

The background is a complex, abstract painting. It features a central rectangular area framed in yellow, containing a dark, textured figure that resembles a person or a mask. This central area is surrounded by various colors and patterns, including a large yellow shape on the right, a blue shape on the left, and a grey, textured area at the top. The overall style is expressive and somewhat chaotic.

# Emerging from Silence

Remembering Patrice Lumumba as a Symbol  
of Nationalism and Anti-Colonialism

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Image front page: Detail from the drawing *Congo Crisis*

Artist: Sapin Makengele

Medium: Drawing

Date: 2017

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## List of Abbreviations

**DRC** Democratic Republic of Congo

**UN** United Nations

**SFU** Stop Filming Us

**US** United States



## Introduction

### Emerging from Silence

A tooth, dripping with blood and framed in gold, lies at the centre of Sapin Makengele's drawing *Congo Crisis*. It has been sixty years since the DRC gained its independence and nearly sixty years since this tooth was forcefully removed from its owner. The year of 2020 signifies important historical events: the spread of the Corona virus and the Black Lives Matter movement. Another notable event happened in September of 2020, when it was announced this tooth would be returned to the family of the deceased.<sup>1</sup> The tooth belonged to the first democratically elected prime minister of the DRC: Patrice Lumumba [1925-1961]. The circumstances surrounding his death were silenced for years, but right before the turn of the century, this changed, and Patrice Lumumba has been emerging from silence.

Patrice Lumumba was born in 1925 and became politically active in the 1950s in Stanleyville. He became chairman of the Stanleyville's Association of Evolués. Evolués were people of Congolese birth that were considered 'more evolved' than their countrymen. Lumumba steered the Association in a more political direction in 1955, which made him a highly influential Congolese leader. He was invited to a trip to Belgium by a young and promising Congolese shortly after. On his return from this trip he was arrested on a charge of embezzlement from the post office. For this crime, he was convicted and condemned to twelve years of imprisonment and a fine.<sup>2</sup> After his imprisonment he went to Léopoldville and worked for the brewers of Polar beer as a salesman, where he made the beer immensely popular. In 1959, the call for independence grew louder and Lumumba encouraged this call. He was head of the 'Mouvement National Congolais', and called out to all the Congolese people equally. Lumumba's party won the elections and a year later, on June 30<sup>th</sup> 1960, he became prime minister of an independent Congo.<sup>3</sup> Less than a year later, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January 1961, he was executed. In February of 1961 his death, but not its true circumstances, were announced and widely disbelieved. Belgian embassies were stormed, a United Nations (UN) flag was burnt and protests erupted. Lumumba's death riled big demonstrations and his

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<sup>1</sup> 'België geeft tand van onafhankelijkheidsleider Lumumba terug', *NOS*, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://nos.nl/artikel/2347737-belgie-geeft-tand-van-onafhankelijkheidsleider-lumumba-terug.html>

<sup>2</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, 'Patrice Lumumba', consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Patrice-Lumumba>

<sup>3</sup> David van Reybrouck, *Congo: the epic history of a people* (London 2014), 242-259.

name continues to be well-known in Africa and beyond. Although it has been nearly six decades since Lumumba died, he is still a symbol today. The question central to this thesis is: Why is Patrice Lumumba a symbol of nationalism and anti-colonialism to Congolese people to this day?

This thesis is structured in several chapters. The two chapters succeeding this one will be a chapter on the historical context, for readers unfamiliar with the subject, and a chapter on the media sources used in this research along with the methods used to analyse them. They are followed by four chapters that each analyse one of these media sources. These chapters are numbered chapter one through four, so that it is clearly understood what chapter is referred to in the conclusion. Thus, the 'Introduction', 'Historical Context' and 'Methods and Media Sources' are not numbered. After the numbered chapters, that make up the body of this research, a conclusion will follow. Before delving into these chapters, however, this introduction will proceed with a historiography given through the lens of silencing and memory theory.

### Silencing, Unsilencing, Remembering and Forgetting

Lumumba's death was doused in silence for many years and uncovering this silence can be done through conventional historical sources and unconventional ones, such as interviews, film and drawings. These sources can be drawn from memory and memory is varied, as will be seen later in this text. Such sources also allow history to step away from the idea of one objective past and help to acknowledge that there are many different interpretations of the past.

Bonnie G. Smith is a professor at Rutgers University who has written on women's history and neglected parts of history. Twenty-five-years ago, in 1995, she wrote about an unfolding movement towards engaging and producing a more democratic history. Smith emphasised that more voices were being heard and that the idea of a singular objectivity adhered to by former generations of historians was receding.<sup>4</sup> A similar view was shared by Richard J. Paxton. Paxton earned his doctorate at the University of Washington and he has recently focused his research on historical knowledge from alternate sources such as video games, and more formal historical narratives. He argues that an ultimate history does not

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<sup>4</sup> Bonnie G. Smith, 'Whose Truth, Whose History?', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 56:4 (1995), 661-668, 661.

exist; he believes that history is always made up of competing narratives of the past and not of one objective truth, or 'one ultimate history'. History, he says is not about *the* truth, but rather about *a* truth.<sup>5</sup> Such competing narratives are also seen in the writing on Patrice Lumumba. As historian of modern African Pedro Monaville points out: there is the Lumumba written about in African history on the one hand, and on the other, there is the Lumumba as a headline in the cold war.<sup>6</sup> To understand why Lumumba remains a symbol to this day, we need to remove ourselves from the idea that we could know him objectively. The memory of him varies for different groups, which is why it is impossible to know *one* Lumumba. In accordance, the media sources used in this thesis allow for different perspectives on Lumumba from different groups. As Jeffrey B. Russell noted, we cannot know subjects in themselves, but we can know human perceptions of them.<sup>7</sup> A subject like Lumumba can be better understood through understanding silencing and memory.

With his book *Silencing the Past* the Haitian academic Michel-Rolph Trouillot paved the way for discussing histories that have been silenced. In this book, Trouillot reveals how the past is silenced by eliminating or trivialising historical phenomena in the process of producing knowledge about the past. This happens when choosing facts, gathering them, exposing them and retrospectively adding meaning to a chosen set of historical statements.<sup>8</sup> Wojciech Burszta points out that revisionist, national historiography defines and presents itself as victorious and silences anything critical towards it. This also happens in the process of shaping common assumptions about history or specific figures of memory. When it came to reflecting on the own nation, there was a lack of critique.<sup>9</sup> Burszta's idea, that national historiography silences anything critical towards the nation, was true for Belgium and other Western countries histories for a long time. This year, however, this seems to be changing. On June 30<sup>th</sup> 2020, the city of Gent removed a statue of Leopold II from the 'Zuidpark'. Leopold II was the first Belgian king who reigned over what is now the DRC and was responsible for millions of Congolese deaths. This date was chosen, because it coincides with

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<sup>5</sup> Richard J. Paxton, 'A Deafening Silence: History Textbooks and the Students Who Read Them', *Review of Educational Research*, 69:3 (1999), 315-333, 319.

<sup>6</sup> Pedro Monaville, 'A History of Glory and Dignity: Patrice Lumumba in Historical Imagination and Postcolonial Genealogies', Matthias de Groof (ed.), *Lumumba in the Arts* (Leuven 2020), 62-77, 62.

<sup>7</sup> Jeffrey B. Russell, 'History and Truth', *The Historian*, 50:1 (1987), 3-13, 10.

<sup>8</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past* (Boston 1995), 26-27.

<sup>9</sup> Burszta Wojciech, 'Silencing the past, retrotopia, and teaching history', *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, 10.11649/sn.1656 (2018), 1-13, 10.

Congo's Independence Day.<sup>10</sup> The historiography on the silencing around Congo's colonial past and independence is in the making.

Before, the narrative of Belgian Congo coincided with Burszta's claim that nations leave out the darker parts of their history. For instance, by emphasising that Belgium introduced free health care and hospitals in Congo when it was still part of their state. They neglected, however, to mention that these hospitals were strictly segregated. For the white hospitals, the nuns were expected to have degrees, whereas for the black hospitals this was not always a requirement.<sup>11</sup> This is what Robert Foster refers to as a partial kind of remembrance: one that recalls and at the same time forgets.<sup>12</sup> As Eviatar Zerubavel put it, the foremost public form of denial is silence.<sup>13</sup> Now, however, this denial through silence is changing. As Ruth Ginio said, silences have boundaries that shift over time and on occasion can be broken.<sup>14</sup> The death of George Floyd and the 'Black Lives Matter' movement that followed, in May of 2020, sparked debates globally; racism and black history were placed at the forefront. The hashtag #BlackLivesMatter was used 8.8 million times on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May 2020 alone, reaching 47.8 million by June 11<sup>th</sup> of 2020.<sup>15</sup> Many countries, including Belgium, are reviewing their history as a consequence. Thus, the death of George Floyd and the "Black Lives Matter" movement broke the silence around racism and the exclusion of parts of history.

The silence surrounding Lumumba was broken in 1999. Nearly forty years after his murder, the book *The Assassination of Lumumba* by Ludo de Witte revealed the details of Lumumba's death. The book spurred on more media attention to the murder of Lumumba

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<sup>10</sup> Amélie Outters, 'Gent haalt controversieel beeld Leopold II weg: "Zijn criminele acties verdienen geen eerbetoon, integendeel"', *VRT*, June 18<sup>th</sup> 2020, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/nl/2020/06/18/gent-haalt-controversieel-standbeeld-leopold-ii-weg/>; Tuly Salumu and Bert Staes, 'Standbeeld van Leopold II weggehaald in Gent', *Nieuwsblad*, June 30<sup>th</sup> 2020, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, [https://www.nieuwsblad.be/cnt/dmf20200630\\_95457916](https://www.nieuwsblad.be/cnt/dmf20200630_95457916)

<sup>11</sup> Kristien Geenen, 'Categorizing colonial patients: segregated medical care, space and decolonization in a Congolese city, 1931–62', *Africa*, 89:1 (2019), 100–124, 109.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Foster, *Out of the Silence: The history and memory of South Australia's frontier wars* (Wakefield 2018), 139.

<sup>13</sup> Eviatar Zerubavel, 'The social sound of silence: Toward a sociology of denial', Efrat Ben-Ze'ev, Ruth Ginio and Jay Winter (eds.), *Shadows of War: A Social History of Silence in the Twentieth Century* (Connecticut 2010), 32–44, 33.

