CHAPTER 14

Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi

The apocalypse, an influential Belgian magistrate wrote at the end of his colonial career, was due in 2026. University graduates, mutinous soldiers, and messianic religious figures would sweep away the massive colonial edifice constructed by Belgium in Central Africa. Nationalism and Pan-Africanism were the ineluctable consequence of education and modernisation; the achievements of the colonial system, to our satirical jurist, contained 'the germ of their own destruction'. Elements of this prophecy were to find their echo in the momentous transformations compressed into the third of a century from 1940 to 1975. A series of shock waves totally altered the political landscape: a nationalist explosion in Zaire\(^2\) that engulfed the prudent calendars and Eurafican visions of the coloniser, the turbulent eddies of which finally gave way to the would-be leviathan state of Mobutu Sese Seko (Joseph-Désiré);\(^3\) an ethnic revolution in Rwanda, and a precarious ethnocracy in Burundi, with the liquidation of the historical monarchies in both. As the Second World War began, however, virtually no one had any premonition of the sea changes in store.

The formal structure of the colonial state was in many respects the logical prolongation of the absolutist Léopoldian state. The centralised personal control the monarch aspired to achieve had as its counterpart the pronounced concentration of powers in the

\(^2\) The Belgian Congo became known officially as the Republic of the Congo upon independence in 1960, then the Democratic Republic of the Congo under the 1964 constitution. To distinguish it from its northern neighbour bearing the same name, it was commonly referred to as 'Congo-Léopoldville', then 'Congo-Kinshasa' when the place-name of the capital city was altered in 1966. In 1971, the designation 'Zaire' was adopted for both the country and its principal waterway. To reduce confusion, 'Zaire' is used throughout here as the term for the independent state.
\(^3\) In 1971, all Zairean citizens were required to drop forenames of European provenance in favour of names of African origin. For persons whose role extends beyond the name-change date, the former Christian name is indicated in parentheses.

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metropolitan colonial organs in Brussels. Executive authority was vested in the Ministry of Colonies, whose staff—and usually minister—tended to be recruited from Catholic and conservative milieux. The royal family also maintained an active interest, political and economic, in colonial affairs. The king was on a number of occasions the source of significant political initiatives. The Chamber of Deputies received an annual report on the administration of the colonies, and had to approve the colonial budget, but its role as overseer was often purely nominal. Within the colony, improving communications were making the concentration of power in the government-general in Léopoldville (Kinshasa) more effective. The Tilkens reforms in 1933 had sharply circumscribed the autonomy once enjoyed at the provincial
level, especially in Katanga and Orientale. The governor-general, who had come to be invariably selected from the ranks of the colonial service, had by 1940 clearly established his pre-eminence within the colony.

Ruanda-Urundi, as a League of Nations mandate, retained a somewhat special status, although it was roughly analogous in 1940 to a seventh province of the Belgian Congo. A decree of 1925 provided for its administrative integration with the Belgian Congo for purposes of currency, security, and colonial bureaucracy. Colonial legislation applied only if specifically extended to Ruanda-Urundi, which retained a separate budget. The vice-governors were, however, subordinate to the governor-general in Léopoldville. Parenthetically, the Usumbura (Bujumbura) post was a stepping-stone to the governor's palace in Kinshasa for three of the four post-war Belgian Congo governors-general.

By 1940, the field administration of the colonial state had achieved a thorough hegemony over the subject population, although in some areas, such as Kivu, Ruanda-Urundi, parts of Kasai and Kwango, colonial occupation was not complete until the 1920s. The reform of indigenous jurisdictions in 1933 completed the task of reorganising customary structures, and incorporating them as auxiliaries of the colonial order. Despite a proclaimed adherence to the doctrine of indirect rule, the territorial administration was peremptory and interventionist on the ground. Its capacity to sustain complete dominance was limited at some times by shortages of personnel and resources, especially during the peak Depression years and the Second World War, and at some places by the vitality and skill of some important chiefs, such as the nyimi of the Kuba or the bami of the Shi. The priority accorded to obligatory cultivation, begun in 1917 and generalised in the 1930s, and to public works, taxation, and labour supply for mine and plantation, was incompatible with real autonomy for customary leadership.

The infrastructure of colonial power was by no means limited to the administration; the missions and corporations were crucial elements in the imperial order. By 1930 there were as many Catholic missionaries as colonial functionaries. The impact of the church came through its control of the educational system; its critical though indefinable role as an agency for the transmission of an alternative value system; its related gate-keeping function
in the allocation of opportunities for social mobility for the young, and the political weight of the more articulate and aggressive spokesmen in the senior hierarchy.

The basic framework of the capitalist sector was solidly implanted by 1940. Union Minière du Haut Katanga (UMHK) had achieved its pre-eminent role in the national economy. Although the heavy paternalism of the mining companies was most pronounced in Katanga, labour-intensive exploitation of diamonds in Kasai, tin in Kivu, and gold in the north-east cast a long shadow over the surrounding countryside. Agricultural capitalism was also powerful in its impact, whether organised primarily in plantation form with large labour demands in the case of palm-oil, or with the corporate power exercised through processing and marketing monopolies, whose supplies were assured through forced peasant cultivation, as in the case of cotton. A wage-labour force, exceptionally large in comparison with those of other African colonies at the time, had been generated by these developments; and the number of wage-earners had increased from 125,120 in 1920 to 536,055 in 1940.

The commanding heights of the evangelistic and capitalist sectors were resolutely Belgian. Although, in the religious sphere, Protestant missionary activity was tolerated, its non-Belgian character denied it access to subsidy (until 1946), state support, and political influence. The capitalist sector included Unilever, active in palm-oil, and Tanganyika Concessions which was the largest single share-holder in UMHK; basic control of the latter, however, remained in Belgian hands, and the economy was, fundamentally, a national enterprise. In Ruanda-Urundi, the relative weakness of the administrative sector was matched by the virtual absence of a corporate domain. A few small mines existed, tin ore being the most important, but their importance was minuscule. The population was far too great to permit a plantation economy to emerge. Only the mission infrastructure was comparable; the White Fathers, in particular, had by 1940 already created a remarkably thorough evangelistic structure with far-reaching social influence.

The scope for African initiative or mobility within the congealing structures of the colonial system was very limited. The adult African was a functional unit, as suggested by the customary census designation ‘HAV’ – *homme adulte valide* – to be harnessed
to export-crop cultivation, or conscripted for mine or plantation service. Internal movement required administrative authorisation. Except for Catholic seminaries, full secondary education was non-existent, though some post-primary vocational institutes had appeared. Despite these handicaps, however, a new élite was just beginning to be visible, especially in the clerical ranks of the public and private bureaucracies.

Each element of the colonial power structure was confident of its capacity to direct the creation of a new society: Christian in its values, industrial in its rhythms and disciplines, Belgian in its orientation and loyalty. Achievement of these goals was very far in the future, and no one doubted the immensity of the task. At the same time, it served as full justification for the coercive weight of the colonial system. The presumed paternal benevolence of these ultimate ends was doubted by few of those who manned the hierarchies of state, church, or corporation, however heated might be the debate over particular pathways. To ruler and subject, the colonial apparatus was too powerful to imagine that it could be dismantled.

The German Blitzkrieg swept over Belgium in two weeks in May 1940, creating a moment of disarray in the colony. The government of Belgium fled to exile in Britain, and by autumn 1940 was operating from London. However, King Léopold III remained behind, and the civil service department heads continued to operate their ministries in Brussels. Confusion persisted for several months as to the status of the colony: residual focus of Belgian sovereignty; dependency of the exile government in London tied to a British alliance; or autonomous and neutral? By late 1940, the partisans of the London exile government had emerged victorious. Leadership in the colony was assured by the most vigorous and brilliant of Belgium's proconsuls, Pierre Ryckmans, a liberal Catholic. The London government, however, was in no position to assert strong authority over Kinshasa; the colonial administration became, for the first time, largely autonomous. The effort de guerre imposed severe sacrifices, which bore most heavily upon the African population. The Allies at first asked for increased production of tin and gold, with cobalt, tungsten, uranium and rubber subsequently added to the list. The
number of required days of *corvée* labour on roads, public works, and forced cultivation was raised from 60 to 120, a figure in reality often exceeded. Coerced collection of wild rubber, abandoned since the 'red rubber' scandals of the Congo Free State, was resumed, raising rubber exports from 1142 tons in 1939 to 11,337 in 1944. Units of the Force Publique, funded by the colonial budget, were made available to Allied forces in the Abyssinian campaign, in West Africa, the Middle East, and even Burma. While the territorial service redoubled its pressure on the subject population, it was stripped of its cadres. In the words of a liberal jurist, the field administration 'was the great sacrifice of the war: decimated in its cadres, prostituted in its mission'.

The war effort had serious consequences for the security of the colonial order, and engendered the most far-reaching disturbances since the early days of Léopoldian rule. Ironically, the first symptom appeared in the form of a revolutionary but racist white syndicalism on the Copperbelt as European employees revolted against the iron discipline of UMHK. In December 1941 a strike broke out among African UMHK workers at Lubumbashi, the first overt urban social protest movement. The immediate grievance was the blockage of wages in the face of a sharp increase in living costs resulting from war shortages. More general discontents had begun to be articulated in small discussion groups of African élites; these ideas formed a diffuse backdrop to this watershed event. Troops opened fire on demonstrators. The official death toll was 60, with most popular versions reporting a vastly greater number. Nor were ominous symptoms of a growing threat to colonial security limited to the Copperbelt. The Kananga (Luluabourg) garrison mutinied in February 1944, and several months were required before the last mutineers were rounded up. A major rural uprising occurred in the Masisi region of Kivu in 1944, expressed through the metaphor of religious protest. In November 1945, demonstrations by dock workers in the port city of Matadi produced an official toll of seven dead and 19 wounded when troops again fired on protestors. In its organisation and participation, the Matadi protest appeared to show signs of nascent working-class consciousness. A more generalised indicator of the social costs of the war effort lay in

1 Antoine Rubbens, in *Dettes de guerre* (Elisabethville, 1945), 191.
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the first appearance of rural exodus. By the end of the war, Belgian officials and missionaries began to note a marked reduction in the numbers of adult male cultivators in many areas.

Ruanda-Urundi lay on the margins of the war effort, and escaped most of its rigours. There was no wild rubber, nor large mines, to devour its manpower. The major preoccupation was the precarious balance between land and population. Mandate authorities were first sensitised to the dangers when a famine in 1928–9 claimed an estimated 300,000 lives, or 10 per cent of the population. Poor rains in a number of areas brought renewed disaster in 1943–4, with again an estimated 300,000 dead or uprooted.

In his last annual address as governor-general, Ryckmans declared firmly that ‘the days of colonialism are over’. The future he foresaw had little in common with that which nationalist voices were coming to demand, but it was not a simple restoration of the pre-war system either. The time was at hand to engineer the first controlled participation of the African populace in local political organs. The awakening aspirations of the mass for a more satisfying existence were to find their fulfilment in a redoubled programme of economic development, joined to a panoply of social welfare measures. For the élite, a satisfying status within the colonial hierarchy was to be defined. In the post-war era, a delicate balance had to be maintained between the devolution of political responsibilities and the spread of mass education. A fundamental premise was that, in some way which only the unfolding future would define, a Belgian framework would remain.

When Ryckmans delivered his Vers l’avenir valedictory speech, most regarded it as a progressive statement. In Belgian circles, nearly all could agree that the priority for economic and social development was appropriate. Vast energies were deployed in preparing ten-year plans for colonial development, published in 1950–1. Further, the prolonged boom in the commodity markets from 1946 till 1957 meant that the colonial budget itself was generating ample revenues to support swift expansion of the educational system, health facilities, housing, water supplies, and similar social services. The proposition that a satisfying niche in
colonial society had to be made available to the growing \textit{évolué} class also commanded fairly general assent. Racial discrimination pervaded colonial life and legislation; responsible colonial officials were persuaded that these should be removed, at least for the élite, although many in the swiftly growing European population were not prepared to eliminate racism from their daily behaviour. But fulfilment of the Belgian Eurafrican dream depended, at some distant point, on the fidelity of the colonised.

During the early post-war years, when full initiative and control remained in the hands of the coloniser, several miscalculations hampered the application of the Ryckmans vision. The policy wheels turned exceedingly slowly, and reforms spent years on the drawing board. Until the late 1950s, the final product was the result of compromises between colonial interest groups; African views played almost no part in shaping the laboriously drafted decrees, which were for the most part overtaken by events almost before they appeared. In the case of Ruanda-Urundi, the growing United Nations pressure for political reform imposed unanticipated constraints. Finally, and most important, no one anticipated the speed at which political mobilisation would occur once it gained full momentum in the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi in 1959.

The failure of post-war reform in the political sphere in the Belgian Congo is epitomised in the fate of the two most prominent measures, the 1952 immatriculation decree, and the 1957 Statut des Villes. Immatriculation was intended as a solution to the problem of the status of the élite: the central postulate was that, as a number of Congolese intellectuals argued at that time, \textit{évolués} represented a special social class, for whom a particular legal status had to be defined. A commission was established in 1948 to develop legislative proposals. In the interim, a 'Carte de Mérite Civique' was created to offer special recognition to Africans deemed meritorious. The commission's initial proposals in 1949 were relatively generous to the élite. Passionate opposition from some colonial milieux, however, was sufficient to emasculate the eventual decree which emerged in 1952, which offered a few

\footnote{See the first published élite manifesto, issued in 1944, demanding exemption from measures 'which might be appropriate for the ignorant or backward mass', reprinted in Rubbens, \textit{Dettes de guerre}, 128–9.}
Congolese 'immatriculated' status, but linked it to very few concrete advantages. In the event, only 1557 Cartes de Mérite Civique and 217 immatriculation cards were issued.

