

CONGO'S PRESIDENT JOSEPH KABILA: DYNASTY OR TRAVESTY?

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Who is the new president of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Joseph Kabila, and how did he rise to power in the bloody heart of darkness? Is he really the son of Laurent Desire Kabila? Why was Laurent Kabila assassinated and by whom? What is Joseph Kabila's relationship to the great white fathers in Belgium who once ruled this colony? Are Joseph Kabila's days numbered?

In March 2007 the military and security forces backing newly elected President Joseph Kabila in the Democratic Republic of Congo fought it out with the supporters of Kabila's strongest challenger, the baby-faced Jean-Pierre Bemba, a spoiled brat with a rebel army, who was seeking to overthrow Kabila in a *coup d'etat*.¹

KABILA OR KANAMBE?

Most people believe his name is neither Joseph nor Kabila. Britain's Telegraph newspaper, and others, reported that Joseph Kabila was a taxi driver in Tanzania, but others say he came from Rwanda, and Kabila's supporters says he was born in Congo. According to some reliable sources, the real name of Joseph Kabila is Hippolyte Kanambe. Asked where Joseph Kabila is from, Janet Kabila refused to answer.²

Jean-Pierre Bemba exploited the question of Joseph Kabila's origins under the slogan "Bemba: One Hundred Percent Congolese." Bemba made speeches of nationalistic self-righteousness, and whipped up riots in Kinshasa by his supporters. Many Congolese people today say that Joseph Kabila's origins are unimportant: what matters, they say, is good leadership.

Laurent Desire Kabila, the supposed father of now President Joseph Kabila, was a thorn in the side of President Mobutu during the early decades of Mobutu's reign. In 1996, Laurent Kabila was plucked out of a bar in Dar es Salaam, where he was owner/manager, and installed as the Congolese

¹ See: keith harmon snow, Congo's Baby-Faced Bemba: A People's History of a Brat with a Rebel Army," Toward Freedom, September, 2007, and keith harmon snow, "Behind the Scenes: Warlord's Deadly Battle in Congo," Toward Freedom, August 9, 2007.

² Private communication, Janet Kabila, Kinshasa, DRC, July 2006.

figurehead of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL). Clinton administration officials like Madeleine Albright, Susan Rice, Prudence Bushnell, and Anthony Lake backed Laurent Kabila's selection and the war that ensued.³

Laurent Kabila provided the Western press the perfect face of rebellion, and they repeatedly invoked the ghost of Che Guevara, who briefly fought alongside Kabila, the "leftist veteran guerrilla," in the 1960's. Kabila attended the University of Dar es Salaam alongside Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, John Garang of the Sudan People's Liberation Army, and Wamba dia Wamba, the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) rebel leader from Kisangani, DRC.

The ADFL insurgency began in 1996 with Rwandan President Paul Kagame shelling refugee camps in eastern Zaire in violation of international humanitarian and human rights statutes. The Rwandans (RPA/F) and Ugandans (UPDF) swept across Zaire behind the mask of a "liberation" struggle. Hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children—mostly Hutu refugees fleeing the U.S.-backed RPA/F *coup d'etat* in Rwanda—were hunted down and massacred, continuing the RPA/F genocidal campaign against Hutus begun in 1990.⁴ The ADFL used "kidogo"—children armed by RPA/F and UPDF and put at the front to draw fire—and the people of Congo suffered unspeakable atrocities and depredations.

Laurent Kabila was reportedly held behind the frontlines during the ADFL campaign to overthrow Zaire. The Rwandan-backed rebel General Laurent Nkunda, who at this writing continues to destabilize and plunder in North Kivu, was an junior RPA/F officer. Leading the charge beside commanders Paul Kagame, James Kabarebe, and James Kazini—and their American military advisers—was the young man who is now president of DRC.

