Chapter 4

Parallel Society in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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Introduction: Parallel society as a concept

The concept of a "parallel society" poses a problem in itself, since the adjective, up to now, was only reserved for the economy, although it affects the dominated society in its entirety, and creates a new set of problems, that of a politically and economically marginalised society operating independently from state structures, while living on national territory. Furthermore, its members recognise each other as citizens of the country, but they do not abide by its laws (duties and obligations). If, in the economic context, such a phenomenon has not been observed to this day, the experience of the Congolese society—influenced by a century-long history of arbitrary state colonial and postcolonial predation, exploitation and violence—has indeed allowed such an entity, operating within complex relationships made up of insubordination and illegality and highlighted by a quest for greater democracy. The subject "parallel society" nevertheless pertains to the organised ethnic population making up the "local state", and is at the same time the result of a mode of domination and of a model of accumulation which the central State has resorted to in order to maintain itself and uphold the leadership.

In this chapter our purpose is not to study the causes or the manner in which the current crisis has emerged and delineated the different social and political constituents of Congolese society. On the contrary, the subject of our analysis remains the constituents, the operation and the meaning of such a parallel society: how did it establish itself; how does it operate to enable it to give multipolar identity to the Congolese; and what is its value in Congolese nationalism? This identity, the historicity of which rests within the framework of a regime of domination, hinges as

much on the postcolonial nation, as on the ethnicity and regionalism created from the beginning of colonial times.

The analysis of a "parallel society" will not follow the simplistic dualism which, in political science and African sociology, consists of opposing practices of leaders and the *elite*—referred to as "the top"—to politically popular modes of action or the hidden resistance of the masses—referred to as "the bottom" (Bayart, 1987; Scott, 1985). On the contrary, more so than evidenced in this simple dualism, there exists a complexity in political, social, economic and cultural relationships and relations that is pervasive in global society, and that eats away at the state territories in which "the leaders" and "the led" have set up their actions and activities. This dynamic has woven a framework in which their politically conflicting relationships are, however, included. Faced with the establishment of a parallel society, the analysis of the criminalisation of the state, as expected, and as stimulating as it may be, offers few avenues for comprehending the Congolese parallel society as a politico-economic, historic and culturally autonomous entity, since its introduction into "legalism" resting on national and international "illegality", limits the analysis to criminal behaviour (Bayart, Ellis & Hibou, 1997). Since the analysis of such societies is not its subject, it takes into account neither the various dynamics that make up and transform such a society, nor the analysis of practices marginalising the central state in Congo. In its efforts and performance against the central and hegemonic state, the parallel society has benefited as much from the contribution, whether consciously or not, of the post-colonial Congolese ruling class—eager to further "tap into" the wealth—as it has from the constraints of globalisation.

Two factors have stimulated and strengthened local power that relied on the ethnic power already in place: unauthorised domination and the consequences of disastrous national policies which have, furthermore, started political opposition and contestation for the same dominating regime. This complex process can only be analysed if we accept that *illegality*, used politically, has established itself as a feature of this societal landscape—a feature from which the Congolese population has negotiated its own existence as ethnic individuals and citizens of the Republic. And,

based on this feature—this foundation—they have set up strategies to fight, indeed to rally the State against the interests of the national state and international financial institutions, without withdrawing unto itself. On the contrary, they deploy a dynamic participation in the world economy from ethnic and regional economic networks developing on the world market, while adhering to local economic structures resulting therefrom. According to the ideology in place, this structure is intended for the survival of the ethnic group or of the region. We will elaborate on this later.

In this process the parallel society has an economic foundation (as minimal as it may be), which varies from one ethnic group to the other, indicating that the process of political exclusion that Ilunga-Kabongo (1984:13-28) analysed in terms of "zone of existence" and "zone of non-existence" of the "Zairian" civil society, has created an unexpected path that became more complex after 1984 (Biaya & Omasombo, 1993:97-127). The predatory practices of the ruling class not only desecrated and forced the population to live "outside" of the state, they also allowed them to innovate living conditions in which the urbanisation of villages and the metamorphosis of cities into villages, generated new social reconstruction and political configurations, thus creating a civil society in which the relationships and power games travelled from the village to Kinshasa, the capital, the place of state decisions, whether negotiated or converted into cash.