<sup>14</sup> Ruth Ginio, 'African silences: Negotiating the story of France's colonial soldiers, 1914–2009', Efrat Ben-Ze'ev, Ruth Ginio and Jay Winter (eds.), *Shadows of War: A Social History of Silence in the Twentieth Century* (Connecticut 2010), 138–152, 139.

<sup>15</sup> Alexandra Kelley, '#BlackLivesMatter averages 3.7 times a day following George Floyd's death', June 11<sup>th</sup> 2020, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://thehill.com/changing-america/respect/equality/502353-blacklivesmatter-hashtag-averages-37-million-times-per-day>

and after the interview with Gerard Soete, one of the men that had been in charge of getting rid of Lumumba's body, the government could no longer stay silent. This information led to the Belgian government Verhofstadt apologising due to public pressure.<sup>16</sup>

Silencing and unsilencing go hand in hand with memory. This is because memory is made up of remembering and of forgetting, both of which play crucial parts in silencing and unsilencing. A cultural historian researching remembrance, Jay Winters, states that academic research can draw public attention to silenced past events, but to reach a wider public, memory agents can have a far greater effect. Think of magazines, the internet and film for broadcasting historical narratives. Winter adds that it is important not to stick to conventional archives, because in doing so, voices are left unheard.<sup>17</sup> These voices and histories were intertwined with memory. In understanding the memory of Lumumba, it is also important to consider unconventional archives. There is a large representation of Lumumba in art, which gives us greater insight into how Lumumba is remembered. In the written word, Lumumba was long discussed in the Cold War context in Western historiography. Whereas Lumumba's memory experienced demonisation in the West, elsewhere his iconography was that of a martyr.<sup>18</sup> Thus, these memory agents can provide a remembrance of Lumumba beyond a Cold War context.

Sources that are not typically conventional, such as interviews and art pieces, give a greater understanding of the perceptions of history amongst the Congolese. An example of history through art, is the work of the Congolese artist Tshibumba. He was interviewed and shared his paintings with Johannes Fabian. He published a book which portrayed the work of Tshibumba. Tshibumba painted over a hundred paintings on the history the DRC (then Zaire). According to Fabian, Tshibumba had to speak the truth in a way that would assure his survival; representing history in this way was safer for him. Tshibumba is an interpreter of the history of his country and should not be dismissed as unprofessional, argues Fabian.<sup>19</sup> A recent work that looks at the link between art and history in the history of Lumumba, is the book *Lumumba in the Arts* by Matthias de Groof. He has done research on Lumumba before and in this book,

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<sup>16</sup> Christ Klep, 'Een problematische erfenis: België en de moord op Lumumba', *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 122:374 (2007), 1-11, 8.

<sup>17</sup> Jay Winters, 'Thinking about silence', Efrat Ben-Ze'ev, Ruth Ginio and Jay Winter (eds.), *Shadows of War: A Social History of Silence in the Twentieth Century* (Connecticut 2010), 3-31, 25.

<sup>18</sup> Matthias de Groof, "Lumumba's Iconography as Interstice between Art and History", *ARTL@S BULLETIN*, 7:1 (2018), 39-44, 44.

<sup>19</sup> Johannes Fabian, *Remembering the Present: Painting and Popular History in Zaire* (California 1996), xi.

has compiled writings and depictions of Lumumba by different authors and artists. In the book, an interview with the Congolese historian Elikia M'Bokolo is included. In the interview with Elikia M'Bokolo, M'Bokolo told de Groof that by creating works of art, artists interpret histories. M'Bokolo added that historians can find themselves in a position of poverty next to artists, because historians are often restricted to a positivist approach of the past. Due to this, he argues, they can be trapped in 'sources', which are biased, incomplete, falsified and manipulated, as in Lumumba's case. He states that a figure such as Lumumba thwarts normative frameworks and rigid rules.<sup>20</sup> As M'Bokolo said: "*History isn't only about interpreting facts objectively. It is also a vision that starts with the condition of people today and what they want to do in future.*"<sup>21</sup>

Memory theory has received a continuing interest from the 1980's onwards.<sup>22</sup> Its founding father is often appointed as Halbwachs, who states memory is as much framed in the present as it is in the past.<sup>23</sup> For the purpose of this research, which essentially considers the way Lumumba is remembered today as a national and anti-colonial figure, memory thus plays a significant part. Historian Meike de Goede states that Patrice Lumumba's murder is collectively remembered as a key event that defined the course of Congolese history ever since. For Congolese people, de Goede explains, the events that followed independence are understood as the establishment of a neo-colonial state.<sup>24</sup> This will be recognised in later chapters. As previously mentioned, embedded in memory theory is not only remembering, but also forgetting.<sup>25</sup> On the one hand there is the fear of forgetting<sup>26</sup>, which would explain the multitude of art on Lumumba. On the other, there is selective omission. When memory is constructed, some things are left out on purpose.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Elikia M'Bokolo, interviewed by Julien Truddaïu & Matthias De Groof, 'The History of Patrice Lumumba's Historiography', Matthias de Groof (ed.), *Lumumba in the Arts* (Leuven 2020), 94-105, 102.

<sup>21</sup> M'Bokolo, 'History of Patrice Lumumba', 102.

<sup>22</sup> Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi and Daniel Levy, 'Introduction', Idem. (eds.), *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford 2011), 3-62, 22.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, 18.

<sup>24</sup> Meike J. De Goede, "'Mundele, it is because of you'" History, Identity and the Meaning of Democracy in the Congo', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 53:4 (2015), 583-609, 587.

<sup>25</sup> Johannes Fabian, 'Forgetful Remembering: A Colonial Life in the Congo', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 7:4 (2003), 489-504, 489.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago 2006), 63. ; Bilinda Straight, 'In the Belly of History: Memory, Forgetting, and the Hazards of Reproduction', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 75:1 (2005), 83-104, 83.

<sup>27</sup> Z. Crook, 'Ma hew, memory theory and the New No Quest', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 70:1 (2014), 1-11, 2.

The construction of memory is done continuously, which makes it a perpetually actual phenomenon.<sup>28</sup> The primary sources in this thesis are all recent, because the memory of Lumumba is not a thing of the past, but one of the present. Andreas Huyssens remains convinced that the explosion of memory discourses at the end of the twentieth century have added significantly to ways in which history is understood. Huyssens states that issues of memory have become part of cultural life and public discourse in ways rarely achieved by professional historiography alone.<sup>29</sup> In order to be able to discuss memories, a frame needs to be in place, Frank van Vree argues. This means that that if people cannot talk about something because it is not part of the dominant memory culture, something has to shift so that they can find a way to discuss this. A change in dominant memory culture, for instance through the publication of a book, can allow for such a frame to be introduced.<sup>30</sup> This happened when Ludo de Witte published the story of Lumumba's assassination. After this publication, it could no longer be denied or silenced that Belgium had a part in Lumumba's death. This led to a new way of remembering the events surrounding Lumumba in the West.

Three relevant types of memory and identified in this research. Firstly, collective memory, which signifies narratives of the past experience that are constituted by and on behalf of specific groups. In this memory, they find meaningful forms of identification that may empower. Collective memory sustains and reproduces imagined communities with which individuals identify and that give them a sense of history, place and belonging.<sup>31</sup> Meike de Goede stated that Lumumba's murder was a key event in the collective memory of Congolese people. In the case of Lumumba, most of the sources do not have a first-hand recollection of him. This leads to the next type of memory, namely: post memory. This describes the second generation's relationship to powerful experiences preceding their life, but transmitted to them so deeply, it seems they have constituted memories in their own right.<sup>32</sup> The final type of memory is mnemohistory. This is the type of memory that is not

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<sup>28</sup> Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', *Representations*, No. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (1989), 7-24, 8.

<sup>29</sup> Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts* (Stanford 2003), 5-6.

<sup>30</sup> Frank van Vree, 'Absent Memories', *Cultural Analysis*, 12 (2013), 1-12, 7.

<sup>31</sup> Chris Weedon and Glenn Jordan, 'Collective memory: theory and politics', *Social Semiotics*, 22:2 (2012), 143-153, 143.

<sup>32</sup> Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*, (New York 2012), 103.



concerned with the past as such, but with the past as it is remembered.<sup>33</sup> These three types of memory will be recognised in the chapters analysing the media sources.

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<sup>33</sup> Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, Levy (eds.), 'Introduction', 44.

## Historical Context

In 1885, the country that is now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), was colonised by king Leopold II of Belgium<sup>34</sup>, and the country became his personal property.<sup>35</sup> The Belgian state, however, took possession of the colony from king Leopold II when stories of his misdeeds increasingly came to light. It is estimated that 10 million Congolese people died under his regime and in some circles, he is referred to as the 'Belgian Hitler'.<sup>36</sup> In 1960 Congo acquired independence. Whereas nearing the end of the 50's Belgium planned on a slow decolonisation, the independence of other African countries and an increase in the demand for independence hastened the Belgians to declare independence of the Congo on June 1960. For the occasion, the Belgian king Baudouin flew to Congo. At the time, Patrice Lumumba was the democratically elected prime minister of the country and Joseph Kasavubu was the first president. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, Independence Day, king Baudouin held a speech in which he said the independence of Congo was possible by virtue of his predecessor king Leopold II. Although it was unplanned, Patrice Lumumba took the stage and held a speech of his own. In his speech, he said the independence was enabled by the efforts of the Congolese people: *"Victorious independence fighters, (...) Although this independence of the Congo is being proclaimed today by agreement with Belgium, an amicable country, with which we are on equal terms, no Congolese will ever forget that independence was won in struggle, a persevering and inspired struggle carried on from day to day, a struggle, in which we were undaunted by privation or suffering and stinted neither strength nor blood. It was filled with tears, fire and blood. We are deeply proud of our struggle, because it was just and noble and indispensable in putting an end to the humiliating bondage forced upon us."*<sup>37</sup> He received eight standing ovations for this speech and it put him on the world stage as an African nationalist.<sup>38</sup> King Baudouin, however, was not amused and felt deeply insulted by this speech. Belgium was not portrayed as a beneficiary who improved the Congo and now allowed them to be free, but as an oppressor that had to be struggled against for

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<sup>34</sup> Roel van der Veen, *Afrika van de koude oorlog naar de 21<sup>e</sup> eeuw* (Amsterdam 2002), 163.