"Joseph Kabila was a soldier for Kagame," one newly elected Congolese deputy said in April 2007. "He worked for Rwanda and the RPA rebels. He was in the war [1996-1997] from Rwanda to Kinshasa, from the Kivus, through Kisangani, where they killed all the Hutus, through Equateur to Mbandaka. He was there in Mbandaka when all the Hutus were massacred—all across Congo, he was there. He was with General Nkunda in Kisangani too. He was a friend with General Salim Saleh, Museveni's half-brother, and with Colonel Mayombo, now a General in Uganda."⁵

Laurent Kabila rejected the program his backers had planned. Attacks against Laurent Kabila increased in direct proportion to Kabila's resistance to the directives of the great white fathers and their agents. At first Kabila's resistance translated to threats against the Kabila government that appeared couched in the language of human rights. The massacres committed by the RPF/A and UPDF forces against the populace as they marched across Zaire suddenly became the problem of the ADFL—"Kabila's liberation army"—as if the RPF/A and UPDF were never involved. Special *Rapporteurs* were duly dispatched to Zaire to investigate the skeletons in Kabila's war chest. The massacres of hundreds of thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees forced to flee in front of the RPA/UPDF killing machine suddenly became worthy news, and the word genocide flickered for a moment and then disappeared from sight. In the end however, all the killing was blamed on the

³ See: Wayne Madsen, Genocide and Covert Operations in Africa, 1993-1999, Mellen Press, 1999.

⁴ One of the very few accounts of the counter-genocide by RPA and UPDF forces is provided by New York Times journalist Howard French in his book Africa: A Continent for the Taking.

⁵ Private interview, Kinshasa, DRC, April 2007.

ADFL—dismissing the roles of Rwanda, Uganda, and the US and Israeli military officials advising them and Pentagon agencies providing logistics.⁶

While cheered and canonized for ousting Mobutu just a year earlier (1997) Laurent Desire Kabila was soon declared a “dictator” because he steered Congo on an independent course. Kabila threw out Rwanda, Uganda, Bechtel, the World Bank and IMF, and so began the “War of Occupation.” From 1998 to 2000 the Laurent Kabila government allied with Angola, Chad, Namibia, Sudan (Khartoum), Libya and Zimbabwe; South Africa has played both sides.

Khartoum joined the war because the Ugandan government and the U.S. were backing John Garang’s Sudan People’s Liberation Army in south Sudan, as they are today backing rebels in the U.S. war for Darfur. Some 700 Ugandan rebels from the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) fought for Kabila. The Lord’s Resistance Army is a Ugandan rebel faction backed by Khartoum that Museveni for 20 years has courted to justify increasing AID-for-ARMS scandals (unreported) and the ongoing UPDF genocide against the Acholi people in oil- and gold-rich northern Uganda.⁷

Laurent Desire Kabila was assassinated on January 16, 2001, exactly 40 years less one day after the assassination of Patrice Lumumba. It was a clear message: *not only will we kill those who do not cooperate, we can do it when and where we like.*

Joseph Kabila “assumed” the presidency on January 26, 2001 and remained president throughout the transition (2002-2006).

From 1998-2007 countless mining and logging contracts were let with no transparency or accountability. (This after decades, even a century, of plunder by European and North American mining corporations and their banks, accounting firms and shareholders.) Meanwhile, war has raged on in Congo killing millions, depopulating territories, and providing hundreds of millions in profits and market share for the Western “humanitarian” business sector, a.k.a. the misery industry, and the international landmine racket.

KING LEOPOLD’S GHOST REVISTED

There are many powerful Belgians behind the skeletons dumped in the forests, swamps, rivers, and other mass graves across Congo. Belgium has pillaged Congo for some 150 years. It all began with blood rubber and ivory and King Leopold’s quest for a personal territory to rival the colonies of competing kings and princes.

In 1876, Leopold II hired New York Post journalist Henry Morton Stanley and Stanley became Leopold’s primary agent of death in the Congo Free State. The Leopold era (1876-1908) claimed

⁶ See: Howard French, Africa: A Continent for the Taking, 2001.

⁷ See: keith harmon snow, “Northern Uganda: Hidden War, Massive Suffering: Another White People’s War for Oil,” and “Tullow, Hardman and Heritage Oil Concessions Map,” <http://www.allthingspass.com/journalism.php?catid=49>.

some 10 million lives through networks of bloodletting and slavery directly overseen by Stanley. One Belgian national (later punished) shot 122 Congolese people on a single rubber collecting expedition in 1903.