In this context of unruly modernity, establishing itself with the help of subversive practices (Biaya & Bibeau, 1998:5-13), the state has stopped invading the bush, while the bush has invaded the city with its unusual practices, its economic network, and its political ethnic culture. From that moment, the "governance" or "governmentality" of Congo takes a disconcerting direction for the ruling class, the *elite* and researchers, including the World Bank. And it is in the heart of this social and political "formality" that we will attempt to research nationalism and the meaning thereof in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Parallel society, a revenge of political marginalisation

Political and economic marginalisation

The century of Congolese "modernity" has been a long night during which the imposition of the modern state by colonisation was an administrative despotism at a lesser cost than the state of Mobutu and its leadership. "Mobutucracy" continued until the travesty of the state, which only had international legitimacy, while the colonial and postcolonial ruling class had criminalised the State from its very inception. Three stages illustrate this establishment of the parallel society through the dual mechanism of political and economic marginalisation which, in turn, allowed citizens to flee from arbitrary state practices to manage themselves; sometimes within a context of violence where the arsonist hand of the state often served contradictory and hardly "rational interests" in political terms.

Among the various periods and syntheses of the history of the Congo, those of the national sovereign Conference of Congo given in the general report thereof (Kinkela, 1993:135-199) summarised this history as follows: "The history of the Congolese people has always been that of an ill-suppressed rebellion, exploding in regular cycles with unusual fury" (Kinkela, 1993:136). Kinkela divided the history into five stages, the fifth of which started in 1990, and is still nowhere near its end. The colonisation by Belgium succeeded in imposing an administration replacing the state, with the help of the colonial "ethnographic library" and of the army, which tamed the various rebellions and resistance against the colonial order. It started by dividing the ethnic population into tribes, granting them a forged ethnic identity, which represented the best inclusion of the subject in colonisation. The equation "no tribe, no identity", implied that the person who was made to be part of a tribe, was eligible for employment. Neither of the two colonies (the independent state of Congo and the Belgian Congo) had the Western Weberian administrative referent or the model of a colony in the usual sense. Willame describes it as follows: "This colonial State is not at all or hardly 'rational', it is not legal either. The (arbitrary) division into territories, the confirmation and/or nomination of (pseudo) chiefs, schooling, currency

dealings, military recruitment and hard labour are the expression of a progressive 'administratification' of the colony, not that of political consent from the subjugated community" (Willame, 1992:213-214). The post-colonial regime which managed to oust Lumumba and the nationalists from power since 1960, by inciting civil wars that the first government could not control, including the Belgian invasion and the secessions, concealed the implementation of a dual international strategy conducted by Belgium and the United States. Belgium wanted to recover the colony it had dropped in haste but which was already coveted by the free world; the United States applied themselves in deploying African policy relying on Mobutu, while helping themselves to a rich and strategic territory for the control of Black Africa, which they had allowed the Berlin conference to seise.

This strategy culminated in the setting up of a ruling class, aware enough of its precarious situation in linking its interests to powerful western companies—as wrote J.P. Sartre in 1961. Despite the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Communist block, this logic of "interest" would only collapse in 1992 with the coming into power of Clinton, while Belgium, disillusioned and ridiculed by this neo-colonial policy, its institutions and its contradictions, withdrew from the game in 1990.

In the meantime the post-colonial state created a political system in which arbitrary conduct and uncertainties became the rule in everyday life and in the creation of a political marginalisation supported by increasing state violence. Furthermore, and in order for this violence to function "effectively", it required a security system and an army devouring enormous amounts of money as this political system—Mobutucracy—was being established through a "unitarian party" (1967), "authenticity" (1971), the "party-State" (1974), and the "cult of personality" (1980). This regime rested exclusively on the systematic plunder of resources by the ruling class (Verhaegen, 1978:374-379). The challenging of the political system, which started early in 1963 with the armed struggle of Pierre Mulele and the movement of the second independence, resumed in 1982 with the creation of UDPS and the supposed peoples' desire for a return to multipartism and federalism. In truth, it is the "therapy" to the economic

crisis which the World Bank and the IMF as well as other donors, imposed, that eliminated this system, the limits of which were foreseeable. The conditionality of democratisation of the regime—as a guarantee of good economic management—turned the water canons on an opposition that would harden even if it ended up in pitiful disorganisation *vis-à-vis* the dictator. Nevertheless, it obtained the national conference in 1991, and the transition in 1992.