<sup>35</sup> John Iliffe, *Africans* (Cambridge 2007), 195.

<sup>36</sup> 'De Congolese holocaust en de koning Leopold II, de Belgische Hitler', *International Institute for Scientific Research*, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> 2020, <https://iisr.nl/de-congolese-holocaust-en-de-koning-leopold-ii-de-belgische-hitler/>

<sup>37</sup> Patrice Lumumba, *The Truth about a Monstrous Crime of the Colonialists* (Congo 1961), 44-47.

<sup>38</sup> Monaville, 'A History of Glory', 82-83.

independence. There are two views on the speech of Lumumba. To some, the speech was a piece of populist-genius and was read as anti-colonial vibrancy. Others, however, considered it diplomatic naivety and proof of a firebrand personality.<sup>39</sup>

In the time that followed, Lumumba would get caught up in Cold War politics. Soon after its independence, the situation in Congo fell into chaos. The rich province Katanga underwent a secession which was supported by the Belgians. Lumumba asked the UN for help and they provided assistance, but Lumumba was not satisfied with the response of the UN. He expected them to expel the Belgians, but they did not. Consequently, he asked the United States for help, but they dismissed his call for action. After this rejection and the UN's refusal to help suppress the Katangese revolt, Lumumba appealed to the Soviet Union for help.<sup>40</sup> Lumumba was considered a radical nationalist that was a threat to the West.<sup>41</sup> Thus, Lumumba got caught up in Cold War politics. The majority of the literature on Lumumba stems from this position; the United States branded him a danger and the International Community followed suit.

In September, the president of Congo Kasa-Vubu, fired Lumumba and both he and the army leader Mobutu turned against Lumumba. This meant that Lumumba faced opposition from Congolese, Belgian and US leaders. Lumumba was placed under house arrest, protected by UN troops, which in turn were surrounded by Mobutu's troops. Lumumba managed to escape his house. The UN claimed there was nothing they could do for him after this escape and would make no attempt to rescue even if this would have been possible. Subsequently, Lumumba was caught in December 1960 by Mobutu's men. Together with two other nationalists, Mpolo and Okito, he was flown to Katanga where he was murdered in secret on January 17<sup>th</sup> of 1961. As Isabelle de Rezende put it: "*Lumumba's image was instantly iconic of the Belgian Congo's decolonization, also a protagonist in the unfolding Cold War, and key figure in Africa's (never to be completed) decolonization.*"<sup>42</sup> For decades Western powers were able to claim clean hands,<sup>43</sup> as the circumstances surrounding Lumumba's death

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<sup>39</sup> Monaville, 'A History of Glory', 70.

<sup>40</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein and Dennis D. Cordell, 'Patrice Lumumba', *Britannica*, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Patrice-Lumumba>

<sup>41</sup> Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, 'Patrice Lumumba', *Ohio University Press*, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://www.ohioswallow.com/book/Patrice+Lumumba>

<sup>42</sup> Isabelle De Rezende, 'History as Spectacle', Matthias de Groof (ed.), *Lumumba in the Arts* (Leuven 2020), 26-43, 27.

<sup>43</sup> Monaville, 'A History of Glory', 80.

remained shrouded in mystery. This changed in 1999 when Ludo de Witte published his book *The Assassination of Lumumba* which revealed the parts the US, Belgium and the UN had played in his demise. Initially, the Belgian government Verhofstadt did not respond to the book, but the book was followed by more publicity that enhanced its impact. Gerard Soete had been a Belgian police officer at the time of Lumumba's death and was ordered to make Lumumba's body disappear. Soete admitted in a television interview that he had been ordered to dig up Lumumba's corpse and make it vanish in sulphuric acid. Nothing was to remain. Soete had, however, pulled out two of Lumumba's teeth and taken them back to Belgium. During the interview, he showed one of the teeth to the interviewer. These revelations were scandalous and the Belgian government held an investigation due to the public pressure that followed.<sup>44</sup> In February of 2002, the Belgian government Verhofstadt apologised to Lumumba's relatives and the Congolese people. The Belgian government, however, refused to debate the royal house's involvement.<sup>45</sup> Lumumba's tooth was in possession of Soete's daughter until 2016 and is now in the Palace of Justice in Belgium. Although Soete had taken two of Lumumba's teeth, it is only that one tooth shown in the interview of which the location is known. In the 2019 series of 'Kinderen van de Kolonie' or 'Children of the Colony', Patrice Lumumba's daughter Juliana Lumumba asks for it to be returned to the DRC so that the family can decide on what to do with his remains. In September of 2020 it was announced the tooth will be returned to Lumumba's family.<sup>46</sup> Across Africa, Patrice Lumumba is considered an example of African nationalism and remembered in the context of decolonisation.

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<sup>44</sup> Klep, 'Een problematische erfenis', 5.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem, 10.

<sup>46</sup> Sacha Kester, 'Eén tand, dat is het enige wat over is van de vermoorde Congolese premier. Nu krijgt zijn familie hem terug', *Volkskrant*, September 10<sup>th</sup> 2020, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/een-tand-dat-is-het-enige-wat-over-is-van-de-vermoorde-congolese-premier-nu-krijgt-zijn-familie-hem-terug~ba28b417/>; Anne Vanrenterghem, 'Belgische gerecht geeft dan toch tand vermoorde Congolese premier Patrice Lumumba terug aan familie', *VRT*, September 10<sup>th</sup> 2020, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/nl/2020/09/10/tand-lumumba/>

## Methods and Media Sources

In the succeeding chapters, four different media sources will be analysed: an interview, a documentary, newspaper articles and an official webpage. The method of research applied to the media sources is a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This stems from a critical theory of language which sees the use of language as a form of social practice. Social practices are tied to specific historical contexts and are a means by which existing social relations are reproduced or contested.<sup>47</sup> In order to analyse the primary sources in this thesis according to this model, they are considered through three steps. The first is a text analysis or description of the source. The second is a processing analysis, or interpretation of the source. The final is a social analysis or explanation of the source. To conduct this research, the sources were selected on the basis of the following criteria: firstly, they were of recent date, because this research considers the way in which Lumumba is remembered today. Thus, the closer to the recent date, the more representative the sources are for this recent memory. Secondly, Lumumba's name or image had to appear in the source. Lumumba is not the main subject in all of the sources and this adds to the research, because it allows one to see how Lumumba is mentioned when he is not the main subject. Thirdly, the source had to reflect a stance on Lumumba. Hence, the source should not purely be descriptive, but allow for a look into the memory and opinion of and on Lumumba. The four media sources offer different perspectives and this allows for a more well-rounded look into the memory of Lumumba and why he is a symbol of anti-colonialism and nationalism to this day. Below, the use of method and the choice for the source is further elaborated on per chapter.

The first chapter discusses an interview held with the Congolese artist Sapin Makengele in January of 2020. The interview was based on the depiction of Lumumba's gold tooth in his drawing *Congo Crisis*. The full interview can be found on YouTube.<sup>48</sup> For this research, the entire interview was transcribed and translated. The parts of the interview used were chosen because they discussed the memory of Lumumba today. The interview was analysed using the CDA on these chosen parts of the interview. This source is arguably the closest to a Congolese voice as it was conducted with a Congolese who was asked about

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<sup>47</sup> Hilary Janks, 'Critical Discourse Analysis as a Research Tool', *Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education*, 18:3 (1997), 329-342, 329.

<sup>48</sup> Elske Toot, 'Lumumba's Tooth – An interview with Sapin Makengele', *Elske T*, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1r9LCfDmSHg&t=75s>

Lumumba directly. However, this source is also coloured, which should be kept in mind. As derived from both his depictions of Lumumba in his drawing and in his words in the interview, Sapin considers Lumumba to be a martyr. This is something often found in the literature, where Lumumba is elevated to sainthood. This is a theme the reader is advised to bear in mind.

The second chapter zooms in on the documentary *Stop Filming Us* (SFU) that came out in March of 2020. It was shot by the Dutch filmmaker Joris Postema in the town of Goma. The aim of *Stop Filming Us* is to show a Congolese perspective on the DRC to a Western audience. The documentary's main focus is not Lumumba, but Lumumba does appear in it, and it is by these implicit mentions that his memory in Congolese minds today is illustrated. Thanks to Bonnie Henderson I was able to access the film online and I received permission to take screenshots of it. I was able to watch the documentary in detail. Special attention was given to depictions, resemblances and mentions of either the word or the image of Lumumba. These moments were then analysed through the CDA and are compiled in the second chapter.

Although the documentary was shot with the intention of showing a Congolese perspective, the reader must remember it is still seen through a Western lens as the filmmaker is Dutch. This duality echoes in the reception of the documentary. On the one hand, it received the 'Dutch Movies That Matter Award' and on the other it was criticised to the extent that it should not have been made.<sup>49</sup> Despite this complication, this research does use the documentary because the filmmaker is upfront about this drawback himself. The filmmaker has conversations with Congolese people, reflecting on events that happened in the film. Most notably with Ganza Buroko who is the line producer of the film and appears in the documentary. Postema, Buroko and other Congolese people engage in critical conversations and Postema does not shy away from showing that not everyone agreed on existence of Western bias in parts of the film. The reason I still think it is a valuable source is that one may ask oneself if we can at all speak of one all-encompassing Congolese perspective. In the documentary, for instance, the Congolese photographer Ley Uwera does think the poor side of Goma should be shown, whereas the artist Mugabo Baritegera only wants the film to show the positive side of Goma. Therefore, if Baritegera would make a

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<sup>49</sup> Emiel Martens, 'Stop Filming Us: De film die nooit gemaakt had mogen worden', *One World*, October 6<sup>th</sup> 2020, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://www.oneworld.nl/lezen/opinie/stop-filming-us-de-film-die-nooit-gemaakt-had-mogen-worden/>

movie, we would also see a coloured perspective of Goma. This would also be silencing. As Lumumba is not the focus of the documentary, references to him are indicative of the role Lumumba inhabits in everyday life.