Here is how the Belgian colonial enterprise was presented in to 12 year-old Belgian primary school children in 2006: “When the Belgians arrived in the Congo, they found a population that was victim of bloody rivalries and slave trade. Belgian civil servants, missionaries, doctors, colonists and engineers civilized the black population step by step. They created modern cities, roads and railroads, harbors and airports, factories and mines, schools and hospitals. This work greatly improved the living conditions of the indigenous people.”⁸

While the people of Congo resign themselves to believing that “the page has been turned” in Congolese affairs, much of the ongoing exploitation today can be directly connected to banking, plantations and mining interests that plundered the Belgian Congo (1908-1960) and then the “independent” state—the Democratic Republic of Congo (1960-1972) and then Zaire (1972—1997)—controlled by Joseph Mobutu and his western business partners and backers.

Amongst the many prominent people involved are Belgian nationals like Louis Michel, Étienne Davignon, Philippe de Moerloose and Andre Flahaut, and U.S. nationals like Henry Kissinger, Bill Richardson and Maurice Tempelman. The interests of the Royal Family of Belgium are also involved. The predatory meddling and plundering of such people is rendered invisible by the international “community—press, think-tanks, non-government organizations, foreign policy institutes and especially by academia—e.g. anthropology, international relations, political science, and African affairs departments.

Louis Michel is EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian AID, a gatekeeper position that insures that millions of Congolese people suffer miserably. Louis Michel has been one of Kabila's strongest allies, and he played a pivotal roll in the 2006 electioneering of Joseph Kabila's “victory.” Previous to his EU posting, Michel was a Belgian parliamentarian, minister and Vice Prime Minister, until 2004. He is reportedly a diamond merchant exploiting the diamond rich Tshikapa region of DRC. Michel also has ties to Congo's diamonds through the *Societe Miniere De Bakwanga* (MIBA), a mainstay of Belgian neocolonialism in Congo; Michel's son is reportedly directly involved at MIBA.⁹

Immediately after the assassination of Laurent Kabila on 16 January 2001, then Belgian Foreign Minister Louis Michel was quick to confirm the involvement of Kabila's army chiefs and steer attention away from the obvious *coup d'etat*: the assassination of Laurent Desire Kabila.

Belgian business tycoon Viscount Étienne Davignon is chairman of the board of directors of S.N. Brussels Airlines, which he co-founded after the bankruptcy of Sabena, the Belgian national airline that carried Patrice Lumumba to his own death in 1961 and shipped DRC's plundered minerals out of Rwanda (1998-2005) in partnership with the Kagame regime. Davignon is also a member of the

⁸ J.-P. Lefevre, Une ancienne colonie, le Congo, in *A la conquête du temps*. Cycle 10/12, Ransart, p. B9, in Guy Vanthemsche, *The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo*

⁹ Private interview, Kinshasa, 5 April 2007.

board of numerous Belgian companies, and a former director of Anglo-American Corporation, the big Oppenheimer/DeBeers mining conglomerate operating in Congo in partnership with G.H.W. Bush-connected Barrick Gold Corporation. A 2001 Belgian parliamentary enquiry concluded that Davignon played an important and active role in the assassination of Patrice Lumumba.¹⁰ Like Maurice Tempelman, Davignon was deeply involved in the Western *coup d'état* that put Joseph Mobutu in power, and kept him there.¹¹

From 1989 to 2001, Étienne Davignon was chairman of the Belgian bank *Société Générale de Belgique*, one of the most lasting and perfidious enemies of the Congolese state. Hundreds of billions of dollars of minerals were plundered by the *Societe General de Belgique* through its majority-owned subsidiary the *Union Minière du Haut Katanga* (UMHK)—the Belgian Royal family's mining company that exploited Congo's copper, cobalt, tin, uranium and zinc from 1908, and later became GECAMINES, the parastatal mining company "controlled" by Mobutu and his closest cronies and Western allies. The U.S. purchased uranium from UMHK's Shinkalobwe mine and later used it to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki. GECAMINES was reportedly used by Joseph Kabila's political party—*Parti Pour la Reconstruction et le Développement* (PPRD)—as a vehicle for party financing.¹²

Étienne Davignon was a director of Kissinger Associates, the intelligence and defense-consulting firm set up by Henry Kissinger, whose list of notable associates includes Clinton's former UN Ambassador Bill Richardson, who put a "humanitarian" face on the US invasion of Zaire (1996-1998). Henry Kissinger is on the board of the International Rescue Committee, a prominent "relief" agency in the Congo—and one of the reasons the death toll is so high.

