglas' theoretical model that 'local dominant states supervise local relations, by establishing and striving to preserve a local status quo',<sup>69</sup> and that similar to internationally dominant states, regionally dominant states 'defend the local status quo as they anticipate gains from doing so'.<sup>70</sup> South Africa's role as a regional power during the second half of the twentieth century is comparable to that of Australia's role in the South Pacific. Pretoria's efforts to prevent African nationalism from overthrowing white minority rule in Southern Africa were similar to the use Australia made of its regional influence and dominance throughout the 1960s and early 1970s to hold back the tide of decolonisation that was sweeping across the South Pacific.<sup>71</sup>

It is clear that Pretoria's rationale for its involvement in Congo varied throughout the crisis. The course of action the South African government decided upon was shaped by different local, regional and international developments. Although such developments were historically idiosyncratic and Pretoria's rationale predominantly ad-hoc, two overarching motivations are identifiable. First, the South African government aimed to establish cordial and eventually formal relations with an independent African state. Secondly, it wanted to maintain the status quo of white minority controlled Southern Africa. These motives formed the basis upon which most of Pretoria's involvement was founded. The second identifiable reason supports John Daniel's analysis of South Africa's regional security strategy in the 1960s. Daniel's argues that during the first half of the decade Pretoria considered Southern Africa as a strategic resource that 'formed a political and military buffer between itself and black ruled Africa'.<sup>72</sup> A careful examination of Pretoria's rationale has shown that during the crisis this buffer zone's boundary was sometimes extended to include Katanga or Congo, depending on the local Congolese political conditions. Daniel further argues that during the

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<sup>67</sup> Väyrynen, 'Economic and Military Position of the Regional Power Centers', p. 350.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Destradi, 'Regional Powers and Their Strategies', p. 905.

<sup>70</sup> Lemke, *Regions of War and Peace*, p. 49.

<sup>71</sup> Waters, 'Against the Tide', pp. 194–208.

<sup>72</sup> Daniel, 'Racism, the Cold War and South Africa's Regional Security Strategies', p. 37.

first half of the 1960s, Pretoria's security analysis of the region was 'essentially a racist paradigm' where little Cold War sentiments intruded. It was mainly concerned with the 'swart gevaar' and less with the 'red menace'. Pretoria's focus only shifted during the second half of the decade when the threat to South Africa 'was conceptualised in the context of the East-West conflict'.<sup>73</sup> The South African government's involvement in the Congo crisis corresponds with Daniel's assessment. A close reading of the archival evidence indicates that Pretoria's rationale was dominated by its concerns about safeguarding white minority control in the region, and that Cold War dynamics were considered significantly less.

Ultimately, the South African government's relationship with Tshombe was a marriage of convenience. Its policy on Congo was self-serving, and the limitations of its intervention were usually defined by how its international standing would be affected.<sup>74</sup> Whether it was its cautious stance on providing aid to Tshombe's Katangese state or Leopoldville government, or its efforts to attract white Congo refugees to settle in South Africa, the potential effects on South Africa's reputation were carefully weighed. In the process, considerable amounts of money were spent by Pretoria to achieve a favourable outcome from its involvement.<sup>75</sup> In many ways, Pretoria secretly hoped that its actions concerning the Congo crisis would improve its international standing.<sup>76</sup> As highlighted by Clarke in passing, The National Party (NP) government expected that the events in Congo would indirectly invoke more sympathy for apartheid South Africa.<sup>77</sup> In the case of providing aid to white Congo refugees, the South African government ascribed itself the role of the defender of Western 'civilisation' in Africa, and used the refugee crisis to justify the continuation of its apartheid policy.<sup>78</sup> Besides a momentary and limited shift in thinking across the Western world, international critiques of apartheid South Africa worsened regardless of the events in Congo or Pretoria's efforts to improve its image. It can be argued that Pretoria's relationship with Tshombe in combination with its laissez-faire attitude towards South African mercenaries actually contributed to this growing international condemnation. Although it might not have been successful in changing world opinion, when addressing its electorate the NP regularly referred to the Congo crisis to defend the implementation of apartheid.<sup>79</sup> The events in Congo more than likely contributed

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<sup>73</sup> Daniel, 'Racism, the Cold War and South Africa's Regional Security Strategies', pp. 37-38.

<sup>74</sup> See, pp. 157-162.

<sup>75</sup> See, pp. 58; 64; 70-72; 122; 124; 131.

<sup>76</sup> See, pp. 157-162.

<sup>77</sup> Clarke, *The Congo Mercenary*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>78</sup> See, pp. 55-65; 162-163.