Political participation was to be prudently introduced from the ground up. Congolese would begin to share responsibility at the higher levels of government only after a careful apprenticeship at the base. In pursuance of this principle, a commission was established in 1948 with a mandate to prepare a reform of municipal institutions, providing for some form of popular involvement. This legislation took no less than nine years in preparation, again encountering long delays while colonial interest groups sought guarantees for the rights of European residents. When the law was finally adopted in March 1957 it did make provision for 'consultations' which, in effect, were based on an adult male suffrage, but assured Europeans de facto parity in representation and maintained firm administrative tutelage. Although elections were organised in seven of the largest cities in 1957 and 1958, they were totally overshadowed by the January 1959 Kinshasa riots, and the sudden acceleration of events that ensued.

Post-war reform in Ruanda-Urundi followed a somewhat different path, reflecting the impact of United Nations Trusteeship. Belgium had been strongly opposed to the expansion of international jurisdiction over the former mandated territories which the United Nations Charter provided, in particular the specific obligation to promote self-government. The first Visiting Mission dispatched by the Trusteeship Council in 1948, while quite laudatory on the vigour with which economic and social welfare were promoted by the administration, expressed dismay at the absence of provision for political advance. After renewed criticisms on the political front by the 1951 Visiting Mission, a decree was issued on 14 July 1952 proposing a complex hierarchy of councils providing for limited African participation. The consultations were so indirect, and so filtered through the Tutsi chiefly hierarchy, that their impact was minimal.¹

The 1954 Visiting Mission delivered a harsh verdict on the timidity of political advance. It was suggested that 20 to 25 years

¹ Ruanda-Urundi had an ethnically stratified society, with the command positions occupied primarily by the Tutsi, pastoralists who constituted about 15 per cent of the population. Except for an inconsequential number of Twa (Pygmies), the remainder were Hutu. Tutsi hegemony had been entrenched and systematised by 'indirect rule'.

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would be sufficient time to complete the Trust mission. Stung to the quick, Belgium indignantly rejected the Visiting Mission’s recommendations, with Ryckmans himself now mounting the counterattack. Nonetheless, in 1956 Vice-Governor-General Jean-Paul Harroy, in a move considered audacious at the time, reinterpreted the 1952 decree to provide for universal male suffrage for the sub-chiefdom councils. This did substantially increase the fraction of Hutu representation at the lowest level. However, the indirect election mechanism for the higher-level councils, allied to the *ex officio* representation of predominantly Tutsi chiefs at each level, meant that Hutu were progressively screened out in such a way as to leave, at the kingdom level, exclusively Tutsi membership in Ruanda, and only 3 Hutu members out of 31 in Urundi.

### THE RISE OF NATIONALISM

If the title of nationalist is to be given to any movement of protest against alien rule and oppression, then origins of nationalism may be traced back to the early days of colonial rule: the great mutinies of 1895 and 1897; movements of religious dissent such as the Kimbanguist church; and regional uprisings such as the Pende revolt of 1931. If, however, nationalism must be restricted to a definition based upon the explicit demand for African political rights and self-determination, then Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi stand out for the tardiness of the nationalist challenge. The first public claim for independence appeared in Zaire only in 1956; in all three countries, large-scale politicisation of the population dates from 1959. In all three instances, mass mobilisation became intertwined with the crystallisation of ethnic self-awareness, which had a pronounced impact on the definition of political party alignments. A simple but fundamental starting point for understanding the belated appearance of African political movements, in comparison with countries to the north and east, is that the coloniser was not disposed to tolerate them. It was only in 1958 that the administration began to accept the formation of African parties, and not till 1959 did politicians have full scope for legal organisation. The policy of rigorously isolating Belgian Africa from external influences was quite effective. Only a handful of Africans was able to travel abroad till the middle 1950s; in 1958 there were still fewer than one hundred university students from...
the Congo and Ruanda-Urundi in Belgium. Nationalist literature was not allowed to enter the Belgian colonies, and the transistor revolution had not yet made radios widely available. The only African organ of opinion, *La Voix du Congolais*, was edited under the close supervision of the colonial authorities.

There were, however, harbingers of change. The future President, Joseph Kasavubu, in 1946 had spoken of the ‘right of the first-occupant’, a phrase referring to land issues in his native Bas-Congo, but carrying broader implications. By the middle 1950s, the aggressive tone of some statements from the Alliance des Bakongo (ABAKO) in Léopoldville won it increasing respect, not only in Kongo milieux; Kasavubu became its president in 1954. In Elisabethville, political effervescence was growing, especially in Kasaian intellectual circles. The fateful word ‘independence’ was first given public African expression in 1956. The debate was launched by a young Belgian professor, of liberal Catholic connexion, A. A. J. Van Bilsen, who published a 30-year plan for the independence of Belgian Africa. While the UN Visiting Mission’s proposals for decolonisation within 20–25 years did not evoke immediate response from Ruanda-Urundi Africans, the Van Bilsen plan attracted close attention among Léopoldville intellectuals. A group of young Catholics in Léopoldville, with tacit encouragement from some sympathetic mission and university circles, published in mid-1956 the *Manifeste de Conscience Africaine*, putting forward a programme rather similar to the Van Bilsen scheme. The Conscience Africaine group was primarily composed of persons who had arrived in Léopoldville from up-river, loosely known in the local ethnic lexicon as ‘Bangala’. ABAKO leaders, social rivals, riposted a few weeks later with a far more radical document, launching the lapidary but immensely powerful slogan of ‘immediate independence’.

The debate on the future was now joined. The Catholic Church took a measured step away from its traditional role of moral buttress for colonial authority by announcing its support for an ill-defined emancipation. The 1957 Visitation of Ruanda-Urundi by the Trusteeship Council sparked off two major manifestos, which began to define more clearly the contours of decolonisation politics in the Trust Territory. A group of Ruanda Hutu intellectuals, led by future President Grégoire Kayibanda, issued a ‘Bahutu Manifesto’. This warned that the Hutu, whom ‘the
departure of the Europeans might plunge into worse slavery than before', would at least have 'the right to refuse to co-operate in the efforts to attain independence' until the mechanisms of Tutsi domination were dismantled. The exclusively Tutsi High Council of Ruanda responded indirectly with a 'statement of views', which made no mention of the Tutsi-Hutu polarity, but urged the rapid training of an élite to whom power could be swiftly devolved.¹ In contemporary social perceptions, this meant the transfer of power to the Tutsi.

The urban elections of December 1957 in Léopoldville, Elisabethville and Jadotville (Likasi) reflected the growing African politicisation. The Léopoldville results, in particular, were a psychological shock. The Belgian administration sought to organise these elections without political parties; in the capital, candidates associated with the ABAKO won 133 of 170 seats in the African communes, which appeared to be a spectacular triumph for the partisans of 'immediate independence'.

The catalytic event which totally transformed terminal colonial politics occurred in Léopoldville on 4 January 1959. The administration sought to disperse a crowd gathered for an ABAKO political meeting, a move which escalated into a vast conflagration, spontaneous in its dynamics, massive in its participation. For three tense days mobs assaulted symbolic artifacts of the colonial system: social centres, administrative buildings, Catholic missions and Portuguese stores.

Nationalism in the Congo developed as a complex dialectic between the stunned and increasingly demoralised Belgian administration, an élite which swiftly raised its demands, and a mass which now began to play a major role. By mid-1959, the administration had simply lost its grip on the critical area between Léopoldville and the sea; by the end of the year, comparable politicisation of the rural mass had occurred in Kwilu and Maniema districts, and was present in germ in many other areas. Political leaders were taken by surprise at the scope of rural radicalism; rather than instigating it, the party organisers tried desperately to restrain it, harness it to their political goals, and avoid being swept away by it.²

¹ These two documents are reproduced in United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa, 1957, Report on Ruanda-Urundi, 6 December 1957, T/1346.
² The 'rural radicalism' thesis is expounded in Herbert Weiss, Political protest in the Congo (Princeton, 1967).
In Ruanda-Urundi, the development of nationalism was profoundly affected by the ethnic stratification of the two kingdoms, and the interaction of events in each of them, despite their separate identities. The absence of a major capitalist sector and the mediation of colonial policy, through the traditional structures as adapted by their use as instruments of indirect rule, meant that the dislocating impact of colonialism was much more diffuse. Rural radicalism did appear in Rwanda in 1959, but was focussed on Tutsi hegemony rather than on the colonial system. The classic language of anti-colonial nationalism was primarily articulated by Tutsi leaders, heavily predominant in the ranks of the educated élite in both countries.

The spread of political consciousness was accompanied by a parallel process of ethnic mobilisation. The cultural categories which served as foci for this newly politicised self-awareness were by no means simple projections of the past; in many of the most visible cases, such as Lulua, Mongo, or Ngala in the Congo, they were units of identity which originated in the colonial period. In other instances, such as the Hutu category in Rwanda and Burundi, collective solidarity extended in a quite novel way to a culturally related but historically fragmented grouping. In the Congo, the politicisation of ethnicity in the era of nationalist politics was strongly marked by the particular contours of social competition in the principal cities: Kongo versus Ngala in Léopoldville; Mongo versus Ngombe in Coquilhatville (Mbandaka); Shi versus Kusu in Bukavu; Lulua versus Luba/Kasai in Luluabourg (Kananga); Kasaian versus ‘authentic’ Katangan in Elisabethville. Particular aspects of the strategies of decolonisation contributed their part. In the Congo ethnic associations were tolerated, though political parties remained banned until 1959. The first competitive elections were located in the urban cockpit of ethnic social competition.

The early post-war reforms assumed that political evolution would be slow, that it would remain under the full control of the Belgian administration, provide long apprenticeship at local echelons of governance, offer full partnership and participation to the European residents in Africa, and would lead eventually to a permanent linkage with Belgium. It was hoped that some form of bond would tie Ruanda-Urundi to the rest of Belgian
Africa. In the event, none of these assumptions materialised. The 1958 elections in Belgium resulted in an unusual Christian Democrat–Liberal coalition, anxious to make a new departure in colonial policy. Governor-General Pétillon was brought to Brussels as a technocrat minister of colonies. He at once named a working group broadly representative of Belgian groups, but containing no Congolese members, to prepare a blueprint for political reform.

The Working Group Report was published on 13 January 1959, nine days after it had been made quite irrelevant by the Léopoldville riots. A ponderous and complex plan was put forward, with directly elected councils only at the local level. These would then serve as electoral colleges for higher echelons, but with a dosage of nominated members. There was, to Congolese eyes, a disconcerting vagueness as to the attributes of these councils. There was no provision for a responsible executive, nor any mention of independence. Indeed, the wind was totally removed from the sails of the Working Group Report by the surprise broadcast of the same day by King Baudouin, the contents of which were known in advance only to the prime minister and colonial minister. The broadcast contained the specific pledge to lead the Belgian Congo to independence ‘without undue precipitation or interminable delay’. During the course of 1959, confronted with the tumultuous mobilisation of broad sectors of the colonial populace, Belgium became increasingly aware of the weakness of its position. The Algerian war provided a frightening illustration of the cost of prolonged colonial conflict. Belgium was too small to withstand the foreseeable international pressures that would build up if sustained violence developed. Somehow the confidence of the Congolese nationalist leadership, itself fragmented, had to be won.

By the end of 1959, Belgium had decided that immediate political independence offered the best chance of retaining some influence in the Congo. It was possible to believe that the territorial administration and the chiefs it had installed could influence the outcome of elections in enough areas to assure a solid bloc of ‘moderate’ deputies. Further, the European administration remained intact, and security would depend upon the European-officered Force Publique. All of this underlay what became known as le parti congolais: placing an improvised, flimsy superstructure
of elected legislative organs and councils of ministers to rest lightly atop the bedrock of the colonial state. On 25 January 1960, agreement was reached in Belgium at a Round Table Conference on independence for 30 June 1960 with national and provincial elections scheduled for May 1960. The twin processes of rural mobilisation and politicisation of ethnicity were given renewed impetus by the tumultuous electoral campaign. Power was to be defined by numbers, and aspirant politicians threw into the battle whatever resources they could discover: millennial promises, appeals to ethnic solidarity and fears, anti-colonial fervour, visions of national unity, and funds and advice from remarkably diverse sources. Two broad lines of cleavage, superimposed on many more regional ones, emerged: moderate versus radical, and federalist versus unitarian. The first involved, at one extreme, an indulgent attitude towards, and close association with, the colonial administration and, at the other, an aggressively anti-colonial stance. The other line of division separated those strongly committed to a centralised, unitary structure for the new state, from those who advocated provincial autonomy.