During that time, the structural violence of the state was growing in a manner inversely proportional to its already precarious and weak foundation. Depelchin (1991) indicates that back in 1930, investments had already dried up for this giant. The 1967-1973 economic recovery, after civil wars and rebellions (1960-1967) (Kankwenda, 1993:243-263), allowed the country to give in to superficial modernisation through the project referred to as "Objective 80"—at that time, the Congo would have become a developed country! This programme caused technological imperialism, systematic plundering of national resources and embezzlement of foreign aid, the "balance" of which is a debt of close to 14 billion dollars and the emergence of some two hundred rich families. By 1977, all the efforts this regime invested in aimed more at the upholding of Mobutu's power than at the management of the national economy, which was in a distressed and disastrous state. The IMF regretted it and the donor community bore the cost. The second republic (1965-1992), can be summarised as the absence of the state in Mobutu's Congo.

Elungu, the philosopher, could not have qualified this autocratic regime better when characterising it as being the one that dedicated its bankruptcy to three blatant "orders of disorder— the order of subversion, which bases society on the will of the arbitrary power of a person presumed absolute because he is armed; the order of corruption, which institutes private law to replace the law of labour and the law of society; and the 'order of perversion', because it rebels against everything relating to value" (quoted by Kinkela, 1993:139).

Sites and strategies of the parallel society

Beyond a daily life in *trompe-l'oeil* that unfurls in scientific literature on Congo, and beyond the inadequacies of global analysis, parallel society actually managed to establish itself from sites in which the State has always refused to be effective. It is in this interface between the "real Congo" and "national reality" in which the Congolese live, that the parallel society has positioned and established itself. It has taken *illegality as its strategic basis*, and political ethnic culture as a site to generate ethnic power. The latter, as I have described elsewhere, is a power system based on ethnic groups—a historical reality—and its accompanying political culture. "It nurses a social project and has a socio-political organisation, sometimes minimal, that manages its power niche. Such a niche is negotiated with the hegemonic central State" (Biaya, 1998a:110).

Ethnic power has enabled the planning of this society around a series of institutions and contemporary ethnic personalities, while conducting economic activities. It negotiates its existence with the regime, with which it shares the profits resulting from these economic enterprises. On the other hand, Mobutu's regime was so cunning that it cannibalised foreign aid without attacking international financial institutions up-front. It is this "margin of manoeuvre" (Biaya & Omasombo, 1993:97-127) that remained open, the more so because Mobutu had succeeded in imposing upon them a corrupt technocrat familiar with the theatrics of duplicity, so that these same institutions knew nothing about the "hot and cold" which this senior official—L. Kengo wa Dondo—was blowing to maintain his class in power until 1997. He applied double standard neo-liberalism from the redistributing state. In 1992, the IMF and World Bank reforms proved to be useless and vacuous in the face of "Zaire, a soft stomach devouring any investment", according to E. Blumenthal. When Mobutu's death became evident, this technocrat fled to the West, leaving behind a country "objectively" in abject poverty.

This analytical canvas allows for a resumption of MacGaffey's discussion (1987:345-349, 370-371) on the concept of "parallel economy". This adjective, once formalised, becomes pertinent and justified when substituting "economy" with "society" in reference to Congo-Kinshasa.