Étienne Davignon is also a director of Gilead Sciences, a "biotechnology" company whose past directors include Donald Rumsfeld (1988- 2001). Gilead directors today include George Shultz, a Bechtel director and former U.S. Secretary of State; Carla Hills, International Crises Group director and NAFTA architect; John Madigan, a former Tribune Company (mass media and "news") director and current member of the Defense Business Board of the U.S. Department of Defense; and Nicholas G. Moore, another Bechtel director, and former CEO/Chairman of PricewaterhouseCoopers from 1994-2004. Gilead Sciences was involved in the "Tamilflu" scare.¹³

The International Crises Group (ICG) is a flak organization with a "humanitarian" front that is pressing a U.S. national security agenda. The ICG primes the international media with white supremacist policy statements about Congo, Uganda and Sudan (Darfur) that never address the structural violence that underpins the Western exploitation of Africa. The ICG and International Rescue Committee are two of the main organizers and steering entities behind the Anglo-European

¹⁰ Parliamentary Committee of enquiry in charge of determining the exact circumstances of the assassination of Patrice Lumumba and the possible involvement of Belgian politicians, Belgium, 2001.

¹¹ David Gibbs, The Political Economy of Third World Intervention: Mines, Money and U.S. Policy in the Congo Crises, University of Chicago Press, 1991.

¹² Barry Sergeant, "Nikanor's Quandry," April 4, 2007, <<http://www.moneyweb.co.za/mw/view/mw/en/page1329?oid=84351&sn=Detail>>.

¹³ See: A. Kronstadt, "Bird Flu: Hype, Hypothesis, and Hypodermic," World War 4 Report, 2007, <<http://www.ww4report.com/node/1899>>; and "Rumsfeld's Growing Stake in Tamiflu," Fortune, Oct. 31, 2005, <http://money.cnn.com/2005/10/31/news/newsmakers/fortune_rumsfeld/>.

“Congo Global Action Coalition”—self-described as “a global alliance of humanitarian, human rights, environmental, and faith-based organizations, students, members of the Congolese Diaspora, and other grassroots movements.”¹⁴

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) is involved in the Lueshe niobium mine in DRC's North Kivu province, a mine currently kept off-line—and soaked in blood—by Rwandan-backed General Laurent Nkunda, the warlord in eastern Congo, in order to drive up world niobium prices.

Belgian Étienne Davignon is also Special Adviser to EU Development Commissioner Louis Michel.

Belgian Philippe de Moerloose, a member of Kinshasa's elite, supplies jets, helicopters and other presidential toys to Joseph Kabila.¹⁵ De Moerloose's firm Demipex—based in Brussels, Kinshasa and Lumumbashi—deals in equipment and logistics and holds the sole Nissan distributorship in DRC. His firm Overseas Security Services is responsible for atrocities against desperate Congolese in MIBA held diamond concessions. MIBA is reportedly \$US 100 million in debt, with some \$US 20 million owed to De Moerloose. De Moerloose's Belgian aviation company, Demavia Airlines, partnered with the DRC-based Hewa Bora airlines, is accused of arms shipments to DRC. De Moerloose companies served as intermediaries shipping helicopters between France's Aeromechanic Corporation and Britain's Sloane Helicopters Ltd. to Air Katanga, a “Congolese” firm controlled by other notable Belgian nationals.

Philippe de Moerloose has business ties to the companies connected to George Forrest, a mainstay of exploitation in Congo since 1922; De Moerloose also operates in Rwanda and Burundi, putting him in business relations on both sides of Congo's wars. De Moerloose vehicles sold in Rwanda and Congo are used by armed forces, and De Moerloose (2002) confirmed that the Rwandan Ministry of Defense buys directly from his companies.

Paul de Moerloose, a brother, married Marie-Pierre Pairoux, of the wealthy French Pierre Pairoux family—partners of George Forrest businesses.

Patrick de Moerloose has lived in Katanga's copperbelt zone for 30 years, and was accused of stealing coltan and copper from Gecamines, the massive Congolese mining concern. De Moerloose companies are believed to be involved in illegal diamond, copper and cobalt smuggling out of DRC. Philippe De Moerloose is also implicated in selling weapons to Angola.¹⁶

ARMS AND INTELLIGENCE FOR KABILA

¹⁴ “Join the Congo Coalition,” IRC, <http://ga3.org/campaign/Congo_Global_Action>.