The third chapter examines three articles from the Belgian newspaper *De Standaard*. It had an audience of 650.300 readers in 2017, making it more wide-spread than other famous Flemish papers such as *De Morgen* and *De Tijd*.<sup>50</sup> The articles were taken from the website of *De Standaard*, which continued to be accessible in times of Corona. A number of articles in *De Standaard* are written by people of the Congolese diaspora and part of their audience is from the diaspora as well. This offers an additional perspective of the memory of Lumumba in Congolese eyes. The articles were selected on their recent nature, written between 2019 and 2020, and because Lumumba is placed in the context of today in their texts. The articles were subjected to a close-reading and afterwards analysed according to the CDA.

The first article, 'Do the Congolese have a lot to celebrate on Independence Day?',<sup>51</sup> is written by Don Moussa Pandzou and Lieven Miguel Kandolo. It is part of a series called 'Yaya na Lekie' which means older and younger brother. They are not literal brothers, but they write each other a letter on different subject once a month for *De Standaard*.<sup>52</sup> Kandolo, the 'younger brother', was born in Belgium to a Congolese father and Angolese mother.<sup>53</sup> Pandzou, the 'older brother', was born in the DRC and later moved to Belgium.<sup>54</sup> The letters that are exchanged in this article discuss Independence Day in the DRC. This provides two perspectives of black people from the Congolese diaspora living in Belgium. As the reader will find in chapter three, the opinions of these men differ, thus, two different voices from a similar arena are heard. The second article is by Marc Reynebeau: 'Everything about

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<sup>50</sup> Karsten Lemmens, 'De Standaard groter dan De Morgen en De Tijd samen', *De Standaard*, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2017, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, [https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20171012\\_03127386](https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20171012_03127386)

<sup>51</sup> Don Moussa Pandzou and Lieven Miguel Kandolo, 'Valt er veel te vieren voor Congolezen op de dag van de onafhankelijkheid?', *De Standaard*, 28th July 2019, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, [https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20190627\\_04482873?&articlehash=AC625F2B01E9F40621B9480BB2A00D52AB64276A1B7786369EFF3FCDF39F1AD2EE25A6723183B9B399CD333B89C3BCFCA1EBE6061CCF79B4F950B71CC71B75E5](https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20190627_04482873?&articlehash=AC625F2B01E9F40621B9480BB2A00D52AB64276A1B7786369EFF3FCDF39F1AD2EE25A6723183B9B399CD333B89C3BCFCA1EBE6061CCF79B4F950B71CC71B75E5)

<sup>52</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>53</sup> Lieven Miguel Kandolo, 'Ik ben slechts een kleinkind maar was diep geschokt toen ik de échte verhalen over Congo ontdekte', *VRT NWS*, November 27<sup>th</sup> 2018, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/nl/2018/11/27/opoini-kinderen-van-de-kolonie-lieven-kandolo-apartheid/>

<sup>54</sup> Tracy Bibo Tansia, 'De kolonisatie heeft bijna 60 jaar na datum nog altijd invloed op ons', *Radio1*, November 27<sup>th</sup> 2018, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://radio1.be/de-kolonisatie-heeft-bijna-60-jaar-na-datum-nog-altijd-invloed-op-ons>



Lumumba is unfinished, so he survives in the arts' published in January of 2020.<sup>55</sup> He wrote his article in response to Matthias de Groof's new book *Lumumba in the Arts* and explains the importance of art in relation to Lumumba. Reynebeau is a white Belgian who was born in Belgian Congo. He moved to Belgium when he was twelve and has been writing for *De Standaard* since 2003.<sup>56</sup> He writes about Lumumba in the arts, which is an important way of telling history in the DRC.<sup>57</sup> His affiliations with and interest in the DRC, in addition to the subject of his article that considers the Congolese perspective, is why this article was chosen to be included. The last article 'Patrice Lumumba in neo-colonial corona times'<sup>58</sup> was written by Anouk Torbeyns. This source is the most recent, April 11<sup>th</sup> 2020. Although Torbeyns is not Congolese herself (she was adopted from Indonesia by Flemish parents<sup>59</sup>) she is highly involved with the Afro-Belgians. This commitment can be found in her piece 'Cherish your frizzy hair', for instance, that she wrote on World Afro Day.<sup>60</sup> Additionally, she was one of the organizers of the Belgian Black History Month. In an interview, she said: "*We want to make Afro-Belgians more visible.*"<sup>61</sup> Considering her knowledge and involvement in the Congolese community in Belgium, her article is included in this research.

The fourth and final chapter delves into the UN Character Sketch on Lumumba on the official UN webpage written by Brian Urquhart.<sup>62</sup> It is the furthest from a Congolese perspective as it is written by an Englishman and opposes the view of Lumumba as a martyr. This contrast is often found in literature on Lumumba; the West depicting him as a devil and Africans depicting him as a martyr or saint. It is part of the International Community's perception of Lumumba. This source was not recently written, but is on the UN official webpage to this day. Thus, it continues to be a current text. The piece underwent a close

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<sup>55</sup> Marc Reynebeau, 'Aan Lumumba is alles onaf, dus overleeft hij in de kunst', *De Standaard*, January 17<sup>th</sup> 2020, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, [https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20200116\\_04808906](https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20200116_04808906)

<sup>56</sup> 'Reynebeau, Marc', *Home Academy*, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://www.home-academy.nl/sprekers/reynebeau-marc/>

<sup>57</sup> Fabian, *Remembering the Present*, 219.

<sup>58</sup> Anouk Torbeyns, 'Patrice Lumumba in neokoloniale coronatijden', *De Standaard*, April 11<sup>th</sup> 2020, [https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20200410\\_04920091](https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20200410_04920091)

<sup>59</sup> Anouk Torbeyns, 'Mag ik nog een Vlaming zijn? En wil ik dat nog wel zijn?', *VRT*, July 11<sup>th</sup> 2018, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/nl/2018/07/11/opinie-anouk-torbeyns-identiteit-wk/>

<sup>60</sup> Anouk Torbeyns, 'Koester je kroeshaar', *One World*, September 14<sup>th</sup> 2019, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://www.oneworld.nl/lezen/discriminatie/racisme/koester-je-kroeshaar/>

<sup>61</sup> Linda A. Thompson, 'Here's how Belgium is Celebrating Black History Month', February 28<sup>th</sup> 2019, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://www.thebulletin.be/heres-how-belgium-celebrating-black-history-month>

<sup>62</sup> Brian Urquhart, 'Character Sketches: Patrice Lumumba by Brian Urquhart', UN News, <https://news.un.org/en/spotlight/patrice-lumumba-brian-urquhart>

reading and the CDA was applied to it. It was examined on the positive and negative mentions of both Westerners and Africans, Lumumba in particular. As the point of view in this chapter diverges from that of the first chapter, it was believed to lay bare some parts the preceding chapters might exclude and vice versa.

In this section, the reader has been asked to bear in mind the lens through which the media sources are constructed. In accordance with the attention requested for this, I will also expand on my own lens. I am of Dutch descent and am currently residing in the Netherlands, but spent my early childhood in Kenya. African history has long been an interest of mine and that spark caught fire when I saw Sapin's drawing *Congo Crisis* and learnt the story behind the gold tooth depicted on it during a course at the University of Leiden. For this course, I made a five-part YouTube series on the tooth and Lumumba, which was concluded at the start of 2020.<sup>63</sup> The story and silence on Lumumba is a subject I feel passionate about. As a researcher, I consider the subject as objectively as I can. One's background, however, invariably influences one's writing and it is thus essential that I share information about my own lens.

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<sup>63</sup> Elske Toot, 'Lumumba's Tooth', *Voice4Thought*, February 5<sup>th</sup> 2020, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WISd0Qi6M\\_I&t=77s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WISd0Qi6M_I&t=77s)

## Chapter One

### Sapin Makengele

In his drawing *Congo Crisis*, the Congolese artist Sapin Makengele depicts events surrounding the Congo Crisis, which took place between 1960 and 1965. The year 1960 marks the start of Congo's national independence from Belgium, and 1965 is the year that Mobutu seized power. On the left of the artwork a blue 1960 is drawn, on the right a red 1965; the drawings indicate events that took place between independence and the end of the bloody crisis (Image 1).



Image 1 // *Congo Crisis* (2017) – Sapin

At the centre of the artwork, there are three depictions of Lumumba (Image 2). The most central one depicts Lumumba hung by the Belgian and American flags (Image 3). The second shows Lumumba being held by his hair by an officer, and flanked by Mpolo and Okito, the nationalists that died alongside Lumumba. In the background, three crosses are depicted atop a mountain with a river of blood flowing down from it. This is clearly Christian symbolism, in which Lumumba is shown as a martyr or prophet (Image 4). The third depiction is of a golden tooth dripping with blood, an image which requires some knowledge from the viewer to know it refers to Lumumba (Image 5). It is the tooth that was taken from Lumumba's corpse before it was dissolved in sulphuric acid. In January of 2020, Sapin was interviewed on this depiction of the tooth and its relation to Lumumba.



Image 2 // Congo Crisis (2017) – Sapin



Image 3 // Congo Crisis (2017) – Sapin



Image 4 // Congo Crisis (2017) – Sapin





Image 5 // Congo Crisis (2017) – Sapin

Sapin was asked questions regarding the importance of the tooth and on his thoughts about it being in Belgium. His answers indicate that its memory is crucial; according to Sapin the tooth should be recovered and Congolese people should take agency in its recovery. When asked what the tooth represents to him, Sapin replied: *“This tooth makes me very angry sometimes. It represents something very important that we should put in museums in Congo. Despite the testimony of the man, who removed Lumumba’s teeth, revealing how he did all this, I have not heard of any actions by the Congolese authorities to try and put these teeth in a museum. If these are the real teeth that the man has, then it’s the only original remains of Lumumba that we have. (...) I was even thinking to make a tombstone for Lumumba with these teeth. The tooth is very important as it is the only trace of Lumumba.”*<sup>64</sup> Sapin expresses his desire to see the tooth returned to where it was extracted. Sapin calls upon the Congolese authorities to claim the tooth and, hereby, places the agency within Congolese hands. He speaks of retrieving the tooth rather than of it being handed back by the Belgians. Sapin would like for the tooth to be back in the DRC so that Lumumba can be remembered on Congolese soil. At the time that this interview was conducted, the tooth was in Belgium. Sapin was requested to share his thoughts on this: *“I feel angry! (...) It revolts me. (...) International justice did nothing about [Gerard Soete]. (...) If one day the Congolese have the courage, we must do the procedures in order to get back the tooth of Lumumba and use them to teach the Congolese population the value of Lumumba (..).”*<sup>65</sup> Sapin felt angry and emphasised the unjust

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<sup>64</sup> Toot, ‘Lumumba’s Tooth – An interview’, 2:16 - 3:48.