Indeed, ethnic power or the local state would take over and control entire economic sectors being developed in the "Zairian dereliction", and would benefit from the political apathy of intellectuals, the latter either concealing their anxiety and powerlessness in the face of state violence, or experiencing and/or attempting to integrate the circle of power and enrichment by 1977, since the Zairian civil society was limited to 200 rich families. Let us, at a glance, review the different economic "zones" of Congo, in order to understand this phenomenon of formation of the parallel society and its horisontal and vertical relations. Willame gives a breakdown of activities by geographic sector and by the nature of the resources available within them. The six border areas (East Province, Katanga, Kivu-South, Kivu-North, Lower Congo and the Equator) and the central area (East Kasa and West Kasa), consolidated their economy after 1985 and availed themselves of substantial autonomy *vis-à-vis* the central state. They integrated the ethnic *elite* into their midst by 1988, with committees of ethnic urban and rural associations right up to the village. They also supported the opposition to the regime in place through the event of the 1980-90 period: the birth of a popular but legally clandestine party, UDPS. Indeed, the extraordinary congress of the party-state of 1988 completed the victory of the parallel society against the Mobutu state, which made vain attempts to reform the administration and propose decentralisation as a solution to the political crisis that had developed in tandem with the economic one. Members of the congress who had come from "in-house" rejected all plans for an administrative division, or a new division of the country into tribes that would undermine the foundation of the established parallel society. The failure of this final attempt by central powers to break the parallel society, confirmed the entrenchment of ethnic power, the solidity of its cultural foundation having effected its historicity.

However, during the same period, the blossoming of the informal sector was only the tip of an economic iceberg that colonisation put in place as a reward for shaping and reinforcing the ethnic group, so that the Mobutu regime and its vote-catching, which rested on ethnic manipulation, ended up consolidated and imposing to the population. This ethnicity of the parallel society, different from political and administrative

tribalism of the ruling class, is above all a historicity and an interpretation on the part of the population of their own local and national history. And it is from this thought process—sometimes erroneous—that this same population would organise and support their economic practices, thanks to ethnic ideology. Thus, adjoining the small shop such as lolema (Kisangani), small domestic cultivation (market garden produce, vegetables), adjoining the village-city of the fruit of cultivation—the barter between village inhabitants and small crafts industries developed—and an interregional trade was positioning itself, as well as international trade beyond the borders of the country and connecting to international networks (Biaya, 1985:65-84; MacGaffey, 1987). This illegal import-export trade imposed the need and necessity for its development, to guarantee itself as an ethnic protector, strong enough to negotiate the terms of its "existence" with the ruling and bourgeois class, either through business partnerships or through a payment system. Religious and political "ethnic" personalities carried out this "task" on the basis of ethnicity, which they broadened onto regionalism where needed. Thus we witnessed the undermining of the law forbidding ethnic organisations; and privatisation of mining operations, forbidden long ago, became more "flexible" or otherwise regained momentum. In return, some places of popular ethnic rebellion quietened down. This logic of neo-liberalism, while furthering the strengthening of ethnic regrouping in the amateur development of mining concessions (gold, diamond), as well as the export of agricultural products (tea, coffee, cinchona, etc.), also propelled—following the same logic—the export of mining products from cannibalised companies (spare parts, cobalt, pewter, copper, etc.); and it stimulated the emergence of carefully contrived "ethnic solidarity" towards the development of the province controlled by ethnic intellectuals. Various associations and local NGOs blossomed and set objectives to resume control of what the state had abandoned or was unable to control, such as local universities, regional development councils, and NGOs.

Without succumbing to blind admiration for the belief that the informal sector is an economic success even while it is incapable of accrual, we have to admit that this substantial newly-born bourgeoisie in

some areas was able to accrue and capitalise on its assets. From that time, the dwindling "legal society"—or the central state—and the growing parallel society—became complementary in their economic and political functions at top level, where the ruling class and the ethnic bourgeoisie were sharing the profits. This "conviviality" was sufficient to secure autonomy to the parallel society. In 1995 the latter ended up managing monetary areas in which the American dollar rules; and secondly, the three currencies hit by the central powers continue to circulate in one (and not in the other) ethnic and commercial area based on a logic of fighting galloping inflation, reaching 10 000% in 1995. The annual state budget did not reach the 230 million dollars, representing one-fifth of the annual turnover of the only city of Mbujimayi reaching one billion (Biaya, 1998b). However, specialisation in illegal economy and trade—or of the parallel society—imposed itself, based on materials produced and their international trading network. The money thus earned is used for importing goods. A whole "economy of withdrawal", managed by local ethnic networks, has established itself with leading cities such as Mbujimayi, Kinshasa, Butembo, Lubumbashi, Bunia, etc. which have become platforms and places of power of the parallel society, with its local economy and civil society defending it against the decaying state, the latter reduced to an administrative role. Interregional economic links were coupled with international links, enabling better circulation of imported goods, although sometimes in disastrous transport conditions, given that roads are almost non-existent and reduced to tracks. Finally, these "economies" of parallel society are not created without bloodshed, and they operate by paying "protection" to customs officials, policemen and other officials, for its own survival and the protection of its "lords".