¹⁵ “Diamonds: How Crooks Still Exploit the System,” *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 48, No. 3, 02 February 2007; “Diamond miners killed in DR Congo,” *BBC News*, 7 August 2006, <<http://209.85.165.104/search?q=cache:z9WCcOGEL8MJ:news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/5254006.stm+%22MIBA%22+%22illegal+miners%22&hl=en&gl=us&ct=clnk&cd=4>>.

¹⁶ Interview with Philippe De Moerloose, Belgian Senate “Great Lakes” Inquiry, 2002. The Rwandan subsidiary of Demipex is SOGERWA-IMC.

Andre Flahaut, Belgian Minister of Defense, provoked a row in Belgium after promising to invite President Joseph Kabila to Brussels to receive a degree of Honorary Doctor of the Royal Military Academy (*Ecole Royale Militaire*) in Brussels. Flahaut announced the nomination of Kabila during a visit to Kinshasa in February 2007. Some 300-500 Congolese military “elements”—officers and instructors—were sent to the Belgian Royal Military Academy for military training in 2004. France received 10 FARDC personnel, China 20, and South Africa 200.¹⁷

Some 500 European Union Community forces—EUFOR—arrived in Kinshasa in June 2006, sent to insure that the electioneering would succeed. Notably, state-of-the-art Robocop equipment provided to beef up Congolese security forces in support of the electoral process is now being used against disenfranchised Congolese people in Western-controlled logging, mining, diamond and plantation areas.

Joseph Kabila is married to Sandrine Nguesso, the daughter of Dennis Sassou Nguesso, the President of Congo-Brazzaville. There were reportedly only two white men who attended Joseph Kabila's wedding: one was Israeli-American diamond magnate Dan Gertler, the new King of the Congo, and the other was Belgian tycoon Philippe de Moerloose.¹⁸

France has very close ties with Sassou Nguesso and Gabon's President Omar Bongo, both of whom have supported Jean-Pierre Bemba and his father.

It is notable that a high-powered Angolan delegation visited Kabila in Kinshasa on March 14, 2007, just days before the warlord's deadly battle with Jean-Pierre Bemba. The delegation included top Angolan military, police and intelligence officials. While the agenda focused on Angolan military incursions in DRC territory, occupying some 11 Congolese villages in diamond-rich areas, the Angolan military support for the impending war with Bemba was certainly decided. Congolese opposition officials affiliated with Jean-Pierre Bemba complained about the Angolan incursions, but the Kabila government was unconcerned about the Angolan presence on DRC soil.

UNTURNING THE PAGE

With help from his “friends” behind the scenes, Joseph Kabila outmaneuvered Jean-Pierre Bemba to “win” the “historic national elections” of 2006, Congo's first since so-called independence in 1960. The two warlords—Kabila and Bemba—were competing to be the new Black Face of Congo presented to the world by the great white Anglo-European fathers.

Like academic institutions and African Studies departments all over America and Europe, the so-called “human rights” and “humanitarian” organizations gloss over, ignore or completely mask the realities of Western manipulation and control. The media reports the corporate line, full of tribalism and savagery and ebola viruses.

¹⁷ [Africa Research Bulletin](#), Volume 41, Number 9, 15899-15938, October 2004.

¹⁸ [Africa Confidential](#), 2007; see also: Barry Sergeant, “Nikanor's Quandry,” 04 April 2007, <<http://www.moneyweb.co.za/mw/view/mw/en/page1329?oid=84351&sn=Detail>>

Many of the same families behind the European colonial enterprise—rooted in slavery, white supremacy and terror—are behind the warlords in Congo today. The mainstays of exploitation, like the interests of former Belgian Barons or the Ministers of Colonies, have morphed into more insidious corporate entities. New players have dislodged some interests, like the Israeli-Americans dealing in blood diamonds through the Tel Aviv diamond exchange with the support of the White House. And now China is deeply involved in the fray, but that's another story, another page to be unturned, and a hidden history to be excavated from the rubble of Central Africa.

It has often been stated that Joseph Kabila—whoever he is—had no choice but to assume the post he was pushed into as President of DRC. For Joseph Kabila to complain, balk or resist the machinations of power in any way, people close to him say, would mean his certain death.

Today the DRC government security forces continue to engage in repressive tactics against both innocent civilians and perceived enemies of the state. In October 2007 the security services in Kinshasa arbitrarily arrested scores of boys, women and children who today remain in detention at three security facilities known for long histories of torture during the Mobutu regime (1965-1997).