<sup>65</sup> Ibidem, 9:08 – 11:55.

nature of the situation. He would like the tooth to be employed as an educative tool for Congolese to learn about Lumumba's life.

In the following quote, Sapin expands on how the tooth could be used to educate and shares what he was taught about Lumumba in school: *"My grandfather had a picture of Lumumba at home, I still remember it. I cannot really say when was the first time. Even at school we were always taught about Lumumba, father of independence. It was Mobutu himself who brought Lumumba's story to life very well, but not in detail, while omitting his complicity in Lumumba's death. Since I was a little boy, I have known that Lumumba is the national hero, the martyr of the independence of the Congo. We learnt these things in school, but without learning the details. I started to learn the details when I really became a painter. Furthermore, someone who made me want to discover more was a Belgian friend with whom I worked. (...) But I can't remember the first time I heard about Lumumba, it must have been since elementary school. I don't know if the teaching has changed now, we learnt about Lumumba, but not in detail!"*<sup>66</sup> Thus, in school Sapin was taught that Lumumba is the martyr of independence. Sapin also emphasises that they did not learn about Lumumba in detail and that he would like this to have been the case.

When asked how important Lumumba was to the general population, Sapin says: *"Lumumba is important, because he had the courage to ask for independence. And he became even more important because of the way he died. When Mobutu took power, the first thing he said was: 'Lumumba, a national hero and martyr of the independence.'"*<sup>67</sup> Sapin then explained how Mobutu wanted people to perceive him as a new Lumumba. Concerning this Sapin says: *"It was just Mobutu's campaign to push the power to convince the Congolese. But to have Lumumba decreed as the national martyr of independence is true."*<sup>68</sup> There are three answers in this reply to the question why Lumumba is important. First, Lumumba's courage to speak up. The appreciation for this courage will also be found in later chapters. The second explanation is the way in which Lumumba found his death, most likely referring to the mystery surrounding his death. The final reason Sapin gives, is that Mobutu decreed Lumumba a national hero. Although Sapin does not approve of Mobutu's use of Lumumba in his campaign, Sapin does agree Lumumba should be recognised as a national hero. The fact that

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<sup>66</sup> Toot, 'Lumumba's Tooth – An interview', 4:20 – 6:32.

<sup>67</sup> Ibidem, 6:50 – 7:16.

<sup>68</sup> Ibidem, 8:43 – 8:57.

Lumumba was decreed a hero was thus not a fault in itself. This decree further enhanced the view of Lumumba as a father of nationalism.

When Sapin is asked how he would like Lumumba to be remembered, he shares the following: *“Through many means: exhibitions, books, documentaries on Lumumba, squares and monuments to his name. Especially the new generation should be reminded of his efforts, his composure, his courage. We have to remember him on all fronts.”*<sup>69</sup> As can be seen, Sapin would like Lumumba to be remembered through a myriad of tools. Again, the word ‘courage’ is used, it is an attribute held in high esteem and one Sapin wants new generations to be mindful of. In his reply, Sapin also mentions squares and monuments. Unprompted, he shared his opinion on the Lumumba square in Brussels: *“Currently we have a Lumumba square in Brussels. I tell myself when we visit this square here, we were granted it about a year ago, it’s as if they had killed Lumumba a second time. Besides, for me the square was not credible for it to be the Lumumba place. It has become a big trash can with rubbish and rubbish everywhere. (...) there are still Belgians who say troubling things about Lumumba, despite the fact that he was murdered, despite the fact that he died in such a way.”*<sup>70</sup> In 2018, a square in Brussels was named after Lumumba.<sup>71</sup> The state of the square is an example of how Sapin does not want Lumumba to be shown. Sapin says it is as if they killed Lumumba again, indicating the gross disrespect this square does to Lumumba in his eyes. Sapin does not understand the attitude of some Belgians, he thinks their stance towards Lumumba is baffling. The insult of placing Lumumba at the centre of a poorly maintained square feeds the need for combat by placing Lumumba elsewhere, where justice will be done by him.

When Sapin is asked how he imagines things would be, had Lumumba not been killed, he replies: *“It’s hard to answer, because he was always going to be killed. Because he was someone who understood that he was going to die quickly. It’s very hard to think he wasn’t going to be killed, because he was fighting alone against everyone. Especially with enemies that were Congolese. His worst enemies were Congolese. If he hadn’t been killed, I think he would have gone into exile because he was betrayed by all Congolese politicians.”*<sup>72</sup> The main reason Sapin supplies for Lumumba’s demise, are the Congolese politicians that opposed him.

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<sup>69</sup> Toot, ‘Lumumba’s Tooth – An interview’, 14:50 – 15:33.

<sup>70</sup> Ibidem, 15:34 – 16:41.

<sup>71</sup> ‘Brussel krijgt een plein vernoemd naar Patrice Lumumba’, VRT, April 24th 2018, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/nl/2018/04/24/brussel-krijgt-een-plein-vernoemd-naar-patrice-lumumba/>

<sup>72</sup> Toot, ‘Lumumba’s Tooth – An interview’, 12:05 – 12:55.



In his drawing, Sapin has Lumumba depicted hung by the American and Belgian flag, to illustrate their part in the murder. In his words, however, Sapin emphasises the part Congolese people had in the death of Lumumba. Just as with the return of the tooth, Sapin looks at his country internally and places responsibilities with the Congolese.

In the interview with Sapin, memory was discussed often. Or rather, the way in which Sapin would like Lumumba to be remembered. In the interview both collective memory and mnemohistory are found. Sapin's interview gives more insight into the forming of this collective memory: the lessons taught in school, the information passed down from family members and the fact that Lumumba was decreed a national hero. In Sapin's drawing *Congo Crisis*, there are many familiar depictions of elements surrounding Lumumba. In his interview, Sapin adds more layers, however, by also talking about the Congolese people. This is where collective memory and mnemohistory are combined. Sapin wishes the events surrounding Lumumba to be remembered in greater detail and Sapin's desire for the return of the tooth is part of this expansion of memory. With the tooth, Sapin believes, an amelioration can be achieved in the way in which Lumumba is remembered.

Sapin considers Lumumba an incredibly important and positive figure in history. Both from his drawing and from the interview, it is clear that Sapin belongs to the group of people that revere Lumumba in a martyr-like way. School education, images of Lumumba in people's houses and Mobutu's decree that made Lumumba a national hero are all reasons that Sapin gives for Lumumba's continuous part in Congolese minds. Both the drawing and the interview leave no doubt that Sapin considers Lumumba a crucial nationalist figure. When it comes to (neo-)colonialism, this is displayed evidently in Lumumba's drawing, but not in Sapin's words. In the interview, he mostly pleads for Congolese to take up agency. This chapter, therefore, lends itself best to understanding why Lumumba remains a figure of nationalist importance in the DRC today.

## Chapter Two

### Stop Filming Us

For the documentary: *Stop Filming Us* (SFU), the Dutch filmmaker Joris Postema travelled to Goma, a city in North-Eastern Congo. Postema shot the documentary to create awareness about life in Goma in Western audiences by showing them Congolese perspectives.<sup>73</sup>

The themes of nationalism and anti-colonialism are found throughout the documentary. The documentary displays Congolese people who want to show a positive side of the DRC. These Congolese people want to illuminate the strong points of their country and people. For instance, when a group of four Congolese men are shown a picture of a Congolese woman, they describe her as African. When asked why, they reply: *“This is a happy person. This person expresses pride.”*<sup>74</sup>. The pride in being African illustrates the importance of nationalism. Simultaneously, through both images and discussions, such as the one discussed in the section *Hall Lumumba*, the neo-colonialist side is shown. Neo-colonialism is depicted through the many shots of UN cars<sup>75</sup>, the sequence of NGOs<sup>76</sup> and that of places with European names<sup>77</sup>. These are examples of remnants of colonial times and of how the International Community is still involved in the DRC.

Considering its recent release, in March of 2020, the film is a helpful insight into the memory of Lumumba in the present. There are five instances in which Lumumba is either explicitly shown or mentioned. Two of these took place in the same venue, which is why they have been compiled under the same heading ‘Yolé!Africa’. The other scenes in which Lumumba appears have been placed chronologically in the three remaining sections. Re-occurring people in the documentary are the artist Mugabo, who wishes to show the positive side of Goma; the Congolese filmmaker Betty, who wants to make a film about Congo herself; the film producer of SFU Ganza; and the soundman of SFU TD Jack. These people will also return in the following sections.

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<sup>73</sup> SFU, 1:00:28.

<sup>74</sup> Ibidem, 28:15.

<sup>75</sup> Ibidem, 2:30, 19:23, 23:27, 105:09, 1:14:43, 1:17:37,

<sup>76</sup> Ibidem, 18:30 – 19:29.

<sup>77</sup> Ibidem, 1:17:17-1:17:1:17:30.

## Yolé!Africa

The first reference to Lumumba in the documentary is his a painting of his face on the wall of the Yolé!Africa building in Goma. Here, Lumumba is portrayed as a strong man. He looks to his right, his head straight and his defining goatee and glasses prominently displayed.<sup>78</sup> This is not the martyred Lumumba with crosses in the background, but a Lumumba whose expression leans toward defiant. Yolé!Africa is a cultural centre for youth in east DRC that was established in 2000 as a reaction to the conflict in the area. They provide space, skills and alternative education for youth, so that they may thrive despite the strife.<sup>79</sup> The appearance of Lumumba may be explained by Yolé!Africa's objective; thriving even in difficult times. The ongoing conflict in this part of the DRC may be seen as a parallel to the life of Lumumba, which explains why it is his image that has been chosen to accompany this movement. The collective memory of Lumumba as someone who soldiered through, is reflected in the image on this building. The shot of Lumumba's face is first shown from afar (image 6)<sup>80</sup> and later from close by (image 7)<sup>81</sup>. Sandwiched between these two frames is another; that of the gate of Yolé!Africa. The gate reads: 'The art of empowering youth'.<sup>82</sup> Placing this frame between the two images of Lumumba further fortifies the idea that Lumumba is an empowering factor. The fact that he was chosen as the image that youth walk into as they enter the building seems indicative of Lumumba's role as an example to them. The resemblance between Lumumba's situation and that of youth in Goma now, may therefore explain why Lumumba is seen as exemplar of the kind of Congolese they aspire to be. Thus, Lumumba's image here acts as an indicator of a nationalist striving for Congolese youth, because they can parallel their lives to his.