In opposition to what Longandjo, a development sociologist, maintained— the power of the state is not evaluated on its failure to maintain itself as "res publicae" and in managing hunger, illnesses and violence, but its marginalisation lies at the origin of the dynamism of a parallel society nurtured by its ethnicity and political culture engendered in terms of its existence, giving it popular legitimacy in the face of a gangster-state. This is symptomatic and deserves to be mentioned. When

ADFL (the Alliance of Democratic Forces and Liberation) seised Kisangani in 1997, Kabila suspended this gold and coffee "traffic"; but soon thereafter the parallel society—this socio-political burden—forced him to exercise moderation in the bureaucratic and technocratic language which was about to cause famine where it had not existed before. This struggle against "Mobutist" anti-values, in order to establish new values, was postponed until later. Whether he liked it or not, he authorised this illegal trade which he had suspended, to resume.

Multipolar identities, antagonism and interests

The question of identity or identities is the next focus of attention, since it moulds the individuals and communities making up the parallel society. As mentioned above, any identity is a construction; and as with any construction, it is subject to evolution and death. Following their particular history, the Congolese have developed a multipolar and plural identity, emergent upon colonial and postcolonial policies.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that when Mobutu came into power, he started a jealous centralism, thus falsely displaying his support for "Lumumbist" nationalism and the will of the regime to undo tribal divisions in the country. This policy, resuming the colonial one consisting of forbidding tribal associations, did not succeed in stopping political exclusion and economic marginalisation due to predatory management. Not only did it revive colonial ethnic identities but it also established new identities, either claim makers of regional or ethnic identities, which did not contradict the national identity and Congolese nationality. Mass participation in various associations, indicates that the first identities were developed around big ethnic (or tribal) groups, and political parties from the advent of independence (1960-1965). These representations benefited from the experience of political and economic marginalisation of the second republic, as they expressed themselves in economic and commercial competition occurring in urban areas. Let us take the case of the Luba-Kasa group to illustrate a way of creation of postcolonial identities.

The post-colonial Luba identity came about by 1959, by rejecting the fabricated colonial urban identity. Instead, this group, urbanised since 1921-1945, and returning from a forced national exodus caused by the civil war for independence (1959-1960), established the city of Mbujimayi and its province, where to this effect, it claimed a Nkonga identity, namely that of "the unifier". This new identity was the fruit of the urban experience and political history which the Luba succeeded in creating in the autonomous state of South Kasa. This identity, breaking away from the colonial one following the "betrayal of the Whites", evolved rapidly in a direction distinct from that of members of the same ethnic group that had not supported the exodus or its ethnic ideology, and that stayed in colonial cities and places of ethnic persecution. Thirty years later, the colonial Katanga identity resurfaced and, organising itself on the basis of regionalism, became genocidal with the help of the central state and its ethnicity; and was marshalled against these Luba, who had remained behind in 1960 and whom it forced to return to the original Kasa abandoned three generations earlier. At the heart of this warmongering ethnicity, which is still predominant in the Great Lakes region and strongly rooted in some parts of the country, is the "tribalist" identity of the colonised—moulded by the coloniser and nurtured by postcolonial power. The warmongering ethnic identity lacks a sound and well thought-out historical foundation, because when the regional enemy disappears, it becomes fragmented and attacks the ones closest to it, who may be yesterday's ally. The example of the East province illustrates this clearly. In Kisangani, between 1982-1993, and as soon as the Bakuyakya (foreigners or Congolese born elsewhere) withdrew from the urban political game, competition for urban management (chamber of commerce, town council, municipality, etc.) rejected any applicants from persons born outside the Tshopo district or belonging to any other ethnic group of this province.