The elections yielded a psychological victory for the more radical nationalist parties. The initial hope of the administration, the Parti National du Progrès, won only 15 seats in the lower house. The major victor in most eyes was the Mouvement National Congolais–Lumumba (MNC/L) which made a major effort to offer its programme of radical, unitarian nationalism on a national scale. In the event it won 33 of the 137 seats, while a further eight were won by allied parties. The more dynamic regional parties, such as Parti Solidaire Africain (PSA) and ABAKO, swept their home areas but had only a limited bloc of parliamentary seats. The formation of a government out of this fractured parliament was a tortuous process, rendered even more difficult by the realisation that the numerous party groups were by no means disciplined, cohesive blocs. In extremis, a precarious formula was found, which seemed to offer a glimmer of hope: the two most prestigious leaders, Patrice Lumumba and Joseph Kasavubu, became prime minister and president respectively. The dangers of independence were reflected in the vote of confirmation on the Lumumba cabinet: though the parties represented in the Lumumba ministry represented 120 of the 137
seats, the government received only 74 votes, or five more than the bare minimum.

In Ruanda-Urundi, a working group similar to that for the Congo was sent out in the spring of 1959. Its report emerged in November 1959, and proposed a formula rather similar to that which had failed to take root in the Congo. The electoral principle, already introduced in 1956, was again to operate at the local council level, with elected burgomasters to replace appointed chiefs. The councillors would serve as electors for kingdom councils, with each mwami (king) becoming a constitutional figurehead, outside politics and parties. Political evolution was to proceed at the level of the two kingdoms. There was virtually no support in Rwanda or Burundi for maintenance of a common framework.

In Rwanda, the series of events which led to the establishment in January 1961 of the Hutu Republic began with the sudden and unexpected death of Mwami Rudahigwa Mutara III on 25 July 1959. The traditional royal council, the biru, convinced that foul play had been involved in the mwami's death, convened at once without the knowledge of Belgian officials, and announced Jean-Baptiste Ndahindurwa as Mwami Kigeri V. This audacious coup was meekly accepted by the Belgians, thus apparently suggesting that real power now lay with the Tutsi monarchists. Sharpened apprehensions in Hutu circles at this development created a propitious climate for a jacquerie in November 1959: a week of rural violence, beginning with widespread burnings of Tutsi dwellings by Hutu peasant bands, followed by Tutsi assassination of a number of Hutu leaders. Although the death toll was not large (officially 13 Tutsi, 37 Hutu), the political impact was enormous. In the aftermath of the jacquerie, some 22,000, mainly Tutsi, fled into hastily created refugee camps in Burundi, Zaire, Uganda and Tanzania. In the following weeks, no fewer than 21 Tutsi chiefs and 332 sub-chiefs were killed, arrested, or forced out of office, over half of these in the north.¹ Hutu chiefs were appointed to fill these posts, often in disorderly conditions. Although the Belgian administration by no means controlled the direction of events, there is persuasive evidence that it had decided

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to react to them by throwing its weight on the side of the Hutu, now organised in the Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation Hutu (PARMEHUTU). Tutsi interests were articulated by the Union Nationale Rwandaise (UNAR), radically anti-colonial in its lexicon, royalist and chauvinistic at its core. Communal elections were held in mid-1960s. With UNAR generally boycotting the elections, the result was an overwhelming triumph for PARMEHUTU, which captured 2390 of the 3125 local council seats. The structure of local power was radically altered by the installation of Hutu burgomasters in 210 of the 229 communes which replaced the sub-chiefstaincies.

Legislative elections for a National Assembly were announced for January 1961. At the United Nations, where Belgian credibility was at low ebb and UNAR effectively portrayed itself as an anti-colonial movement, the General Assembly in December 1960 sought to head off an immediate PARMEHUTU monopoly of power by urging a Round Table Conference among the parties and the postponement of the elections. The conference was held in Ostend in early January 1961 and resulted in a predictable impasse. At this juncture, PARMEHUTU and the Belgian administration in Rwanda were anxious to go forward with the balloting, to pave the way for a swift transfer of power to PARMEHUTU. Brussels, however, while indignant over what appeared a systematic misunderstanding of Belgian motives, bowed to international pressures and postponed the elections. On 28 January 1961, trucks arrived in the small, central Rwandan town of Gitarama, bearing the 3126 communal councillors and burgomasters, furtively summoned by the PARMEHUTU leadership, certainly acting with the consent of the local Belgian administration, and possibly with the tacit approval of Brussels. By acclamation, this assemblage, acting as impromptu constituent assembly, declared the birth of the 'democratic and sovereign Republic of Rwanda', with Grégoire Kayibanda as prime minister, and Dominique Mbonyumutwa as president. The monarchy and all its symbols were declared abolished.

The Belgian administration, although it termed the coup illegal, accepted its results, claiming with some justice that it lacked the power to do otherwise. The Gitarama coup fixed the structure of power for post-colonial Rwanda; the 17 months which remained before independence on 1 July 1962 were devoted to formal
legitimation of the new regime, both internally and at the United Nations. At UN insistence, a referendum was held on the issue of the abolition of the monarchy, and internationally supervised legislative elections took place in September 1961. The PARMEHUTU, however, was already in power; the referendum yielded an 80 per cent vote in favour of the Republic, and assured the ruling party of 35 of the 44 seats. In a final compromise with the UN on 28 February 1962, two ministerial posts and some local administrative nominations were given to UNAR.

The building of an independent state in Burundi from 1959–62 set off very different lines of conflict between dynastic clan and generation. The monarchy, rather than being swept away, was momentarily reinforced as a reassuring symbol of unity. Historically, kings of Burundi took up in turn one of four dynastic names, Ntare, Mwezi, Mutaga, and Mwambutsa. The descendants of a king, or ganwa (princes of the blood), formed a clan carrying the dynastic name of the progenitor. Though intrigue within a royal clan was certainly possible, the existence of the structurally competing royal clans provided a relative continuity to factional struggle absent in Rwanda; to this must be added the much less centralised power of the mwamiship in Burundi until Belgian indirect rule enlarged its effective scope. During the twentieth century, dynastic rivalry had hinged around the Bezi and Batare clans, a competition intensified by the particular character of German intervention in Burundi politics in the early years. Throughout the Belgian period, Bangiricenge ruled under the dynastic name of Mwambutsa. He was enthroned in 1915, at the age of two, and died in European exile in 1977. The stakes of rivalry during the colonial period were primarily chieftaincy posts and seats on the kingdom council. With independence coming on the horizon from 1957, it was evident that the resources and power at issue would be greatly enlarged.

In the 1950s, the Belgian administration came to be identified with the Batare faction; thus, when nationalist vocabulary began to graft itself upon the Bezi–Batare rivalry, history cast the Bezi as radical anti-colonials (associated with the Parti de l’Union et le Progrès National/UPRONA) and Batare (linked to the Parti Démocratique Chrétien/PDC) as moderate collaborators with the administration. The new ideological costumes were brought into
sharper focus by the dynamic role of Prince Louis Rwagasore, who became, in effect, the primary spokesman of UPRONA upon his return in 1958 from university studies in Belgium. UPRONA had been founded by a leading Bezi figure, Léopold Biha (his full name was Bihumugani); the PDC was launched by Pierre Baranyanka, great grandson of Mwami Ntare. Rwagasore stood somewhat outside the Bezi–Batare conflict as a real national figure. He was not the heir to the throne; as son of Mwambutsa, he belonged to the Bambutasa clan, and not the Bezi. His national appeal was also enhanced by his marriage to a Hutu woman, and by a charismatic political style, as well as by his tie to the palace. Belgian officials began to refer privately to the UPRONA leadership as crypto-Communist, and unmistakably sided with the PDC.

In March 1960 communal elections were announced for November of that year. Meanwhile, an interim council was named by the administration which was weighted toward Batare interests. Shortly after, Rwagasore was placed under house arrest in Bururi, in the south; other leading UPRONA figures were also hit by restrictive measures. The PDC, in alliance with several smaller parties, appeared to win a sweeping mandate, taking 2004 of the 2873 communal seats, compared with only 545 for UPRONA. Striking while the iron was hot, the administration at once announced that elections would be held for a legislature which would elaborate the central political institutions of an independent Burundi. The UN protested strongly, and the Belgians backed down on the question of legislative elections; however, a provisional council was created, with the new communal councils acting as an electoral college. A PDC-dominated interim central government was established, at once recognised by Belgium. However, under heavy UN pressure, Belgium partially retreated on 25 June 1961, reshuffling the interim government to confer two important ministries on UPRONA. Legislative elections were to be held in September, and Rwagasore was released. UPRONA succeeded in identifying itself as the party of both nationalism and the monarchy, and captured 58 of the 64 seats and 80 per cent of the vote. This verdict led to the investiture of Rwagasore as prime minister.

The euphoria of this triumph was short-lived. On 13 October 1961, a hired Greek assassin shot Rwagasore. The real conspirators were Batare leaders, in particular the PDC leader Baranyanka’s
sons, Jean Ntiterendeza and Joseph Biroli, both of whom were convicted before independence, and hanged after. They apparently mistakenly believed they had the support of the Belgian Resident in this disastrous assassination, a conviction probably derived from contacts with some Belgian functionaries. As Lemarchand notes, ‘Only if one remembers the historical dimensions of the [Bezi–Batari] conflict can one understand the feelings of rage of the Batari in the face of a situation which denied them once and for all the opportunity to make good their traditional claims to power’.

The demise of Rwagasore threw Burundi politics into disarray. Only the charisma of Rwagasore provided UPRONA with a unifying force; once this was removed, intra-party strife began to take on ominous new dimensions as for the first time Hutu–Tutsi conflict appeared. André Muhiirwa, the only significant Batari figure in the UPRONA leadership ranks, succeeded Rwagasore as prime minister, perhaps somewhat blunting the intensity of the Bezi–Batari confrontation following the Batari role in the murder. Muhiirwa, however, had social views tinged with Tutsi chauvinism, and soon became feared and hated by Hutu leaders. In January 1962, the first murders of Hutu intellectuals occurred in Bujumbura, carried out by the UPRONA youth, the Jeunesse Nationaliste Rwagasore (JNR), foreshadowing the deadly perils which lay ahead.

INDEPENDENCE AND CRISIS IN ZAIRE

What burst upon the world as the ‘Congo crisis’ in 1960 may be conveniently examined from four perspectives: the overlapping breakdowns of army; the administration; the problem of national unity; and the constitutional framework. The first flash-point was the army, riddled as it was with discontent when independence came. The political leaders had unwisely accepted a plan for Africanisation of the officer corps which kept this cadre exclusively European at the moment of independence, required a decade before much impact would be made, and above all excluded the current generation of other ranks from the prospect of swift promotion that was being enjoyed by the politicians. The first overt act of indiscipline occurred in Kinshasa on 4 July. Troops

2 Lemarchand, Rwanda and Burundi, 341.
in the nearest garrison at Mbanza-Ngungu (Thysville), ordered to Kinshasa as reinforcements to cope with possible trouble in the capital garrison, rose instead against their European officers.

Lumumba tried desperately to halt the mutiny, first by sacking the Belgian commander, and promoting all troops one rank, then, three days later, by announcing the total Africanisation of the officer corps, with acceptable Belgians remaining only as counsellors. This was to no avail: the mutual fears and suspicions between Europeans and Africans generated by the abrupt arrival of independence were too pervasive. The African mutineers were in mortal fear that the European officers would try to disarm them and exact lethal vengeance, while the European community in and out of the military camps was swept by lurid reports of rape and violence perpetrated by the troops, some of which were true. New officers were named, in some cases by election, in others by succession of the senior NCOs, in still others under the influence of the newly installed Zairean Commander-in-Chief, V. Lundula, or his Chief of Staff, Mobutu. However, weeks were to pass before anyone even loosely controlled very many troops. As it faced a crisis of survival, the new government was deprived of effective control over its instrument of security.

The backbone of the colonial state was its bureaucratic structure. Like the army, the administration carried its wholly European flavour into independence. Not until 1959 was there legal provision for the incorporation of Zaireans into the approximately 10,000 executive-level posts in the bureaucracy. In 1960, the 4645 slots in the first three ranks still contained only three Zaireans. Furthermore, only the new generation of university graduates (the first Lovanium graduating class was 1959) was to have access to these. Those senior clerks who had not metamorphosed into politicians were as bitter as the old NCOs. Independence, it seemed, was only for politicians.

This malaise served as backdrop for the July panic. Amongst European functionaries, tales spread of ‘black lists’ of persons destined for sacking at the first opportunity after independence. Total panic gripped the European community in the wake of the mutiny, and by mid-July most Belgian functionaries save those in Katanga had fled. Of necessity, yesterday’s clerks became today’s director-generals. Many had long administrative experi-
ence and abilities far beyond those required for the posts in which they had been blocked by the discriminatory structure of the colonial service. Nonetheless, they were called upon to assume their new responsibilities in conditions of unprecedented disarray. For the moment, the administration was no more able than the army to fulfil its former mission of central control.