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<sup>78</sup> SFU, 08:58.

<sup>79</sup> 'About Us', *Yolé!Africa*, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://yoleafrica.org/about-us/>

<sup>80</sup> SFU, 08:46.

<sup>81</sup> Ibidem, 08:58.

<sup>82</sup> Ibidem, 08:48.



Image 6 © DOXY Films/EO 2020



Image 7 © DOXY Films/EO 2020

Another poignant link to Lumumba are two Congolese people that reoccur throughout the documentary: Ganza and Betty. Ganza is the general coordinator of Yolé!Africa.<sup>83</sup> Outwardly, Ganza resembles Lumumba in SFU (Image 8).<sup>84</sup> He has a goatee and glasses that are distinctly similar to Lumumba's. Considering Ganza is one of the senior people at Yolé!Africa, and thus has an exemplary role, it is interesting to see how alike Lumumba he appears. Both he and Lumumba share the passion for advancing Congolese people. Ganza's emulation of Lumumba is, therefore, an indicator that drawing a parallel between oneself and him, is perceived as an advancement of the nation. Lumumba continues to be a symbol of nationalism, partly because reproducing him through oneself displays fervency for the forwarding of Congolese people.



Image 8 © DOXY Films/EO 2020

Betty is a Congolese filmmaker who is first introduced walking out of the gates of Yolé!Africa in between the two aforementioned frames of Lumumba (image 9).<sup>85</sup> Her placement here, literally opening the doors that say 'The art of empowering youth', amid the Lumumba frames, also strongly links her to him. The scene moves from the outside of the building to the interior. Here, Betty and Ganza are discussing options for funding for Betty's film on the colonial relationship between Belgium and Congo.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Yolé!Africa, 'About Us', consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://yoleafrica.org/about-us/>

<sup>84</sup> SFU, 10:23.

<sup>85</sup> Ibidem, 08:53.

<sup>86</sup> Ibidem, 09:24.





Image 9 © DOXY Films/EO 2020

Both occasions on which Lumumba's face is in the frame, are followed by the image of Ganza and Betty. First, the image discussed above, and the second instance follows later on in the film. The image shown of Lumumba is one taken from afar and Lumumba's face is literally illuminated; it is only his face which is lit up by the sun, the rest is covered in shade (image 10).<sup>87</sup>



Image 10 © DOXY Films/EO 2020

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<sup>87</sup> SFU, 27:56.

This frame is followed by Ganza and Betty showing a group of Congolese youth different pictures of Congolese people and asking them whether these were taken by a foreigner or a Congolese person.<sup>88</sup> Lumumba thus becomes the introduction to a scene in which the tension between the West and Africa is played out. The question of anti-colonialism is brought forward. Lumumba is a reminder, an example, of a Congolese man who did not want to be influenced by the West. Arranged side by side, the image of Lumumba preceding both Ganza and Betty strongly links the three together. By using the image of Lumumba as an example, they convey to their young audience that this is the type of person a Congolese strives to be.

### Hall Lumumba

The second-time Lumumba is brought to the audience's attention, is when preparations for a film viewing in a place called 'Hall Lumumba' are shown. The viewing is part of a larger film festival, currently known as CIFF, that is organised to bring the local community together around film screenings and that encourages critical debates.<sup>89</sup> The name of the hall is deliberately shown (image 11)<sup>90</sup>, and by doing this the filmmaker intends to let the name resonate with the audience so that they will associate this name with the unfurling scene.

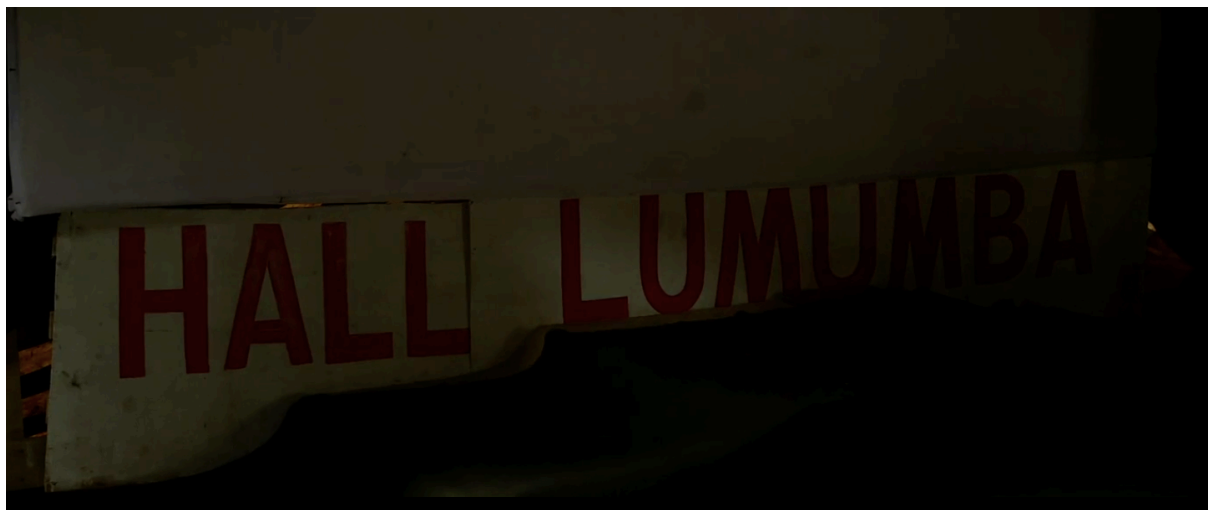


Image 11 © DOXY Films/EO 2020

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<sup>88</sup> SFU, 28:10.

<sup>89</sup> 'The Congo International Film Festival', consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://voleafrica.org/ciff/>

<sup>90</sup> SFU, 11:28.



The film shown is that of a man on the Kivu lake who describes how the colonists forbade them their practices. It displays the influence the West has had on the DRC's history. After the film ends, in accordance with the aim of the CIFF, a discussion is started.

In the context of this film viewing, Lumumba is tied to Congolese history. This is derived from the following discussion that was ignited after one of the viewers said: *"We don't even know what we have forgotten. That's why we fall into the trap of what others said."*<sup>91</sup> Betty replies that they should follow examples of Congolese such as Wendy Bashi, who is an inspiration and example for them all to tell their own history. Here, the words of Lumumba are reflected. In Lumumba's final letter to his wife Pauline he wrote: *"History will one day have its say; it will not be the history taught in the United Nations, Washington, Paris, or Brussels, however, but the history taught in the countries that have rid themselves of colonialism and its puppets. Africa will write its own history (...)"*<sup>92</sup> Just like Lumumba, Betty says there is a way out of the trap of not knowing your history. The way out is writing history yourself. Post memory, or memory that seems to be one's own when actually it is derived from former generations, is recognised here. Betty emphasises the documentation of a Congolese version of history just as Lumumba did. The link between Lumumba and Congolese history continues as the scene moves to the outside of the building, where a group has gathered in front of 'Hall Lumumba'. Here, a discussion on neo-colonialism is raised. One of the participants asks how best to deal with the concept of neo-colonialism and immediately Mugabo and Betty intervene to say that it is not a concept, but a reality.<sup>93</sup> The fierceness with which they instantly rush to add that it is a reality and not a concept, demonstrates how strongly the anti-colonialist sentiment lives. Another participant shares the following: *"We have adopted all their opinions, they stick in our minds. Is there no way to remove them?"* As he says this, his hands move by the sides of his head, so as to indicate how it is stuck in his head (image 12).<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> SFU, 13:57.

<sup>92</sup> Patrice Lumumba, '(1960) Patrice Lumumba's last letter to Pauline Lumumba', August 20th 2009, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/primary-documents-global-african-history/patrice-lumumbas-letter-pauline-lumumba-1960/>

<sup>93</sup> SFU, 14:20 & 14:26.

<sup>94</sup> Ibidem, 14:38.



Image 12 © DOXY Films/EO 2020

To this, Mugabo replies that in the end our mind is our own, so that there are places they cannot reach. The tension seen in this conversation is one also found in discourse on Lumumba; victimhood versus self-determination.<sup>95</sup> On the one hand, the Congolese say they are unable to escape the colonisation, but on the other hand, they also speak of writing one's own history and taking agency of one's own mind. The ongoing feeling of captivity reinforces the discourse on Lumumba as a victim of neo-colonialism. Contrarily the power to determine one's own mind speaks to Lumumba as the self-determined anti-colonialist and nationalist.

### Mugabo's Words

In this scene, Lumumba's name is voiced in a protest held in 2017 by the artist Mugabo. Before entering the scene of the protest, a space is introduced that Mugabo wants to turn into a gallery. Mugabo's wish for the gallery is to restore cultural patrimony. He says that he would like art to be a way of debating contemporary issues. This explanation of the gallery is indirectly an explanation of Mugabo's protest as well. The protest was an artistic attempt to open the eyes of Congolese people to the state of their country.

The next scene depicts Mugabo speaking to a crowd as he is chained to another man by the wrist. The man has red paint on his face and his chest is bare. There are two other men dressed similarly and they are also linked together (image 13).<sup>96</sup> A number of gaslights lie in

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<sup>95</sup> De Goede, "Mundele, it is because of you", 587.