Furthermore the integrationist policy of the state and its "Authenticity" (1968-1975) (MacGaffey, 1982:49-70), which turned into exhibitionism, nonetheless succeeded in giving the Congolese a national identity, which does not exclude the ethnic, urban or rural one that the

parallel society calls upon and establishes for the purposes of its own reproduction. Thus we saw the Luba intellectuals, the first wave of nationalists, defending the South-Kasa secession and turning it around into provincial autonomy in 1960-1962, although they had been turned back from this province by lesser intellectuals who had seised the pseudo-secessionist state of Kasa. During the clandestine time of the UDPS, Mobutu, evoking "ethnicism", accused this party of being "a matter for the Luba", but its architects—Luba for the most part—were more perceived as "good and true Zairians", which means "nationalists and Luba at the same time" to their fellow countrymen from other ethnic groups, which also have this plural identity. However, when it is a question of the culture of leisure, referred to as "ambiance", founded upon the trilogy of "wine, women and song" (Biaya, 1996:345-370), popular representation concurs that the Ngbandi, member of the Mobutu tribe, is immoral and perverse; the fearful, obsequious and deceitful Kongo is a good musician and a good dancer, and that the marriage of an intelligent Luba to a woman from the Equator (who steals), will produce a child with Kongo identity, etc. The multipolar aspect of identity also includes nationalism. As proof, we need only the example experienced during democratisation. In April 1991, while fights between the parallel society of Mbujimayi and the army continued for six days, over an intervention from the army to punish the owner of the bar where a meeting of UDPS took place, a tacit truce was observed by the belligerents. They all went to church on the Sunday morning, and in the afternoon, watched the football match for the African Cup between Congo and Gabon. By evening the fighting had resumed. National identity is more than a simple matter of a "passport" needed for travel, and goes hand in hand with a certain national pride that the second republic and the parallel society have evoked and inspired in the Congolese.

However, we would not share the assertion according to which ethnicity disappears in ambiguity under the impetus of urbanisation (Willame, 1992:212). On the contrary, when its multipolarity and flexibility are wrongly perceived and are not experienced by the analyst, they become the main factor of its various transformations. Above all,

ethnicity bears the mark of the other player participating in its elaboration. Thus, entirely to the contrary, ethnic identity is strong and widely felt in urban areas where "polyglotty", numerous languages, inter-ethnic and cultural relations are numerous and sometimes labile—more so than in a moderately homogenous rural environment where it seldom has to compete with other ethnic identities. Besides, a person's name is the first indicator of firstly clannish individualisation, and secondly individualisation of the state, since the ethnic group of the individual is recorded in the national identity document. This reality of individual identity operates according to biographic law—says Bastide—which is enriched by our experience and accompanies us throughout our public life, starting from our private life and early childhood. In the urban Congolese context, it is as awkward as it is surprising and pleasant for a newcomer to the city—mohuta—enquiring about a wrong address—to be asked what tribe he belongs to; for as soon as he answers the question, he will, as a matter of course, be sent to consult a member of his ethnic group living in the area. However, the flexibility of identity allows for it to be changed, fractionalised, even rejected in the course of life and in the exercise of political, social and cultural dealings. The proof is there with the downfall of the Mobutu regime which, failing to ensure quick economic recovery, engenders an identity uprising resulting in the exercise of conflict implied and given in the new "unitarian" party political regime: Kabila is a conservative "Mobutist"! A tailor-made anti-democratic and anti-nationalist identity is already in place in the DRC.

Which nationalism is on the move?

This analytical description of the Congolese drama, as strange as it may be, with its weak and strong points, gives a glimpse of a will of the people to express the political thought of: "let's do something about this situation", which is the main theme of any political thought or action. "Politics are creative inventions", writes Wamba-dia-Wamba (1993:96). There is tension within the struggle which has characterised the history of the Congo for a century already. The Lumumba drama is very much like that of the Congolese people. The Congolese nationalist trend has been