In Katanga the European community had long considered the province a distinctive entity, resenting centralised control from Kinshasa and Brussels and the siphoning of Katangan resources to finance development in the less-endowed regions. (In 1960, 43 per cent of state revenues, and over 50 per cent of the foreign exchange came from the Copperbelt, figures that have sharply increased since independence.) This essentially European particularism, in the final colonial days, spread to a segment of the African leadership through the prism of an intensifying social competition between immigrants from Kasai, especially Luba, who tended to predominate at the élite end of the African spectrum, and groups from the southern part of Katanga, who came to describe themselves as 'authentic Katangans', and organised politically behind the Confédération des Associations Tribales du Katanga (CONAKAT). As independence approached, the large Belgian firms, especially UMHK, increasingly disconcerted by the radical rhetoric of the more aggressive nationalist parties, found CONAKAT leader Tshombe's affirmations of close collaboration with Europeans reassuring. Lumumba viewed Tshombe and CONAKAT with great suspicion, both for their visible connexions with UMHK, and for their hints that secession was being seriously contemplated. CONAKAT received only two minor posts in the elephantine Lumumba government, while Tshombe became provincial president. On 11 July, profiting from the disruption in Kinshasa, Tshombe proclaimed Katanga's independence. Belgian troops disarmed the mutinous army garrisons in Katanga; Belgian functionaries were ordered to remain at their posts, in contrast to the flight elsewhere. A Katanga gendarmerie – a unit destined to serve many flags and causes – was recruited at top speed, with the help of Belgian officers. Although the African dimensions to the secession should not be overlooked, it could never have been undertaken without large-scale public and private Belgian support. On one crucial and ultimately fatal
front, however, Belgian aid was refused: the new state of Katanga was not accorded official recognition by Belgium, nor by any other country.

On 8 August, Katanga was followed out of the national door by the Luba–Kasai region of South Kasai, in a more ambiguous and short-lived secession. The Luba provided the stereotypical success story in exploiting new opportunities for social advance presented by the colonial system. Luba had migrated in large numbers to focal points of modern activity: the Copperbelt, the Bas-Congo–Katanga (BCK) rail line, the Kasai provincial capital of Kananga, even to Kinshasa. Their apparent success made them objects of hostility – and by October 1959 of violent assault – in many places, particularly other areas of Kasai, and the Copperbelt. The final blow came in their virtual exclusion from both the national and provincial governments in June. Thus rejected on all sides, the Luba cradleland of South Kasai briefly claimed independence. As the site of most of the industrial diamond production, its loss in August 1960 deepened the crisis faced by the Lumumba government.

The final act in the drama of breakdown came with the split of the central government into two centres, each claiming to be sole repository of legality. The bifurcated executive established by the provisional constitution, with both President Kasavubu and Prime Minister Lumumba having important powers, was bound to lead to trouble. The two leaders could not have been more different, and the crisis laid bare certain flaws in both. Kasavubu had shown great courage at certain junctures in his political career; his 1946 speech on the ‘right of the first occupant’; the 1956 ABAKO stance for ‘immediate independence’; and a forthright political statement on the occasion of his inauguration as communal burgomaster in 1958. These had created a myth which proved larger than the man. Secretive, withdrawn, aloof, lacking in organisational talents, Kasavubu counted on events and other forces to work on his behalf. But Lumumba was a master organiser. In Kisangani (Stanleyville), where he first became visible, he had achieved leadership of virtually every organisation in sight by 1956. Of inexhaustible energy, charismatic style, immense charm, his political personality was almost irresistible in the final months of colonial rule. Yet joined to these talents
were some fatal flaws: he suffered from an inability to collaborate with others on an equal political plane; he was distrustful; a mercurial, passionate and impatient man, he was prone to hasty judgement and susceptible to sycophants. By August 1960, he had become surrounded by an inpenetrable entourage of cosmopolitan ideological adventurers, whose ill-judged portrayals of political reality contributed to his growing isolation. Though Kasavubu and Lumumba remained quite close in the first phases of the crisis, by August a profound chasm of distrust separated them. Indeed, after mid-July they almost never met.

Kasavubu, on the basis of an ambiguous provision in the constitution, announced over the radio on 5 September that he was dismissing the prime minister, and proposing Ileo Songo-Amba (Joseph) in his place. He then retired to the presidential palace to await the further developments that many forces, external and internal, were by then anxious to help organise. Lumumba went into furious counterattack, announcing that he was removing Kasavubu. Parliament, hastily convened, annulled both sackings. On 14 September Colonel Mobutu intervened, announcing the establishment of his own College of Commissioners, composed of university students. The thread of constitutionality had been lost. Lumumba’s residence was surrounded by UN troops as a measure of protection; the gesture was also, in effect, confinement.

Kasavubu had some decisive advantages. Mobutu continued to recognise his role as president, as did the UN. For a crucial few days, the UN froze the situation by closing the airport and radio station; Kasavubu’s supporters benefited from continued access to Brazzaville radio. The western, especially American and Belgian, support for Mobutu and Kasavubu was far more effective than anything the Soviet Union was in a position to do for Lumumba.

By November 1960, the Lumumbist forces had concluded that it was not possible to recoup the situation from Kinshasa. They regrouped at Kisangani, gaining control of the provincial administration and army detachments. On 27 November Lumumba escaped from UN protection in Kinshasa and tried to join his backers in Kisangani. He was captured en route by the Kinshasa authorities, who transferred him to Katanga, where he was at once murdered. In the meantime, Lumumba’s Vice-Premier, Antoine
Gizenga, had announced that Kisangani was the seat of the legal government. The nadir had been reached; torn into four fragments, with its administration paralysed, and the army, in the words of UN Special Representative R. Dayal, a 'disorderly rabble', prey to diverse external rivalries, the prospects for Zaire were dim.

INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE 'CONGO CRISIS'

The internationalisation of Zairean politics is the last immediate consequence of the crisis which requires consideration. This began with the intervention of Belgian troops on 10 July, with the ostensible mission of protecting the European population. On 11 July, Kasavubu and Lumumba were on the verge of agreeing to their presence, provided their mission was restricted to its announced purpose. However, that day was marked by the senseless Belgian bombardment of Matadi, and Belgian military support for the Katanga secession. Within three days, the Zaire government had appealed for American troops, UN forces, and a 'close watch' on the situation by the Soviet Union.

With remarkable speed, the United Nations put together an international force, which from then till 1964 was the most important coercive instrument in the country. The UN force, however, was responsible to the international body and not, as Lumumba apparently initially believed, to the Zaire government. Theoretically, it was intended to keep the peace without intervening in internal affairs, an impossible assignment in the conditions obtaining in 1960. Thus the complex patterns of international organisation politics – balances of power between the governing organs of Security Council and General Assembly, conflicts and rivalries between officers in the UN Secretariat and field command in Zaire – had considerable impact on political evolution in the country. The fatal dialectic of the Cold War set in very quickly. By August, the United States had concluded that Lumumba and his allies were dangerously susceptible to Soviet solicitations, and committed the considerable resources of its hyperactive intelligence agency to support political factions seeking his overthrow; then during the autumn months it dabbled in abortive assassination schemes. The Soviet Union, sensing an unanticipated opportunity to strike a serious blow to imperialist bastions in Central Africa, began delivering equipment and
advisers to the Lumumba forces in late August. President Nkrumah of Ghana, in possession of a secret commitment from Lumumba to join the stillborn Ghana-Guinea-Mali union, mustered all the diplomatic resources at his command to keep him in power. In so unstructured and weakened a polity as the Zaire of the ‘Congo crisis’ epoch, the impact of such forces was considerable.

The first half of 1961 witnessed slow movement toward a formula of reconciliation, which might make possible a reunification of the fragments, and the formation of a compromise national government. The Lumumbist group at Kisangani wanted to preserve the essentials of the late prime minister’s vision: a unitary state, weighted toward the radical 1960 parties. Katanga intimated willingness to re-enter the national community, provided that it were reconceived in a confederal image, permitting the runaway province to retain through internal autonomy what it was unable to gain as a result of absence of international recognition. Kinshasa wavered between the two, reflecting the changing international climate. With the UN as mediator, a new start was made in July 1961 by reconvening parliament; all but the CONAKAT deputies were in attendance. The assembly was almost evenly divided between Kisangani and Kinshasa blocs; however, former trade-union leader Cyrille Adoula was accepted by both as a compromise candidate. Many Lumumbists felt they had been out-manoeuvred; Mobutu remained commander of the now reunified army, while the security police were run by Nendaka Bika (Victor), both key figures in the ‘Binza group’, an informal clique of Kinshasa leaders enjoying strong western (especially American) backing.

Restoration of constitutional government eased the burden on the UN in dealing with de facto authorities without intervening in internal affairs. In New York, however, pressure was mounting on the UN Secretariat for some decisive action against the Katanga secession. On 28 August 1961, a first gesture of force was made in a smoothly executed operation aimed at 443 European officers and irregulars serving with the Katanga gendarmerie. Some 105, however, eluded the UN net, and others soon reappeared. The UN field representatives, without the knowledge of Dag Hammarskjöld, the Secretary-General in New York,
devised a more far-reaching coup for 13 September, aimed at ending the secession. This plan, however, fizzled out, and UN forces found themselves engaged in an urban gunfight with the inevitable casualties and damage. The epitaph to this disaster was the tragic death of Hammarskjöld himself, when his plane crashed outside Ndola, Zambia, en route to a rendezvous with Tshombe to negotiate a cease-fire.

In December 1961, renewed fighting broke out between UN forces and the Katanga gendarmes. This time, the UN was able both to justify its action on grounds of self-defence, and also to thrash the Katangans. Tshombe had to seek a cease-fire, with an agreement that appeared to commit Katanga to end the secession. Tshombe's skill in dilatory manoeuvre was by no means exhausted, however, and much of 1962 was spent in sporadic and fruitless negotiations on the execution of the agreement. Finally, renewed conflicts in Lubumbashi between UN forces and Katanga gendarmes developed at the end of 1962. This time the UN command seized the occasion to pursue the military action to a full conclusion, by occupying all the major towns of South Katanga and putting the Katanga gendarmes to flight. Though local commanders exceeded New York instructions, the campaign was swift and decisive; on 14 January 1963, Tshombe declared the end of the secession.

The confusion which beset the central institutions in September 1960 had soon spread to the provinces. By 1962, the Kongo, Luba-Kasai, and North Katanga areas were _de facto_ separate provinces. As provincial conflict escalated elsewhere, usually around regional cleavages, other candidates for separate provincial status appeared daily. Just possibly, many believed, a provincial structure based on smaller units, somewhat more homogeneous and created through the play of ethnic self-determination, could offer a more viable structure. Out of this came the fragmentation of the six old provinces into 21 during 1962 and 1963. Although ethnic affinity was accepted as a criterion, in fact the new units tended to follow the lines of the former districts, the colonial administrative echelon lying below the province. The hopes of greater cohesion of the new units were soon disappointed. The issue of the regional distribution of power was pivotal in the prolonged efforts to draft a permanent constitution to replace the
provisional document hastily concocted on the eve of independence. When by 1963 parliament had reached an impasse in its constitutional labours, a special constituent assembly, composed of party, regional and interest-group representatives, was convened in Kananga in January 1964, to consider a draft prepared with UN assistance. The word 'federal' was carefully expunged, but the document contained many federal features. Beyond constitutional formality, a large degree of informal federalisation had occurred through the inability of the central government effectively to exercise powers in its domain.

By early 1964, troubles mounted for the Adoula regime. Tshombe, now in comfortable exile in Madrid, began to weave a coalition of the discontented. The Katanga days had left ample resources in his hands, plus friends who would provide more. Radicals were promised national unity, disavowal of the Lumumba murder, and an anti-American posture. Moderates were reassured by the actual performance of Tshombe in office in Katanga. European interests were told that he remained a friend of the west, and a defender of private enterprise in Africa. As the conviction grew in many quarters that the Adoula regime was no longer able to cope, the Tshombe alternative began to appear as a serious possibility, not least to President Kasavubu. On 6 July 1964, Kasavubu named Tshombe as formateur of a provisional government, while awaiting the organisation of elections for a new parliament and a permanent government as prescribed by the Kananga constitution which had just come into effect. In contrast to the industrious but colourless Adoula, who rarely made public appearances, Tshombe was gregarious and exuberant. The new prime minister enjoyed, for a time, astonishing popularity with the Kinshasa crowds. Tshombe did include one Lumumbist figure (André Lubaya) in his cabinet; otherwise it contained a full slate of persons who had never before held central ministerial office. But Lumumbist critics pointed to the continued control of the security apparatus by Mobutu and Nendaka, a former lieutenant of Lumumba from eastern Zaire, who had become a bitter enemy. By the end of the month, various Europeans once associated with the Katanga regime began to reappear in advisory roles. In its style of operation, the Tshombe regime soon took on the attributes of the old Katanga state.
Within two weeks of the installation of the Tshombe government, a wave of rebellion which had broken out in several parts of the country in early 1964 suddenly began to coalesce and extend rapidly. Six weeks later, a revolutionary government was proclaimed in Kisangani, about one-third of the national territory had been lost to the central government, and the Kinshasa regime seemed on the brink of collapse. However, the rebellions quickly began to give way before mercenary-led spearheads of the national army, and by the end of the year had broken into fragments, the rebel leadership in flight and all hopes of success vanished. The striking receptivity of the revolutionary appeal must be understood in the context of the hardships brought to many by the circumstances of independence. A few privileged categories — politicians, functionaries, officers — had enjoyed a spectacular social ascent; but most people suffered a sharp drop in well-being. The recollection, especially for the young, of the campaign promises, of the hopes that independence had awakened compared very unfavourably with the bitter reality. For older persons, there was a curious nostalgia for colonialism: not, of course, the vexations of European oppression, but for the order and predictability of life, for the reliability of services which accompanied the last years of le temps des Belges.