<sup>96</sup> SFU 17:38.

front of them. They are surrounded by officers and multiple people are filming them from their phones.<sup>97</sup>



Image 13 © DOXY Films/EO 2020

Mugabo is addressing the crowd and the officers. He announces the following to them: *“All of you back there! Look at Congo! The land of Lumumba. Look at this country. [image 14] Look at our rights. Look what they do to people who talk. Look at our handcuffs. We’re doing this for Lumumba. The corrupt Congolese leaders have killed this country. They’ve killed Lumumba and go on killing the Congolese people. You who are watching this, you are accomplices. All of you with your cameras, you’re killing the Congolese people. Because of you I’m prepared to die today. You’re corrupted. You’re here to arrest me because you think you have power. Look at yourself, it’s a disgrace. You’re a disgrace. That’s where you’re taking this country: handcuff those who talk. “I am a colonel” What does that mean? The Belgians have gone.”*<sup>98</sup> In this piece, Mugabo is solely addressing the Congolese. The first mention of Lumumba is when Mugabo calls him the keeper of the DRC, and calls the DRC the land of Lumumba. Here Lumumba is portrayed as the father figure to the country that is like a son to him. Being tightly connected to the motherland, Lumumba continues to be a symbol of nationalism. This is supported by the next four lines; Mugabo says that the struggle they are going through, their handcuffs, are for Lumumba. He parallels the temporary situation in the Congo to the time of Lumumba. He also mentions the rights and the speaking up, which Lumumba also did, and

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<sup>97</sup> SFU, 17:57.

<sup>98</sup> Ibidem, 17:29-18:20.

says they are doing it now to continue Lumumba's work. He continues this parallel between Lumumba's time and now when he addresses three different Congolese actors: the corrupt Congolese leaders, the onlooking crowd and the officers.



Image 14 © DOXY Films/EO 2020

Mugabo directly assigns responsibility to corrupt Congolese leaders and the crowd surrounding him. He says they killed Lumumba and are killing the Congolese people still, again equating Lumumba then to today. In Mugabo's eyes, no change has occurred in this regard. The DRC is in a similar place because the leaders have not changed their ways. Lumumba then remains alive, because those that were responsible for his death have continued on. Not only Lumumba, but also these unnamed corrupt leaders have not found their end. The continuation of injustice thus furthers Lumumba as the one who did want to stand up for the country, but could not do so due to these adversaries that are yet to be eradicated. The members of the onlooking crowd are also addressed as accomplices, thereby responsibility is assigned to part of the Congolese people themselves. They are not doing what Lumumba did: they are just watching, they are not speaking up. Their silence offends Mugabo, as in his eyes, a Congolese should act as Lumumba did.

In the officers surrounding Mugabo, the manifestation of neo-colonialism is found. Mugabo calls them a disgrace and says that the Belgians are gone. Reading between the lines, what he says here is that the officers he addresses, those that say: "I'm a colonel", do not speak from a Congolese place but from a Belgian one. Mugabo does not believe there is room for this in the land of Lumumba. Mugabo appoints responsibility to these officers, and urges

them to stop behaving as if they are still under Belgian rule and start acting as a Congolese should behave instead. The recurring theme of Mugabo's speech is that problems that were happening then are still perceived to be in place.

### The Spirit of Lumumba

The final time Lumumba is mentioned coincides with the end of the film. The director Joris, the producer Ganza and the soundman TD Jack organized a screening of SFU at a Congolese hotel and invited a Congolese audience to see it. The audience's responses to the film now make up the final cut of the feature. Some respond positively,<sup>99</sup> others hesitantly or negatively; one man says he thinks the film should be completely redone.<sup>100</sup> The comment from one of the viewers on Lumumba is as follows: *"In the context of decolonization of the mind and that of the space at Yolé!Africa, I feel free and I feel free to speak, because there I'm protected by the spirit of Lumumba. It allows me to express myself, but not in an airconditioned space like this. So, I want to know why this room was chosen for this first screening while a lot of the shooting took place at Yolé!"*<sup>101</sup> This viewer would have felt more comfortable speaking in a place that he felt connected to and that he felt Lumumba was connected to. There, he would have enjoyed Lumumba's protection. Lumumba's bravery to speak would project onto him and he would be able to let his words leave his mouth freely as Lumumba's used to do. However, because he was put in an air-conditioned, unfamiliar, perhaps Western or neo-colonialist setting, he is not able to do so quite as well. Exemplified in these words, is the perceived connection of the viewer between Yolé!Africa and Lumumba; those who fight for the advancement of the Congolese people. The space he is in now, makes him question if this is also the intention of the filmmaker Joris.

The question as to why this location was chosen enhances the mistrust of the audience member towards the filmmaker. First, Joris replies it is because of the better lighting<sup>102</sup> and then Ganza adds it is because they wanted to show a professional space so that the audience would not think they did not have other options. For this reason, they chose that hotel owned by Congolese people.<sup>103</sup> This explanation is followed by an audience member who mostly

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<sup>99</sup> SFU, 1:31:06.

<sup>100</sup> Ibidem, 1:30:57.

<sup>101</sup> Ibidem, 1:26:45.

<sup>102</sup> Ibidem, 1:27:41.

<sup>103</sup> Ibidem, 1:28:19.

praises the film and tells other viewers they must remember the intended audience is Western. The purpose is to help them see the other side of Congo, but this viewer does not like the location that was chosen.<sup>104</sup> When another viewer then also comments on the location saying: “So actually, you as a filmmaker, you bring us to a place where you feel good. Where your work will be easy for you, but you don’t consider us.”<sup>105</sup> Ganza is visibly annoyed and says it was him who chose the location and sent the invites. Ganza goes on to ask the viewers why they assume Joris chose the location, was it because he is white?<sup>106</sup> This links back to the first comment in which Lumumba was mentioned, when it was thought Joris was the most likely person to have chosen the location, causing the speaker to feel disconnected from Lumumba’s spirit because it was not a space he considered Congolese. The disturbance of Western influence, therefore, is considered as disowning of the Congolese audience’s preferences. It is Ganza who corrects the viewers and after this the matter is dropped completely. Thus, the perception or assumption of Western influence is taken negatively and put down as something that prevents Congolese from speaking freely because they are taken out of their comfort zone and placed where the Westerner is at ease.

It has become evident that the memory of Lumumba is present in the minds of Congolese living in Goma today. Both implicitly and explicitly he occurs throughout the documentary. Both in collective memory and in post memory Lumumba still has a strong position in the lives of Congolese in Goma. As a nationalist figure, Lumumba is emulated by Congolese today: both in words, images and personal appearance. The belief that (neo-)colonialism is still an issue in present-day DRC resonates from *Stop Filming Us*. The corrupt leaders, the remnants of colonial times in Congolese minds and continued interference of the West: these are all factors that are perceived similar to those Lumumba faced. Since things have not changed in the way the Congolese in this documentary would have liked them to, stark parallels continue to be made to Lumumba. This leads to Lumumba’s continued functioning as a relevant symbol of fighting colonialism.

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<sup>104</sup> SFU, 1:28:44.

<sup>105</sup> Ibidem, 1:29:33.

<sup>106</sup> Ibidem, 1:29:56.

## Chapter Three

### De Standaard

The Flemish Belgian paper *De Standaard* is a daily newspaper that was founded in 1918 and reported on the events surrounding Lumumba's premiership and death back in the sixties<sup>107</sup> and is still active in this day and age. As a result of colonial times, a significant number of Congolese people and people with Congolese heritage live in Belgium today.<sup>108</sup> Whereas before *De Standaard* mostly wrote *about* Congolese people, it is now also written *by* Congolese people or people who are strongly connected to the DRC. Through the use of articles found in *De Standaard* between 2019 and 2020, the views of several authors connected to the DRC living in Belgium with regards to Lumumba will be analysed. The first article discusses Independence Day, the second article explores Lumumba in the arts, and the third discusses Lumumba in corona times.

#### Do the Congolese have a lot to celebrate on Independence Day?

The first letter, 'Is Congo really independent?', raises a question on the treatment of the Congolese in Belgium. This one is written by Kandolo and addressed to Pandzou. His first sentence reads: "*Coming Sunday, June 30<sup>th</sup>, is a special day to us Congolese.*"<sup>109</sup> Although Kandolo was born and raised in Belgium he does use the word 'us' and thus indicates he feels Congolese. This indicates that Kandolo concerns himself with the DRC and, as will be seen later in this text, his Congolese heritage makes him feel an affinity with Lumumba.

Kandolo goes on to talk about king Baudouin's speech on June 30<sup>th</sup> and Lumumba's response to that. In this speech, king Baudouin gave no credit to the Congolese for the independence of their country. Instead, he said it was due to the genius of his predecessor king Leopold II's efforts and that of others that followed him that Congo now received this independence.<sup>110</sup> The speech Lumumba gave on that same day defied king Baudouin's words and hailed the victory in name of the Congolese. Kandolo calls Lumumba's words the highlight of that day. He goes on to describe unfavourable circumstances that have caused Congolese

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<sup>107</sup> Ludo de Witte, *De moord op Lumumba* (Leuven 1999), 283.

<sup>108</sup> Silke Cuypers, 'Belgisch-Congolese jongeren aan het woord', *Brood&Rozijn*, 21:1 (2016), 28-45, 37.

<sup>109</sup> Pandzou and Kandolo, 'Valt er veel te vieren'.

<sup>110</sup> Burlin Barr, 'Raoul Peck's Lumumba and Lumumba: *La mort du prophète*: On Cultural Amnesia and Historical Erasure' *African Studies review*, 54:1 (April 2011), 85-116, 111.

to leave their homeland in hopes of finding better circumstances elsewhere. *“In Congo, they are confronted with injustice, poverty and instability, in the West they come up against racism and a lack of recognition for them as a person and their culture.”*<sup>111</sup> This lack of recognition for people of the Congolese diaspora and the racism they face in the West might explain why Lumumba remains to stand as a nationalistic hero to those with Congolese roots. Back when king Baudouin held his speech, he only spoke of the deeds of the Belgians and the Congolese were not included in his words. Lumumba, however, did recognise them. An example Kandolo gives to demonstrate the feeling of not being fully accepted by the West, is the Lumumba square in Brussels. This square was placed in Brussels in 2018 in memory of Lumumba<sup>112</sup>. Kandolo attended the ceremony and describes it as a beautiful one, yet he remained reserved. He says he had a gut feeling something bad would happen to the square and this feeling was proven: *“A year later I feel that I was right. Worse, the picture of Lumumba by the plaque had been besmirched with graffiti.”*<sup>113</sup> What is illustrated here is the role of Lumumba as representing more than himself; he represents the Congolese people. Defacing Lumumba, according to Kandolo, is an act of disrespect towards the Congolese in Belgium. This act is an act towards Kandolo personally, a denial of being a respected citizen in Belgium. In this regard, post memory can be recognised. This is because the memory of Lumumba is still so relevant that Kandolo feels he and Lumumba are part of a similar victimhood imposed on them by the West.