disrupted several times in the course of various periods, but without significant success—the messianic movement that started in 1915 on the Equator with Maria N'Koy, the rebel, Kimbangu, the catechist (1919-1921), and the female prophet Kaki (1930-1931), from the Pende, would have to wait for Lumumba for a better approach and a better knowledge of the foreign enemy: Belgian colonialism. But Lumumba would never be too anxious to capitalise on his achievements: independence and the start of a democratic and supra-tribal society; for once again, he became prisoner of his three enemies, including an old one. The Binza party was born under the leadership of Mobutu and financed by America and Belgium, whose united anti-Lumumba campaign had the support of the UN Secretary General Dag Harmaskjöld. This nationalism was expressed soon after his assassination, through civil wars and uprisings of the working class which plagued the country from 1963 to 1967. Passing through the underground forces of Mulele, to the university campus, Mobutu's pro-Western regime was eager in carrying out the students' massacre in 1969, as well as the elimination of Mulele a few months earlier, in October 1968. The Shaba wars in 1977 and 1978 brought about a new change in that the secessionists of yesterday, from Katanga, reverted to nationalism. However, the National Liberation Front of Congo (FNLC) was defeated by the massive intervention of French, Moroccan and Belgian forces and Mobutu's army, supported by American logistics.

It is also within the parallel society establishing itself that the anti-neo-colonial nationalism became a reality and resumed the struggle for new independence. Its image is no longer that of an ideology of passivity having to face the truth and miseries sweeping the country. With progressive and global prospects, from 1959 to 1992, that is for 30 years, Congolese nationalism had to face a series of rebellions of the working class: the uprising which occurred on 4 January 1959, resulting in independence; the civil wars (1960-1963); the insurgencies (1963-1967), the students' protests, the parliamentary rebellion, the workers' strikes, the self-criticism of intellectuals, the students' massacre (1969, 1971, 1989, 1990), the creation of underground movements (1976,1982), the protests and marches organised by women between 1987 and 1990 which

culminated in the national sovereign conference of 1991-1992. These different stages and struggles against colonisation and the post-colonial state, were intended to achieve the creation and emancipation of a national democratic society. In this context the parallel society becomes a type of nationalism in itself—spontaneous at the start—that benefited UDPS in that it was its battle horse to usher in the national sovereign conference which saw the end of the second republic and opened the door to democratic transition (1982-1992) (Biaya, 1998b).

Despite Mobutu's departure, the AFDL, then in power, did not take into consideration the transition that resulted from the national sovereign conference. That party prolonged the transition which finally identified itself with the "day-to-day management" of power. In its ambiguous and historical sense, it failed to capitalise on the internal nationalist movement. Its undefined and unclear policies sent no signals of real control of the popular and militant nationalism that seemed to characterise its accession to power. In short, the same symptoms of a newly-born "Mobutism" are becoming apparent at regional and international levels, and those of an ageing "Mobutism" at national level.

This regime is in fact strongly inclined to negotiate its stability between a regional African policy wrongly integrated and negotiated, and an economic interest pointing towards the oblivious West, and which contradicts the anti-neo-colonial Lumumba ideology which the regime pretends to defend. Washington did express its view of the new Congolese regime in the following terms: "Kabila is not an asset but a liability". We emphasise. What responsibility? When Museveni managed to be Mobutu's successor just as Clinton replaced Bush in this era following the cold war. With the third millennium ahead, Museveni could, with great skill and intelligence, serve or cover the interests of the United States in this tormented Great Lakes region as much as Mobutu did in the past approve the anti-Communist and reactionary strategic American policy in Central and Southern Africa. On the other hand, at national level, the national parallel society and its sites remain deeply involved in the criminalisation of the state—with the help of international economic networks, coupled with the impedimenta of an ill-controlled ethnicity which reappears

suddenly since it finds resources in and/or the rest of the AFDL coveri ng the "tribalism" of revenge of the Katangese or Tutsis, which in turn rests on the logic of "amends for the wrongs of the colonial past" for the former, and "postcolonial" for the latter.

In this context there are fears that the present regime may not be as nationalist or "Lumumbist" as it pretends to be, and that in this situation of postcolonial nationalism, the conservative endogenous forces based on ethnicity may be stronger than those with new ideas. In contrast to the other identities rooted in historicity, whether genuine or erroneous, the history of Congolese nationalism has taught us a lesson, namely the weakness of nationalist identity is that it is just like a garment that can be worn or discarded, depending on the circumstances. Fortunately for nationalism that is genuine, just as for a religious order, one cannot judge a book by its cover, nor does the attire represent nationalism. It is its reflexive experience of breaking with the past, and for change in view of the democratic transformation, which constitutes the measure of that experience.

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