While these factors may suggest a generalised predisposition to insurrection, rebels did not find a ready audience everywhere. The reaction of a particular local community to a call to insurrection would depend upon its evaluation of the symbolic associations of those making the appeal. Who were the insurrectionaries? Brother, friend or foe? To this calculus was added a prudential estimate of risks and advantages. Who would win? Dare we oppose an approaching rebel band? What risks of vengeance from the national army would arise if we welcomed the rebels? Individuals, factions, communities, regions derived varying responses from these calculations.

The first embryo of rebellion appeared in October 1963, when a number of Lumumbist politicians crossed the Congo River and established a Conseil National de Libération (CNL) at Brazzaville, where a government prepared to provide sanctuary and facilitate revolutionary organisation by the Lumumbist opposition came to power in August 1963. A few months before, a relatively
little-known former Minister of Education from the 1960 Lumumba government, Pierre Mulele, had furtively returned to Zaire after three years in Egypt, China, and Eastern Europe. Quite independent of the CNL, he began to organise partisan bands in the valley forests of his native Kwilu district. More than in any of the other rebel groups there was a strong ideological content to the political and military instruction Mulele and his lieutenants provided, drawn primarily from Chinese theories of peasant revolution. The Mulele movement achieved remarkable success, for a time, in harnessing rural discontent in his own ethnic Mbundu zone, and among the neighbouring Pende. He had much more difficulty in penetrating other groups, and some saw themselves actively threatened by the Mulelists. Mulelist bands passed to the attack at the beginning of 1964, but by May the movement had become regionally encapsulated, and began to be torn by internal tensions. Mulelism became a political myth of formidable proportions, and it was many months before the last of the bands left the forest.

In February 1964 the CNL established a new office in Burundi, where the fluid political conjuncture had also become favourable. In the Ruzizi plain, bordering Burundi, factional dispute among the Fulero offered an initial base for rebel organisation, which soon exposed the weakness of the national army. On 15 May the frontier town of Uvira was taken by insurgents, opening the Burundi border. Rebels gained another foothold, when Kalemie (Albertville), capital of North Katanga, was captured on 19 June by youthful insurgents from the north. A scene to be re-enacted many times in the following weeks ensued; the national army simply evaporated, and small, lightly armed youth bands pushed south and east without encountering significant opposition. The situation in Kalemie itself soon became anarchic, and Gaston Soumialot, principal organiser of the eastern branch of the CNL, turned his own attention to regions north and east.

By mid-July, youth bands in Maniema were structured in more conventional form as an Armée Populaire de Libération (APL) under Nicolas Olenga. The APL snowballed as it moved toward Kisangani through zones of Lumumbist strength. In each town, new recruits were enrolled, commercial and state vehicles seized, bank and store vaults emptied, and sizeable stocks of equipment and ammunition captured from the fleeing national army. From
quite modest beginnings, the APL when it reached Kisangani on 4 August had become a force which began to match the national army in numbers, vehicles, and small arms. In August, APL columns advanced in all directions: eastward from Kindu into Sankuru, north and west from Kisangani to Isiro (Paulis) and Bunia, east to Lisala and Boende, all of which were in insurgent hands by the end of August. Only one serious setback occurred; a column of 6000 men led by Olenga was driven back at Bukavu in mid-August by a national army garrison effectively led by Colonel (Léonard) Mulamba Nyunyi, with some American and Belgian advisers, and with the decisive support of Mwami Kabare, who at the last moment committed his Shi followers against the rebels.

Rebellion was at flood tide when CNL leader Christophe Gbenye proclaimed a revolutionary national government at the Lumumbist capital of Kisangani on 5 September. The decomposition of the People's Republic followed very swiftly after its establishment. The constitution of mercenary units and the incorporation of former Katanga gendarme units provided new resources for the national army; Belgian and American logistical support was increased. Relations between Gbenye, Soumialot and Olenga were always uneasy, and hierarchical control intermittent at best. The Kisangani regime found itself responsible for administering vast expanses of territory, with neither structure nor resources to respond to their needs. The expansion of rebel territory was accompanied by the application of revolutionary 'justice' to those associated with the central government, resulting in the massacre of thousands of persons.

By October, the national army counter-offensive began in earnest. The revolutionary government interned approximately 1800 Europeans who had remained in rebel-held areas and sought to use them as a bargaining counter, both as a shield against air raids, and to negotiate a halt of the advance on Kisangani. This led to the controversial American–Belgian parachute operation at Kisangani and Isiro on 24–26 November with American planes transporting Belgian troops. About 100 Europeans and many Africans were killed in connexion with this undertaking. Most African opinion was deeply offended by the racial arrogance implicit in the operation, which rested on the unstated assumption that European lives were more important than African ones.
Although the Tshombe government had not invited this intervention, it had accepted it, so reinforcing its political isolation in Africa.

By the end of 1964, as a collective threat to the central government the rebellions had failed. Leadership, never united, fell apart after the loss of Kisangani. However, many substantial pockets of rebellion remained, and many months passed before central authority was restored in a number of these. In some instances, their persistence was abetted by the belated arrival of external supplies: Soviet equipment, transferred by Algeria via the Sudan, and Chinese weapons across Tanzania into the Lake Tanganyika zone. Also, during 1965 the largest pocket of rebels, in the Fizi–Baraka zone on the Tanzania border, benefited from the assistance of the tireless revolutionary, Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara, and a few dozen Cuban colleagues. They eventually became disillusioned, but the Fizi pocket became a zone of institutionalised dissidence from that time forward, and was never brought under central control. Elsewhere, the process of restoring the authority of Kinshasa was often accompanied by massacres comparable in scale to the assassinations by the rebels.

With the nightmare of rebellion largely over, political attention turned in 1965 to the contest for power under the Kananga constitution. National elections were scheduled for March. The evident challenge was to produce some sort of regrouping out of the rich florescence of parties which then claimed to exist; no less than 223 parties entered the 1965 campaign. It was, by now, exceedingly difficult to organise politically outside the structure and the resources of the state and this gave a decisive advantage to the incumbents. In February 1965 Tshombe launched a national political movement intended to underpin his bid for continued power, the Convention Nationale Congolaise (CONACO), containing 49 constituent parties. The Lumumbist bloc, which still functioned with some cohesion in the 1963 parliament, had fallen victim to multiple splits, and had lost a number of its leaders in the rebellions. Thus CONACO was the apparent victor in the parliamentary elections, taking 122 of the 167 seats.

Parliament did not meet till September, by which time the fragility of CONACO had become apparent. An opposition bloc
of deputies, the Front Démocratique Congolais (FDC), emerged, led by security chief Nendaka and former Léopoldville provincial president Kamitatu Massamba (Cléophas). When parliament met, the first test votes showed the Tshombe and anti-Tshombe groups almost evenly divided. The crucial power contest was for the office of president, to be elected by parliament and the provincial assemblies. Kasavubu desired re-election, but Tshombe had decided to challenge him. As the evenness of the division became clear, tensions began to build. On 13 October, Kasavubu dismissed Tshombe as prime minister, and named Evariste Kimba as interim premier. On 14 November, the Kimba government failed to obtain a vote of confidence, by a vote of 121 to 134 (counting both houses). Kasavubu at once asked Kimba to make a second attempt at forming a government, but at this juncture there simply seemed no majority available for either side. Zaire appeared once again to be in a cul-de-sac. These were the circumstances in which the military high command decided to install General Mobutu as president on 25 November 1965. That same day, a suddenly chastened and united parliament convened, and approved the coup d'état by acclamation.

In a major address to the United Nations General Assembly on 4 October 1973, President Mobutu pronounced a harsh verdict on the First Republic:

The situation which we have experienced from 1960 to 1965 was cruel for our people. And we must recognize that anarchy, chaos, disorder, negligence, and incompetence were master in Zaire. Some of you look in the dictionary perhaps to understand the definition of the word ‘anarchy’, while in Zaire we have experienced it so thoroughly that many thought the word ‘anarchy’ was a Zairean invention.¹

In fact, words such as ‘chaos’ and ‘anarchy’ really go too far to convey the reality of the period. Most of the time, in most places, the routines of life went forward. Many major economic enterprises continued to operate. UMHK, for example, hardly ever missed a day’s work. Schools continued to function, indeed rapidly expanded, although an academic year was lost in many areas affected by the rebellions. Yet disorder was fatally lodged in the arteries of the system. Most Zaireans experienced in their personal lives some of its repercussions: the loss of a friend or relative; a brutal encounter with an ill-disciplined army patrol or

rampaging gang of youths; the depressing awareness that one’s ethnicity defined the quarters of town it was safe to enter. This is why, in its unanimous acclamation of the New Regime, parliament was faithfully representing its constituents. The First Republic passed into history as a distasteful period which many people a decade later still did not wish even to discuss. It is this rejection of the legacy of the First Republic which serves as a point of departure for an understanding of the New Regime fashioned by President Mobutu.

**The New Regime, 1965–75**

Mobutu at once made his intentions clear by asking for five years in which to rebuild the country. The complete blueprint was not at hand; indeed, the coup had not been planned far in advance of execution. From the outset, however, certain themes were clear: depoliticisation, to cleanse the country of the political divisions of the First Republic; centralisation; creation of new political institutions; personal rule, with the presidency as the supreme institution. Mobutu intended to serve as a political leader, not as military caretaker; from the outset, few military personnel were called upon to serve in either political or administrative roles.

Political parties were dissolved; parliament was retained, and met occasionally for ritual approval of the budget for the remainder of its prescribed five-year term. Perhaps its major function was to serve as a well-remunerated sinecure for an important cross-section of politicians whose discontent would have been irritating, if not dangerous. At the end of 1966 provinces were reduced in number to eight plus a capital district of Kinshasa, and transformed into purely administrative organs. The perils of opposition were quickly demonstrated. On 30 May 1966, four leading figures of the First Republic (including ex-Prime Minister Kimba) were accused of conspiracy, tried in a five-minute court martial the following day, and hanged at once in a public square in Kinshasa. The benefits of collaboration, on the other hand, were seductive, as the president quickly developed exquisite skills in patrimonial distribution of benefices.

The mercenary elements and Katanga gendarmerie units were a serious menace, as Tshombe soon resumed plotting from Spanish exile. Mobutu could not at first afford the risk of expelling
the former and disbanding the latter, until his hold on power was secure and the campaigns against the remaining pockets of rebels completed. The nature of the menace was made clear when 2000 Katanga gendarmes backed by a number of mercenaries mutinied at Kisangani in July 1966. A more serious mutiny occurred in July 1967, led by Colonel Jean Schramme, a former Belgian settler connected with the Tshombe faction. The conspiracy was partly aborted when Tshombe was kidnapped on the eve of the planned uprising, and imprisoned in Algiers, where he died two years later, officially of a heart attack. However, nearly 100 mercenaries and several hundred Katangans did seize control of Kisangani, then retreated to Bukavu, which they held until November.

By 1967, Mobutu was ready to give institutional form to his new regime. At the centre, effective power was concentrated in the office of the president. A single national party, the Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution (MPR), was created in May 1967. Generously endowed with government funds and vehicles, the party extended its structure throughout the country in the months that followed. There quickly appeared jurisdictional conflicts between the administrative and party representatives at different echelons of government, leading to a decision in October 1967 to fuse at each level the party and administrative responsibilities. The MPR role was extended to all organisational sectors: unions, youth and student organisations were converted into party organs, and cells were established in Catholic seminaries and army units. The apotheosis came in the 1974 revised constitution, which declared the MPR to be ‘the nation politically organised’, and ‘the sole institution’ of Zaire. The state itself, according to this constitutional theory, was simply a dependent emanation of the party. States, however, especially those cut from the cloth of the bureaucratic–authoritarian colonial tradition, do not wither away so easily. The more pervasive the party domain became, the more indistinguishable it became from the state.

Beyond the extraordinary definition of the party role, the 1974 constitution stands out for the breathtaking scope it gave to the power of the president. The leader of the party automatically became president of the Republic. He presided over all organs of the nation: the Political Bureau of the party (which determined broad policy goals and principles), the Council of Ministers (charged with the execution of Political Bureau decisions), the
THE NEW REGIME

National Legislative Council (which gave its views on budget and details of policy decisions, but could not challenge their essence), and the Supreme Court. Further, in effect the president named all the members of these various organs. The style of political rule under the Mobutu regime can be usefully described as 'patrimonial'.

Although initially he included in top posts many of the leading luminaries of the First Republic, they were progressively isolated from their sources of autonomous power and eventually thrust aside in favour of a new political generation which had hitherto played more secondary roles, or which had emerged after 1965, primarily from the growing ranks of university graduates. Few were permitted to keep a particular post very long, and there was constant rotation in the ruling organs. The increasingly personalist style of the regime was evident also in the evolution of its official ideology. The first MPR platform, the Nsele Manifesto, issued on 20 May 1967, had as its central theme 'authentic Zairean nationalism'. National dignity, non-alignment, an assertion of indigenous values in the place of imported doctrines, such as scientific socialism or capitalism, were its themes. In 1971, Mobutu unveiled the doctrine of 'authenticity'; Zairean nationalism had to reject the alienating overlay of imposed western values to fulfil itself through the Zairean cultural heritage. In the 1974 constitution, ideological evolution proceeded a further step by the establishment of 'Mobutuism' as the national doctrine. The content of this political thought was to be discovered in the writings, the speeches, and the actions of Mobutu.