<sup>79</sup> See, pp. 162-164.



to the NP's electoral success in the 1960 referendum on becoming a republic, and the 1961 general elections. Such an argument proves Thomas Noer's claim that the reported violence against white people in Congo aided the NP's political cause.<sup>80</sup>

The formula of referring to the Congo crisis when discussing South Africa's political trajectory was certainly not unique to the NP. Warwick is correct in suggesting that the events in Congo had a significant effect on white South Africans who juxtaposed their own 'realities' with the events in Congo;<sup>81</sup> but such behaviour was not restricted to them alone. South Africans from across the racial and political divide regularly used the events in Congo to make sense of South Africa's current realities and future direction. This was especially true during the highly politicized period leading up to South Africa's referendum and its general election. Although there was much disagreement about what form South Africa's socio-political future should take on, a consensus existed that the events in Congo provided valuable 'lessons' for South Africa. These 'lessons of the Congo' can be divided into three general views. If South Africa did not want to end up like Congo, it should either continue implementing apartheid,<sup>82</sup> or extend qualified franchise to some of its 'non-white' citizens,<sup>83</sup> or abolish apartheid and implement universal franchise.<sup>84</sup> The Congo crisis was not only used to make sense of South Africa's changing socio-political landscape, but also that of the continent and world, often relying on polarising Cold War discourse to do so. The Congo crisis was fervently discussed in various newspapers and periodicals, translating into a range of opposing interpretations and views about the events and their causes.<sup>85</sup> Although South Africans closely followed the developments in Congo, their interest occurred in waves of intensity. Such interest was often divided along ideological or racial lines. While many white South Africans spent considerable time discussing Congo's refugees, they were noticeably less interested in the death of Lumumba. Vice versa, the majority of black South Africans hardly discussed the refugee crisis, but greatly mourned Lumumba's death and extensively lambasted his murderers.<sup>86</sup> The striking number of protests, commemoration ceremonies, and comments concerning Lumumba's death by predominantly black South Africans is indicative

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<sup>80</sup> Noer, *Cold War and Black Liberation*, p. 58.

<sup>81</sup> Warwick, 'White South Africa and Defence 1960-1968', pp. 171; 179; 183; 228.

<sup>82</sup> See, pp. 200-202.

<sup>83</sup> See, pp. 202-204.

<sup>84</sup> See, pp. 204-206.

<sup>85</sup> See, pp. 166-190.

<sup>86</sup> See, pp. 170-173; 190-199.

of his importance to them.<sup>87</sup> Black South Africans' attachment to the figure of Lumumba and their reactions to his death formed part of a wider regional trend, and interesting parallels can be drawn with Timothy Scarnecchia's work on the relationship between the Congo crisis and Zimbabwean nationalism.<sup>88</sup>

Equally noteworthy was the Congo-related rhetoric commonly used by black South Africans in their discourse on fellow black South Africans who were considered to be working for the apartheid state.<sup>89</sup> Tshombe became the epitome of African collaboration, and his name and various derivatives thereof were regularly used to describe so-called apartheid stooges. Such a label was often attached to paramount chiefs like Pondoland's Botha Sigcau.<sup>90</sup> This observation contributes to regional understandings of the Congo crisis, and tie into the work of Scarnecchia and Michael West on similar discourse in Rhodesia.<sup>91</sup> It is certainly possible that Robin Kayser's claim that in the early 1960s the name of Pondoland's *iKongo* insurgency movement, which opposed the Bantu Authorities Act that empowered chiefs like Sigcau, was influenced by the events transpiring in Congo.<sup>92</sup> Although no direct evidence was found to prove this theory, the popular use of Congo-rhetoric to distinguish between collaborator and compatriot certainly adds credence to this hypothesis.

This study is the first comprehensive examination of South Africa's involvement in and perceptions of the Congo crisis, and provides a nuanced understanding of this relationship. It has re-examined and strengthened the limited knowledge on South African mercenaries and Pretoria's involvement in, and stance on, the Congo crisis. It has also investigated hitherto neglected aspects of the crisis, including, white Congolese refugees who fled from Congo to South Africa; the connection between South African nationalist movements and the Congo crisis; as well as wider South Africans perceptions of the crisis. This thesis has clearly indicated that Congo was of considerable importance to South Africa. Not only was it an important part of Pretoria's foreign policy, it also influenced the exile politics of some of South Africa's nationalist movements. In addition, it influenced South African perceptions of its own turbulent socio-political changes, as well as the political transformation of the African continent. In essence, the Congo crisis was used and abused by both proponents and

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<sup>87</sup> See, pp. 194-198.

<sup>88</sup> Scarnecchia, 'The Congo Crisis, the United Nations, and Zimbabwean Nationalism'.

<sup>89</sup> See, pp. 206-207.

<sup>90</sup> See, p. 206.

<sup>91</sup> Scarnecchia, 'The Congo Crisis, the United Nations, and Zimbabwean Nationalism', pp. 75-77; West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, p. 218.

<sup>92</sup> Kayser, 'Land and Liberty!', pp. 31; 101-102.

opponents of apartheid South Africa in pursuit of their objectives and in defence of their ideologies. South Africa's involvement in, and perceptions of, the Congo crisis altered its internal and external politics during the first half of the 1960s. What sets South Africa's involvement in the Congo crisis apart from foreign interference by the USA, Belgium, Britain, Cuba, or the Soviet Union is that South Africa's involvement was predominantly concerned with Southern Africa's white minority control, instead of Cold War geo-politics.

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