The Mobutu regime in its first decade had undeniable accomplishments in the political realm. The vast country had been effectively reunited, and most disorder ended. When Mobutu sought a new mandate as unopposed presidential candidate in the 1970 elections, the regime and its leader had an undeniable élan. By the end of its first decade, the negative side of the personalist style of rule became more evident; with state resources as a vast patrimonial domain to be apportioned among the political élite, inequality and corruption spread throughout the body politic. By 1975, a deepening social malaise was again evident, compounded by a profound economic crisis beginning in 1974.

1 This characterisation is advanced by Jean-Claude Williame, *Patrimonialism and political change in the Congo* (Stanford, 1972).
ZAIRE, RWANDA AND BURUNDI

RWANDA: CONSOLIDATION OF THE HUTU REGIME

In comparison with its two neighbouring states of former Belgian Africa, the post-independence history of Rwanda was singularly uncomplicated, if not uneventful. The essential contours of the post-independence distribution of power were defined by the Rwanda revolution of 1959–61. These patterns worked themselves out more fully after 1962; in 1973, the legitimacy of the first-generation independence regime had eroded, and a reshuffling of actors though not of basic political structure occurred through the vehicle of a military coup.

In the aftermath of the revolution, a large-scale flight of Tutsi to neighbouring countries occurred; by 1963, an estimated 130,000, or nearly one third of the Tutsi population, were refugees in Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, and Zaire. A large part of the factionalised UNAR élite and the exiled mwami had not abandoned hope of reversing the revolutionary outcome. Perhaps 2000 Tutsi irregulars (ingenzi) were assembled in the neighbouring states to mount a seven-pronged assault on the Kayibanda regime in December 1963. Only one of the columns, 200 strong, advanced very far, reaching a point 12 miles from the capital of Kigali before they were destroyed by the Belgian-officered Garde Nationale Rwandaise. Savage vengeance was exacted on the Tutsi in Rwanda, with at least 10,000 massacred by local Hutu bands. This disastrous invasion was the final postscript to the revolution. Outside the country the UNAR fell apart in the succeeding months, and internally it was removed from the posts negotiated for it by the UN in 1962. The Rwanda revolution was total and irreversible.

In the years that followed, the Kayibanda regime gradually lost its momentum. Regional tensions within the new Hutu political élite emerged; Hutu from the north, whose culture and history were quite distinctive, began to murmur that affairs were dominated by a clique from central Rwanda and that the Kayibanda regime permitted too high a fraction of Tutsi students in the university and secondary schools. President Kayibanda, whose withdrawn life earned him the nickname of ‘hermit of Gitarama’, offered no resistance to the military coup organised by army commander Juvenal Habyarimana in July 1973. Although the regional balance of Hutu domination was altered, with northerners
now predominant, the fundamental character of the Rwanda revolution was maintained.

**BURUNDI: FROM MONARCHY TO TUTSI REPUBLICANISM, 1962-75**

Burundi politics in the first four years of independence are an extraordinary tangle, involving overlapping conflicts between *ganwa* clans, the monarchy and its opponents, *ganwa* and anti-royalist Tutsi, regional Tutsi and Hima groupings, and an emergent politicisation of the polarity between Tutsi and Hutu. By 1975, fundamental transformations in political sociology had occurred. The monarchy had disappeared; the *ganwa* as a hegemonic elite had lost their role. A fundamentally unstable ethnocracy had emerged, but was yet to meet the need for a durable social formula compatible with the diffusion of egalitarian values and broadened self-awareness which inevitably accompany modernisation.

On the eve of independence, a fissure opened in the dominant UPRONA between what were, essentially, Tutsi and Hutu factions.Though Hutu mobilisation was limited at that point to Bujumbura and the Lake Tanganyika shoreline, this was the first time that the latent ethnic polarity became openly reflected in political structures. The Tutsi faction was led by Prime Minister Muhrira, while the Hutu wing was headed by Paul Mirerekano, a Hutu merchant and mystic, who had once been an enthusiastic backer of Rwagasore, and remained a champion of Hutu rights. These factions became known as ‘Casablanca’ and ‘Monrovia’ respectively, after the radical and moderate groups of African states of the day. The horrifying example of Rwanda, not to mention Zaire, clearly exhibited the dangers contained in rami­fying ethnic hostilities spilling over from the party into the administration. Mwami Mwambutsa, still a powerfully integrative symbol, tried to defuse the tensions by his increasing personal intervention in politics. In June 1963, Muhrira resigned in disgust over the mwami’s intervention; Pierre Ngendandumwe,

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1 Some of the pastoralists in southern Burundi were known as Hima. Although they belong to the same original groups as the Tutsi, in Burundi they were believed to have migrated from a different direction, and to be of lesser status than the Tutsi. They did not participate in the structures of Tutsi hegemony over the Hutu.
a Hutu associated with the 'Monrovia' faction of UPRONA, was named as prime minister. From this point forward, however, successive governments were responsible to the court, and not to parliament. Executive functions were at best shared with an expanding palace entourage, largely composed of Bezi ganwa figures.

In singularly Byzantine fashion, Tutsi extremists were able to bring about the overthrow of the Ngendandumwe government by manoeuvring this 'Monrovia' regime into recognising the People's Republic of China, contrary to the preferences of the mwami, not to mention the Belgian and American embassies. In April 1964, Ngendandumwe was replaced by Albin Nyamoya, a Tutsi of noble (but not ganwa) lineage, linked to the 'Casablanca' group of UPRONA. The Nyamoya ministry coincided with the peak of the Zaire rebellions, and Bujumbura became a major focus of international intrigue. For some months Burundi politics were dominated by the 'Chinese factor', and tracts appeared warning of 'Communist penetration' of Burundi. In January 1965, the mwami again intervened to sack Nyamoya, alleging 'numerous errors and serious misjudgement...in foreign affairs as well as problems related to national progress'.

Ngendandumwe was reinstalled as prime minister, only to be murdered three days later by Rwanda Tutsi extremists. The mwami now turned to Joseph Bamina, a university-trained Hutu from a high-status lineage, and married to a Tutsi. Bamina had momentarily served as compromise UPRONA president in late 1962, acceptable at that point to both Tutsi and Hutu. At the mwami's behest, relations with China were severed, and a paradoxical effort, endorsed by palace and ganwa, was made to drain by democracy the poisonous tensions which political instability had secreted. Elections were organised in May 1965, apparently without full calculation as to their implications. They were remarkably free and untrammelled, and resulted in a clear triumph for Hutu candidates. This was not at once apparent in the party labels; the pro-Hutu Parti du Peuple won 10 of 33 seats, while UPRONA won 21. But UPRONA was by now a shambles, with as many as five different UPRONA lists being presented in some constituencies. The crucial factor was that 23 of 33 winners were Hutu. Pending the naming of a new government, the mwami designated his private secretary and

1 Weinstein, Historical dictionary, 227.
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leading Bezi courtier, Biha, as interim prime minister in July. On 13 September 1965 the mwami confirmed his appointment, driving the Hutu parliamentarians to the conclusion that Mwambutsa intended to deny them the fruits of their electoral victory.

On 18 October 1965, a group of Hutu officers and men attempted a coup. This quickly failed in Bujumbura, but in the countryside Hutu bands attacked a number of rural Tutsi homes, killing and burning, especially in central Muramvya province. Vengeance was swift. Some 34 military participants in the coup were executed, and 86 Hutu political leaders were sentenced to death on charges of complicity. In the countryside, Tutsi bands with army support went on the rampage, slaughtering several thousand Hutu peasants. Until that point, all governments had contained relatively equal numbers of Hutu and Tutsi. Henceforth, although token Hutu representation continued, Tutsi hegemony was clearly affirmed. Biha, wounded in the attempted coup, no longer really functioned as prime minister. The mwami, who had withdrawn to the friendlier mountains of Switzerland, could not manage conflict by remote control. Radical Tutsi led a campaign against the Biha regime, which they labelled a Bezi clique. In March 1966, the mwami designated his 19-year-old son and heir apparent, Charles Ndizweye, to exercise his powers on the spot, but these were now rapidly ebbing.

In July 1966, Prince Charles announced his imminent succession to the throne; in September, he was crowned as Ntare V. Although 100,000 attended his coronation, the new mwami was too young to have mastered the arts of political intrigue and manoeuvre. Yet his effort to do so rapidly brought him into fatal conflict with the Tutsi politicians. In November 1966, while he was on a state visit to Kinshasa, the monarchy was abolished.

Captain Michel Micombero, who had led the counterattack against the Hutu coup participants in October 1965, had been named prime minister in July 1966; his cabinet, like the abolition of the monarchy, represented a major turning point in Burundi’s history. A new generation came to power, partly recruited from the army officer corps. Factional conflict continued to supply the inner dynamic of Burundi politics in the post-monarchy years, but now revolved around new foci. Micombero himself was representative of the new generation; of mixed Tutsi–Hima origins, and a family which did not rank highly in traditional
prestige, he was far removed from the Bezi–Batare groupings of old. Regional affiliations, however, did play a growing role; Micombero and a number of his closest collaborators came from the Bururi district in southern Burundi. Tensions rose to the surface in 1969, when a number of Hutu intellectuals were killed, and again in 1971, when a number of officers from central Burundi were tried for plotting.

The next great watershed in Burundi politics was the holocaust of 1972, which took the lives of roughly 5 per cent of the population. On April 1972, Hutu attacks occurred simultaneously in three places – in Bujumbura, on the eastern border, and on the southern lakeshore, where really serious assaults occurred, with perhaps 2000 Tutsi murdered. The reaction was not long in coming, with the army coordinating the carnage carried out by armed Tutsi gangs of Rwagasore Revolutionary Youth. Educated Hutu were a particular target, as the architects of this slaughter were clearly determined to exclude forever a re-enactment of the Rwanda revolution. In such circumstances, the size of the death toll becomes a grisly secret of history; serious estimates run as high as 200,000. Another victim was the deposed mwami, who returned from exile in March 1972; he was murdered by a radical Tutsi politician when the Hutu attack began.

When the weeks of terror had run their course, Micombero installed Nyamoya again as prime minister, in an effort to at least restore harmony among Tutsi factions. In 1974, Micombero dismissed Nyamoya, and the Bururi group returned to power. In November 1976, the Micombero era came to an end, with a military coup led by Colonel Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, a Tutsi related to the ousted president.

The lines of ethnic hegemony had hardened in Burundi, and it was difficult to see how the system could transcend the inherent limitations of a legitimacy limited to 15 per cent of the population. The ruling class was now caught in a gigantic trap. Many of its elite were deeply imbued with egalitarian, even revolutionary political values, and strongly rejected the older pattern of ganwa domination and court intrigue. Yet the threat of the servile insurrection, with the essentially contemporary idea of martyred Hutuhood, loomed as an omnipresent menace. At the moment of crisis, as in 1972, the fears and emotions tied to communal survival overcame rational thought and humane conviction, leaving the
path clear for the most ruthless guardians of the ethnocratic order to pursue their macabre tasks.

**ECONOMIC CHANGE**

The period 1945–57 was one of extremely rapid economic growth in the Congo, whose major exports enjoyed buoyant markets. The most important single commodity was copper, accounting for from 50 to 60 per cent of the total value of minerals. Wartime production was about 150,000 tons; this rose slowly to 250,000 tons by the end of the colonial period. Of roughly equivalent importance, with exports during the 1950s worth $50–$60 million, were cobalt, diamonds, and tin, with gold and manganese not far behind. The Congo has been the world’s largest producer of cobalt and industrial diamonds. Agricultural output also surged; in the best years in the 1950s, its total value came close to that of the mineral sector. The most important crops were cotton, palm-oil and coffee. Cotton, which peaked at 65,300 tons in 1959, was grown, not wholly willingly, by peasant cultivators. Palm-oil was both produced on plantations and collected by peasant outgrowers, the latter system being particularly prevalent in Bandundu (Kwilu). Coffee became a major crop only after the Second World War, developing extremely rapidly during the price boom of the 1950s to reach 56,341 tons in 1959.

The speed and turmoil of independence in the Congo had far-reaching economic consequences. Investment had ceased by 1958, to be replaced by a net capital outflow of $46 million in 1959. The capitalist sector endeavoured, as a holding operation, to maintain the use of existing installations, but not to expand until about 1967. Its expatriate staff, unlike those of the state, generally remained at their posts, so there was much less dislocation than in the public sector. Peasant agriculture was particularly hard hit, as the marketing infrastructure eroded, prices were unfavourable, and the coercive state apparatus which had been the major factor in cotton production could no longer enforce its cultivation; agriculture fell from 40 to 25 per cent of total GNP from 1958–66.

State finances were badly disrupted; indeed, in 1961 the government functioned without any budget at all. Smuggling and tax evasion deprived the state of much of its revenue; however, the bureaucratic establishment was expanded, and its remuneration...
increased. The scale of inflationary pressure is measured by an increase in money supply from an index of 100 in 1960 to 355 at the end of 1964, as compared with a decline in the volume of total production from 100 to 76. The Congo franc had declined to one tenth of its 1960 value at the time of the major currency reform of 1967. The budgetary deficit reached 30 billion Congo francs in 1965 ($170000000 at the official rate).

The New Regime of President Mobutu removed the obstacle of insecurity by 1967, which permitted renewed operation of extant installations and plantations throughout the country. The 1967 devaluation gave a five-year respite from inflation, and a period of favourable export prices plus a recovery of production to pre-independence levels produced buoyant exchange holdings; by 1970 Zaire was able to boast that it was one of the rare Third World countries whose currency was solid enough to be used in International Monetary Fund lending. State revenues surged from a low of $16600000 in 1962 to $250100000 in 1968, as public finances were brought for a time under relative control.

However, Mobutu's patrimonial politics came to require large outlays through a poorly controlled presidential account. By 1974, $100 million of just over $1 billion of government expenditures went officially through the presidency, and the real amount was in fact significantly higher. Linked to the large-scale distribution of public funds to reward fidelity was the institutionalisation of corruption; by one estimate, some 60 per cent of the 1971 state revenue was diverted to purposes other than those officially stated. A period of record copper prices from 1972 till April 1974 produced a short-lived bonanza in public revenues, which in turn triggered a surge of expenditures; public outlays rose from $548.3 million in 1972 to $1183.8 million in 1974. Heavy external borrowing occurred in the early 1970s to finance an ambitious programme of development, and led to an external debt of more than $2 billion by 1975, placing the country on the brink of international bankruptcy.

Economic nationalism was a recurrent theme under the New Regime, beginning in 1966 with a decisive confrontation with the most powerful enterprise of the country, UMHK. Zaire insisted that UMHK be reconstituted as a Zairean corporation, rather than

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1 Jean-Philippe Peemans, 'The social and economic development of Zaire since independence: an historical outline', *African Affairs*, April 1975, 74, no. 295, 162.
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continuing as a Brussels-domiciled enterprise. With negotiations at an impasse, Mobutu suddenly published an ordinance on 1 January 1967 nationalising the Zairean-based installations of the company. Although rumours circulated for a time that Mobutu intended to bring in Japanese or French interests to manage the nationalised copper installations, a compromise very favourable to the former owners was soon arrived at. Another subsidiary of the Société Générale (the parent company of UMHK), the Société Générale des Mines, was assigned management rights over the Zairean enterprise, which eventually was named the Générale des Carrières et des Mines (GECAMINES); by way of compensation, for 15 years it was to receive 6 per cent of gross sales, estimated to yield between $180 million and $360 million, depending on the prices. The net UMHK investment of external capital had been $200 million, nearly all of which had been completed by the 1920s. From 1950–66, UMHK profits totalled nearly $1 billion, of which roughly $320 million had been reinvested.1

The zenith of economic nationalism was the 1973–5 period. On 30 November 1973, the president announced a sweeping set of measures, prescribing the Zaireanisation of commerce, plantations, and many small and medium enterprises. The more attractive concerns wound up reserved to the top echelon of politicians and army officers, often acting through wives or relatives. Vast disruption of the commercial sector followed, as the Zairean acquéreurs generally lacked commercial experience, access to credit, and contacts with suppliers. Many were content to strip the assets of their businesses. The 30 November measures soon became intensely unpopular, and acquéreur a social epithet, the new owners being blamed for shortages and price rises.

At the end of 1974, Mobutu tried to defuse the rising resentment by a ‘radicalisation of the revolution’. Party officials were told to abandon their businesses, and to repatriate their foreign bank accounts. The larger Zaireanised enterprises were placed under state control, along with a second wave of businesses that had not been covered by the measures of 30 November 1973. Radicalisation failed in its turn; the draconian measures were very unevenly applied and the state-directed reorganisation of large Zaireanised enterprises could not halt the economic haemorrhage. In March 1976, Zaireanisation was, for the moment, abandoned,

1 Unité (Brussels), February–March 1970.
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and former owners promised the ‘retrocession’ of their businesses.

Another major determinant of economic policy, joined to economic nationalism, was Mobutu’s expansive vision of Zaire’s manifest destiny: a mission of leadership in Africa, an example of what a new African state could achieve in spectacular development. Realisation of these ambitions necessitated a rapid increase in government resources. In the short run, this could only be accomplished by accelerating the exploitation of Zaire’s treasure trove of minerals.

A generous investment code was promulgated in 1969. The major lure was the huge deposits of copper and allied metals in Shaba, previously held in reserve by UMHK. After vigorous competition among assorted international interests, the largest copper deposit was leased to a predominantly Anglo-American consortium, the Société Minière de Tenke Fungurumé (SMTF), headed by AMOCO Mines and Charter Consolidated (28 per cent each). A smaller copper concession was granted to a Japanese consortium, SODIMIZA. Other new investments included a Goodyear tyre factory and General Motors assembly plant in Kinshasa, a Continental Grain flour-mill in Matadi, and Gulf Oil development of offshore oil deposits, which began production in 1975.

A tremendous energy and transportation infrastructure was required to underpin these developments. Old Belgian plans to tap the enormous hydroelectric potential of the lower Zaire River, dating from 1910, were finally put into operation; Inga, phase I, was begun in 1966, and completed in 1968. By 1972, work had begun on Inga II, which would raise capacity to 1.3 million kilowatt hours (about half the capacity of Cabora Bassa); ultimate potential was 30 million kilowatt hours. By 1973, work had begun on the gigantic direct transmission line from Inga to Shaba, whose costs would exceed $400,000,000, with plans to complete the rail links from the copper mines to the sea.

By the early 1970s, the full implications of this strategy were becoming manifest. Dependency on copper was overwhelming; GECAMINES alone contributed 50 per cent of the state revenue, and two-thirds of the foreign exchange. Sharply deteriorating terms of trade for peasant producers demoralised the villages. Cotton output dropped from 63,000 tons in 1959 to an average
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of about 20,000 tons in the early 1970s. By 1976, palm-oil exports were less than one quarter the pre-independence figure. By 1975, imports of the three major cereals, maize, rice and wheat, rose from 47,000 tons in 1959 to an estimated 325,000 tons by 1975.

For Rwanda and Burundi, the narrow limits set by geographic isolation from markets, high population densities, slight apparent mineral endowments, absence of industry, and shortage of land, ruled out the spectacular ambitions of Zaire. But with nothing but the rural sector to nurture, both accorded agriculture a higher priority, and avoided the pattern of rural deterioration which characterised Zaire.

Coffee, seriously promoted since the Second World War, averaged an annual production of about 10,000 tons in both Rwanda and Burundi by the late 1950s. After a brief drop in production immediately after independence, output grew to an average annual level of 20,000 tons each in the early 1970s. In 1975, this represented 90 per cent of Burundi's exports, compared to 72 per cent for Rwanda; the difference lay in the 2000 tons of tin which Rwanda exported yearly.

The Malthusian equation was an ominous preoccupation for both countries. Lethal famines in 1928 and 1943 demonstrated the precariousness of the equilibrium between man and the land. In Rwanda, by 1968 it was estimated that only 30 per cent of the cultivable land was fallow, with population projections suggesting that none would remain by 1980. The land shortage placed absolute limits on acreage which could be devoted to export crops; further pressure was exerted by the one million cattle in the two countries. No source of non-agricultural employment was in prospect for more than a fraction of the peasants. In the face of these austere circumstances, the post-independence economic performance of both countries was surprisingly good.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE

The period under review brought momentous transformations in the structure of society, and important ones in the cultural domain. We are doubtless too close to these changes to appreciate their full significance, particularly in the cultural domain. One important aspect of change, the crystallisation of new and enlarged patterns of ethnic self-awareness, has been considered in
previous sections. We will focus here particularly upon urbanisation, inequality, and culture. In Zaire, the institutionalisation of a large urban sector stands out as a central contemporary trend. In 1940 Léopoldville, the largest city in Belgian Africa, had only 46,884 inhabitants; by 1975, there were an estimated two million. Kananga, Mbuji-Mayi, Bukavu and Mbandaka, with the 1970 census listed as having 429,000, 236,000, 135,000, and 108,000 inhabitants respectively, were in 1940, tiny towns of 10,000 or less.

The urban explosion began with the Second World War, and then slowly gathered force in the post-war years. Independence brought years of extraordinary growth, triggered by the end of controls on settlement, the rapid extension of the educational system from the 1950s, and the sharp decline in rural well-being after 1960. The 1970 census showed 15 per cent of the population living in 11 cities with populations of over 100,000. Although urbanisation is of slight impact in Rwanda and Burundi, even here the capital cities swiftly grew: Kigali from 5,000 in 1962 to approximately 60,000 by 1975, and Bujumbura from 8,000 in 1940 to about 130,000 in 1975.

The character of urban life had altered as a function of this growth. In 1940, the central parts of the towns were exclusively European, with African townships of modest dimensions on the periphery; where, as in the Copperbelt, large employers dominated, company compounds for worker families, with their ordered paternalism, were common. By 1975, vast squatter communities girdled all the large towns. The former European quarter now also housed the top ranks of the public service, leading political figures and some successful African traders, as well as expatriates. Until 1957, unemployment was a marginal phenomenon in towns; those without jobs were simply returned to their home communities, and only a very small fraction were urban born. A modest recession in the western economies in 1957 brought retrenchment to the colony, including significant unemployment, which thereafter became a central feature of urban life. With it developed a vast and poorly measured sector of what became known as ‘informal employment’: hawking, providing small services, or performing domestic duties at the home of a somewhat more prosperous relative.

There were also rapidly changing patterns of stratification. In Zaire, before 1960 stratification had been above all racial. There
was an absolute ceiling for Africans in the public service, and a *de facto* one in private bureaucracies. Restrictions on property ownership, access to credit, and entry to more profitable lines of sale made African success in commerce almost impossible. Social divisions among Africans were above all marked by prestige, as suggested by the very term *évolué*, which came into currency by 1940 to denote an educated African performing a white-collar function. As the word *évolué* suggests, social status was measured by European standards. An African worthy of esteem had to demonstrate his proximity to the domain of 'civilisation'. Education in the mission schools was certainly an indispensable prerequisite; however, more subtle criteria than the mere number of years in school were involved. 'Civilisation', operationally defined, meant European culture, values and behavioural mores. The status of *évolué* was conferred, in intangible ways, by the judgement of an informal jury of missionaries, administrators and other notables.

With independence, the top social category, the European population, fell sharply from its peak of 110000 in 1959, then stabilised at between 30000 and 40000. A highly remunerated group (except for the missionaries), their life style was influential in establishing the level of aspiration and expectation for the new African political–administrative class which, for the first time, commanded an income which made possible the attainment of these dreams. In the years after independence swift rise within the ranks of the élite depended on access to the main avenues of social mobility. Politics, the principal though newest avenue, drew its recruits mainly from the 25 to 35 age-group, and mainly from those employed in the bureaucracy of both the public and private sectors. This group had varying levels of secondary education (university graduates were not yet present in force). The point of entry was electoral office, or clientage ties with one who had achieved political success. The great year of recruitment was 1960; thereafter, access was more difficult, and criteria changed. Additional new opportunities opened under the New Regime, both through the apparatus of the party and technocracy.

The 10000 vacancies created at the top of the administration by the 1960 flight of Belgian functionaries provided a massive once and for all promotion opportunity for those poised just below. On the whole, the beneficiaries came from the category
of relatively senior clerks who could lay plausible claim to these offices. Continued expansion of the administration made absorption of the university graduates on attractive conditions easily assured until the early 1970s. Private bureaucracies were much slower to open their managerial posts to Africans: GECAMINES, which continued to operate like a private firm after its ostensible nationalisation in 1967, in 1974 still had 1362 expatriates (concentrated in the technical domain), and 1135 Africans (holding the administrative posts).

For many, administrative and political income provided the starting capital which could be enlarged by extramural commercial activity, often managed by a member of the family. Especially profitable were urban undertakings which did not require full-time management: rental property, taxis, trucking, beverage sales. In the early 1960s, the imposition of import controls made the traffic in import licences extremely profitable, and brought about the emergence of a number of prosperous, politically connected, national import–export firms. The 1973 Zaireanisation edict had a powerful impact in enlarging the mercantile underpinnings of the politico-administrative class. It should be noted that very few of the new African businessmen emerged from the truncated, impoverished, largely illiterate pre-1960 Zairean trading community.

Beginning in 1940, the size of the urban labour force expanded quickly then stabilised. The number of wage-earners rose from 336,000 in 1940 to 962,000 in 1950; in 1972, the figure had fallen slightly to 905,000. The colonial administration sought social peace after the Second World War through rising real wages, which tripled during the 1950–8 period. This in turn induced the large employers to mechanise their operations; GECAMINES in 1975 produced 450,000 tons of copper with the same labour force which had turned out less than 180,000 in 1950. Independence produced a short-lived further surge in real wages, which peaked in 1961 for those holding permanent wage employment. Inflation then swiftly eroded and nullified these gains; by 1965, real wages were back to the 1958 level. An effective price-stabilisation programme in 1967 aimed at both the external rates of exchange and internal price-levels. This and the introduction of a new currency permitted a halt to inflation and a brief recovery of wage levels. However, by 1972, deterioration had set in once again. The
International Labour Organisation reported that between 1964 and 1975 the real minimum wage (the effective remuneration level for the majority of workers) fell by 53 per cent.¹

The rural sector experienced a comparable cycle. After the harsh phase of the effort de guerre, the 1950s saw a real improvement in rural well-being. Coercion, long the pillar of the colonial agricultural policy, slackened, and prices paid to producers rose. Schools, dispensaries, and clean water began to become available in the villages. The misfortunes after 1960 were particularly detrimental to the rural sector; by 1975, real prices paid to farmers for major crops such as cotton, coffee and palm fruits ranged from a quarter to a third of the 1960 level.

Thus a profound social malaise gripped the country. Though contained within the authoritarian structures of the state, periodic outbursts, such as the 1964–5 rebellions, or the wave of wildcat strikes in 1976, were symptomatic of the discontents generated by the contrast between the visible wealth of the administrative–political élite and the expatriate community, and the deteriorating situation of the mass of the populace. At the same time, a large element of fluidity remained in the emergent social stratification. The expanding educational system sustained the hope of mobility for those at the bottom, while those at the top enjoyed the momentary use of wealth rather than secure entrenchment as a propertied class.

The issues of stratification and inequality were differently posed in Rwanda and Burundi, and pivoted largely around the relationships between the two ethnic communities, Tutsi and Hutu. The impact of the first decades of colonial rule, German and Belgian, had been to generalise and entrench Tutsi socio-political hegemony. Early access to education had been largely restricted to Tutsi. The premise of inequality became administrative ideology through a doctrine of the natural superiority of the Tutsi ruling élite which was shared by the colonial administration and Tutsi leaders. A crucial institution of Tutsi domination, at the socio-economic level, was the widespread device of cattle clientage. A patron, generally Tutsi, would provide one or more cows to a client, normally a Hutu, in return for social and economic services. Historically, the cattle contract had developed

in several different forms. In central Rwanda, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it had become generalised in a form (ubuhake) which entailed a caste-like relationship. In Burundi, the most widespread form of clientage, ubugabire, provided a wider range of social choice for the client. In the post-war years, it became an article of faith that abolition of cattle clientage was an absolute prerequisite of social change and political development. In 1954–5, the almost exclusively Tutsi kingdom councils in Rwanda and Burundi, with some prodding by the colonial administration, legally abolished cattle clientage. It later proved that this reform, which had appeared so critical in the 1950s, was simply overtaken by events. The issue of Tutsi–Hutu relationships, as independence approached, was translated to the political realm. The major avenue of social mobility after 1962 was the limited armature of the state itself – its administration, educational system and army. But this was too narrow a base to support a system of stratification comparable to that of Zaire.

The sphere of cultural change is the most difficult realm of all to understand. The mechanisms of transmission of western material culture are massive, yet the emergent cultural synthesis did not amount to ‘acculturation’, or the replacement of the historical cultural heritage by traits and values of western derivation. The school system, despite efforts to reform it, remained to a large degree western in form and content. The urban social environment provided a very different setting from the rural community within which the indigenous cultural heritage was formed. The transistor radio, which became available in the 1960s, brought a large sector of both urban and rural society within the reach of a world-wide communications system. Of particular importance was the role of the Christian Church. In all three countries, the Catholic Church in particular had been strongly implanted. Zaire already had 500 African priests by 1960, and by 1975 there were two dozen Zairean bishops, and one Cardinal. In 1968, the Catholic Church claimed the membership of 71 per cent of the Burundi population, and 55 per cent in Rwanda. A measure of the social influence of the church lay in its periodic political conflicts with the secular authorities in Zaire, beginning in 1971. The church, at that juncture, was the major social institution which lay outside the orbit of the state; the assaults upon it appear to have merely
strengthened its attraction as an alternative to the existing socio-political order. Protestant churches were less potent, but claimed significant followings. After 1960, their number was increased by official recognition of African separatist churches, especially the Kimbanguists, rigorously suppressed by the colonial authorities as a political threat. Following independence, in Zaire the Kimbanguist church spread far beyond its initial Kongo cultural zone, especially in Kasai. In 1968 it was admitted to membership of the World Council of Churches.

Language was a particularly important arena and sensitive indicator of cultural change. In Zaire, the salient trend was towards the crystallisation of a multilingual society. The major regional languages, particularly Lingala and Swahili, spread rapidly during our period. Although no precise figures are available, it is safe to assert that, by the end of it, only the most isolated social categories of Zairean society (the elderly, rural women, young children) were not at least bilingual. In Rwanda and Burundi, the existence of Kinyarwanda and Kirundi as universally known indigenous languages made less necessary the diffusion of Swahili as the vehicular language, although the latter played an important role in Bujumbura. We may thus see symbolically enacted on the linguistic battlefield the drama of cultural change. The diffusion of regional languages represented the emergence of new forms of cultural synthesis, often urban-centred. These were also manifested in such domains as music and dance which formed an important part of urban leisure activities, or the syncretic forms of urban popular art. At the same time, the impact of western culture continued in the linguistic as well as other domains through the continuing spread of French.

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A central plank in the platform of post-war colonial reform was the serious commitment, for the first time, to a broad-based educational system. The educational pyramid was, however, to be constructed gradually, floor by floor. Accordingly, a vast primary network was established in the 1950s, which by the year before Zairean independence enrolled 70 per cent of the 6 to 11 age cohort. No less than 64 per cent were in the first two grades, and less than 3 per cent in the sixth grade. Secondary and higher
education was much slower to develop. In 1959, only 29000 pupils (less than 1000 girls) were in Zairean secondary institutions, with a mere 136 in the final-year graduating class. The foundation of the first universities was the occasion for bitter struggle within the inner walls of the colonial structure. The Catholic Church forced the issue in the early 1950s, and the administration reluctantly authorised the establishment of Lovanium University in Léopoldville in 1954. Anti-clerical forces had to be satisfied with the establishment of a second, state, university in Elisabethville in 1956. The pace of educational advance in Ruanda-Urundi was partly influenced by pressure from the United Nations. The first UN Visiting Mission in 1948, noting ‘the concept of slowness which is one of [the] dominant characteristics of education in the territory’, was critical of the absence not only of any access to university training, but even of secondary schools. Though secondary schools were opened in the 1950s, it was only in 1963 (Rwanda) and 1964 (Burundi) that universities were founded, in both cases with the collaboration of the Catholic Church.

In the post-war years, strong pressure from the rapidly growing Belgian community forced the colonial administration to establish a state network of secular secondary schools, initially reserved for European children. The spillover of the guerre scolaire in Belgium (1954–8) led to the substantial expansion of a state network, now open to some Africans. Popular pressures for greater opportunities, as well as ideological conviction, led successive post-independence regimes to accord top priority to the expansion of education. Expenditures rose rapidly in this field, reaching 30 per cent of the Zaire national budget by 1969. In 1960, only 136 children completed their secondary schooling; in 1975 20000 did so. That same year, a university which had awarded only 14 diplomas to Zaireans in 1960, awarded nearly 2000 degrees. To the two original campuses were added a Protestant university in Kisangani in 1963, and an array of specialised post-secondary institutes, sponsored by various international agencies.

A growing sense, in Zaire, that the state had inadequate control over its higher educational system led to a sudden and dramatic university reform in 1971, by which all units were merged into a single national university. The reform was accompanied by the
nomination of Zairean university administrators to occupy the command positions on all the campuses; rationalisation and economy were to be achieved by regrouping each specialisation on a single campus. Though the goal of national direction and control was largely achieved, the haste and improvisation of the implementation brought serious dislocations.

In December 1974, Mobutu announced that the state would take over the Catholic and Protestant secondary and primary systems as well; though by this time the religious networks enrolled fewer students than the state schools, they were, on the whole, better staffed, directed and funded. Particularly at the secondary level, the Catholic schools were far superior to those of the state, as measured by the much greater percentage of graduates who passed the national state examination. This reform, at least in the short run, exceeded the capacities of the state to apply, and the Catholic and Protestant Churches were invited to resume operation of their networks in 1977.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The scale and resources of Zaire necessarily predestined it for a major role on the African stage and in world politics. Just as certainly the tiny size and poverty of Rwanda and Burundi limited their roles to virtual invisibility. Once independence became a familiar fact, Belgium became by far the most important diplomatic partner for both Rwanda and Burundi, and the source of most of their technical assistance, while the United States purchased most of their coffee. Periodic overtures came from France to incorporate them within the world of francophonie. Moments of sharp ethnic tension in either state almost necessarily translated into difficult relations with the other, as in 1963 or 1972. After 1966, both had close relations with Zaire, except for a period of rupture with Rwanda in 1968–9 created by Rwandan refusal to extradite mercenary mutineers from Zaire who took refuge in the country.

With the New Regime, Zaire moved to assert itself as actor in, rather than as mere object of, international politics. Other African leaders, exhausted and embarrassed by the endless convolutions of the ‘Congo crisis’, were prepared to accept Mobutu, despite reservations held by some deriving from his intimate American
associations, and his suspected involvement in the decisions which sealed Lumumba’s fate. Full entry of Zaire into the African family was symbolised by the holding in Kinshasa of the 1967 Organisation of African Unity summit conference. From this point forward, Mobutu had sufficiently consolidated his domestic position to move from the modest goal of full acceptance to a restless quest for African leadership. In 1970, he paid state visits to ten African states, and in 1972 attracted eight African heads of state to his party conference. 1973 was the high water mark; Mobutu spent no less than 150 days outside Zaire, including visits to 14 African states (and 12 others). In January 1973 he paid a spectacular state visit to China, returning with a pledge of $100,000,000 as aid for rural development. On 4 October 1973, he made a major address at the United Nations, highlighted by a surprise announcement of a rupture with Israel two days before the Yom Kippur war. Thereafter, some major reverses deflated the aspirations to African leadership of the New Regime. The rapid economic deterioration which became evident in 1974 made reconciliation with western creditor powers imperative. The civil war in Angola was disastrous for Zaire, which was deeply committed to the defeat of the MPLA. In September 1975, several Zairean battalions were operating inside Angola jointly with the FNLA, which was long dependent on Zairean support. The unforeseen entry of Cuban army units into the fighting in November quickly led to disaster for the Zairean and FNLA units. The simultaneous South African intervention in southern Angola placed Zaire in an impossibly exposed role, humiliated by defeat, and disgraced in Africa by complicity with apartheid and imperialism. Although the struggle against the MPLA was officially abandoned in February 1976, distrust between Angola and Zaire remained profound.

The two most important extra-African partners of Zaire between 1960 and 1975 were Belgium and the United States. Relations with Belgium followed a widely oscillating curve, with moments of fervent cordiality alternating with periods of bitter recriminations and even rupture. A Treaty of Friendship concluded just prior to independence was denounced two weeks later by a Zairean government outraged by the unsolicited intervention of Belgian troops, and the military and technical assistance rendered by Belgium to the secessionist state of Katanga. The
removal of the Lumumba government on 5 September 1960 led to resumption of active ties between Kinshasa and Brussels, and by 1963 to very close relationships. Belgian military aid was critical in repulsing the 1964–5 rebellions. However, the UMHK nationalisation controversy of 1966–7 brought a new cycle of crisis. By 1970, restored intimacy was symbolised by a spectacular royal visit by King Baudouin. The ‘radicalisation’ period of 1973–5 brought renewed crisis; by 1975 financial disaster made warmer relations with Belgium again indispensable.

Although links with the United States were less dense and multiplex than those with Belgium, America served as international patron throughout most of the 1960–75 period, usually acting in concert with Belgium. Zairean independence coincided with a peak in global interventionism and Cold War preoccupation in United States foreign policy. Exaggerated fears of a ‘Soviet take-over’ drew the US deeply into Zairean politics in 1960, both directly in covert and diplomatic support for the removal of Lumumba, and indirectly through its substantial (though not determinant) influence in the United Nations operation in Zaire. Successive Zairean governments had intimate political ties with the United States. However, as President Mobutu became more self-confident, susceptibility to direct American influence diminished, giving way to a frigid period in 1974–5, culminating in allegations of American complicity in a confused conspiracy to eliminate Mobutu in June 1975. Common opposition to the MPLA in Angola and the exigencies of the economic crisis restored close relations.

Relations with the Soviet Union were predominantly hostile. The USSR made a short-lived bid at major military support to the Lumumba regime in late August 1960, but at that time – in contrast to the Angolan situation in 1975 – the USSR lacked the logistical capability to intervene swiftly and effectively. With the overthrow of Lumumba, Soviet diplomats were expelled. The USSR viewed Zaire as an American client state; Zaire accused the Soviet Union of meddling on successive occasions (1964 rebellions, 1971 student crisis at Lovanium University, Soviet–Cuban backing of MPLA in 1975, the Katanga gendarme invasions of 1977 and 1978). China, although viewed as a dangerous source of subversion in the early 1960s, became a warm friend a decade later with major state visits to Peking by Mobutu in January 1973.
ZAIRE, RWANDA AND BURUNDI

and December 1974. In early 1975, China was in many respects Zaire's closest ally, a remarkable episode (even if short-lived) which takes us conveniently back to our starting point: the unbelievable transformation of Central Africa in 35 short years. In 1940, Zaire, Rwanda and Burundi were so firmly embedded in the colonial domain that not even the most visionary prophet could have imagined what lay beyond.