The last two paragraphs of Kandolo’s letter contain sentiments of neo-colonialism. Kandolo calls the DRC’s independence a façade. *“As long as Congolese do not take up their responsibility to decide what can and cannot happen in politics and economics, there will never be independence. We have to get rid of our inferiority complex and show our worth, (...)”*<sup>114</sup> Kandolo’s words resonate the belief that neo-colonialism is still affecting the Congolese. The fight against (neo-)colonialism in the spirit of Lumumba has not been won and so he lives on. Secondly, Kandolo speaks of showing their worth. There Lumumba’s words to the Congolese to stand up and make their own history are recognised.

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<sup>111</sup> Pandzou and Kandolo, ‘Valt er veel te vieren’.

<sup>112</sup> ‘Brussel krijgt een plein vernoemd naar Patrice Lumumba’, *VRT*, April 24<sup>th</sup> 2018, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://www.vrt.be/vrtnws/nl/2018/04/24/brussel-krijgt-ee-plein-vernoemd-naar-patrice-lumumba/>

<sup>113</sup> Pandzou and Kandolo, ‘Valt er veel te vieren’.

<sup>114</sup> Ibidem.



Kandolo concludes his letter with questions to Pandzou, who had been in Congo on Independence Day the year before. Kandolo asks him how the 30<sup>th</sup> of June is celebrated in Congo. *“Does it receive a lot of attention and how do Congolese in Congo look at their history and independence?”*<sup>115</sup> Although Kandolo feels Congolese, he also considers that this way of looking at the Congolese history may be different from that of Congolese living in the DRC. Lumumba functions as an umbrella, uniting Congolese over different continents, and although their ways of looking at history may not be the same, the memory of Lumumba connects them. To Kandolo, Lumumba is part of collective memory; he identifies with Lumumba.

In Pandzou’s reply ‘The holiday that turned into a nightmare’, Pandzou starts with proclaiming pride for the independence, but does not place Lumumba on a pedestal like Kandolo does. Whereas Kandolo spent a lot of words on Lumumba and would link him to Congolese people, Pandzou separates the two. He says that the intention of that day, which he describes as the start of a generation of freethinking, political black citizens, is something that can still be honoured. However, he also says the following: *“Patrice Lumumba’s speech, the international interests and greed of politicians and army officers for power, heralded a decade of violence, murder and corruption. In this context, the Congolese people were the ones that remained as the greatest loser.”*<sup>116</sup> Here it is seen that despite Pandzou’s appreciation for the intention of the day, he also lists Lumumba’s speech among the factors that heralded turbulent times.

In the next part of his reply he relays how the Independence Day is mostly celebrated by the elite. They celebrate it in the centre of town. The rest of the people mainly celebrate the results of the national final exams of high schools that are announced on that same date. *“That reality lies far from the matters that the elite of the diaspora engage in.”*<sup>117</sup> According to Pandzou, thus, most Congolese people in the DRC do not pay as much attention to Independence Day as the elites or those with Congolese roots elsewhere. He stipulates that within the diaspora there are differences. Not all Belgians with Congolese roots celebrate the Independence and he says it is important to make a difference between the contemporary needs of the Congolese in the DRC and those of the diaspora in the West. Simultaneously,

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<sup>115</sup> Pandzou and Kandolo, ‘Valt er veel te vieren’.

<sup>116</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>117</sup> Ibidem.

however, they cannot be seen completely separate from one another. Pandzou writes that while he and Kandolo have their intellectual fight on decolonisation of their society, millions of Congolese fight against famine, wars and diseases or celebrate the school exam results that are announced on Independence Day. Pandzou seems to think there is a disconnect between the celebration of Independence Day and the reality of the matter, which he portrays more grimly. Essentially, he says the Congolese have other matters to consider and are not as focused on the day as he and Kandolo are. One might wonder, however, if the day to announce the results of the national exam were on the same day as independence by coincidence. As Pandzou pointed out himself, back in 1960 the intent of that day was to be the start of a generation of freethinking, political black citizens. To this end, it seems fitting that this day was chosen to announce school exam results, as a celebration of self-determination.

Despite these reality checks, Pandzou does also speak of honouring Independence Day. He says that he understands Kandolo's doubts of the independence of which Lumumba spoke, but that doubts will take them nowhere. *"Sunday, I will celebrate the independence, mostly because it was a symbolic victory. Otherwise I would dishonour the struggle of many revolutionaries."*<sup>118</sup> What is interesting here, is that Pandzou uses a plural. Pandzou includes a larger body of Congolese people in the victory. He emphasises the symbolic power of the Independence, not the reality as Lumumba had wished, but a dream that could still come true. In his final paragraph, Pandzou continues these words. He says that it is good to consider symbolic moments, but that it should be done in an honourable fashion. *"The Congolese independence was a highly necessary first step in the right direction. Let us mainly remember that there were brave people that stood up for a better future for the nation. The ideas of the first prime minister of Congo won a battle on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1960, but not (yet) the war."*<sup>119</sup>

Again, Pandzou uses plural and emphasises the importance of honouring Independence Day. Most notable is his last sentence: *"The ideas of the first prime minister of Congo won a battle on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1960, but not (yet) the war."*<sup>120</sup> Pandzou does extend credit to Lumumba in the end. Here, he speaks appreciatively of Lumumba's speech, saying that it won a battle. Pandzou does, however, remain reserved as he finishes with saying the

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<sup>118</sup> Pandzou and Kandolo, 'Valt er veel te vieren'.

<sup>119</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>120</sup> Ibidem.

war has not been won. Pandzou does not identify with Lumumba in the way Kandolo does, and so Lumumba is not part of his collective memory. What is found, is mnemohistory; Pandzou concerns himself with remembering Independence Day as a symbolic victory.

A difference is seen between the two texts with regard to Lumumba as a symbol of anti-colonialism; there where it is believed the Congolese have less agency, Lumumba's symbolic anti-colonialist value weighs heavier. As a symbol of nationalism, it is seen that when one identifies with him as Kandolo does, Lumumba becomes the father of nationalism. Pandzou emphasises the plural and does not identify with Lumumba; this difference in identification portrays why identifying with Lumumba is intertwined with seeing him as a nationalist symbol.

### Everything about Lumumba is unfinished, so he survives in the arts

Reynebeau describes how after Lumumba was murdered, there were international protests, including in Harlem, New York. There, they called him the 'Savior' and according to Reynebeau the protest in Harlem identified with Lumumba through a Christian language of salvation and martyrship; they compared Lumumba's death to the racist lynching in the South.<sup>121</sup> This is interesting, because even though white people did have their part in Lumumba's death, there were also Congolese people that partook in it. Thus, the adaptation of Lumumba to a current situation helps to keep him alive.

Lumumba as saint is a concept that Reynebeau continues to discuss in this article. *"That image of saviour, saint or prophet, was one quite often seen in the representation of Lumumba – at least for those that wished to seem his as an example. The exact opposite was true for his political opponents. In cartoon in the Belgian press it is not unusual (...) to see him depicted as the devil."*<sup>122</sup> Illustrated in this fragment, is the tension between Lumumba the saint and Lumumba the devil. This polarising view may reinforce the sainthood, to set someone against being the devil, one may feel the necessity to elevate him to prophet.

Reynebeau, as the title suggests, crowns Lumumba's 'unfinishedness' the reason for his survival. *"The iconic power of the memory of Lumumba lies in his distinct political profile, (...) and definitely also in his often symbolic, neo-colonialistically viewed brutal death, that was*

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<sup>121</sup> Reynebeau, 'Aan Lumumba is alles onaf'.

<sup>122</sup> Ibidem.

long shrouded in mystifications. He never received a grave, there were not even any material remains (as so wished by his murderers), save for two teeth in a Belgian legal file. For that reason alone, it's only representations that can remember him. Because all else is unfinished about him, his political project in the first place. (...) A somewhat macabre benefit to Lumumba's early death is that the memory of him froze in a time in which he merely represented a promise."<sup>123</sup> These words resemble those of Christopher L. Miller whose article 'Patrice Lumumba and the Past Conditional' is part of the recently published book *Lumumba in the Arts*<sup>124</sup> that Reynebeau also mentions in his article. Miller also argues that because Lumumba was never able to finish what he envisioned, the remaining 'would have's' explain why Lumumba still remains a current figure.<sup>125</sup> Lumumba was unable to fulfil his promises and could not prove this presumed worth.

In his third- and second-to-last paragraphs Reynebeau stipulates that smothered promises and stifled hope are the dominant themes in the iconography, and that this is true even for those that did not like Lumumba. "*In Belgian history, this chapter has never been closed or 'processed.'*"<sup>126</sup> Notable is that Reynebeau here speaks of Belgian history and not just Congolese history, which resonates with Kandolo's words and the request for a Lumumba square in Brussels; to receive validation for the Congolese past in Belgium. He goes on to say that the memory of Lumumba was manipulated by Soviets, who turned him into an anti-imperialistic symbol, and Mobutu who made him a national hero in 1966. The fact that so much is unfinished about Lumumba, fuels the views of him as a symbol of nationalism and anti-colonialism. Reynebeau's article can be seen as memory of mnemohistory; Reynebeau argues Lumumba is remembered as a symbol, a martyr, mainly because he was killed before he could act on his promises. It is the past conditional that can never be proven.

### Patrice Lumumba in neo-colonial corona times

Torbeyns lays down the contrast between Lumumba and king Baudouin in her first three paragraphs. She starts with a quote by Lumumba in which he says he hopes the Congolese will remember the 30<sup>th</sup> of June as a famous date. She then relays her interpretation of king

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<sup>123</sup> Reynebeau, 'Aan Lumumba is alles onaf'.

<sup>124</sup> Christopher L. Miller, 'Patrice Lumumba and the Past Conditional: The Virtual Reality of a Martyr', Matthias de Groof (ed.), *Lumumba in the Arts* (Leuven 2020), 78-93.

<sup>125</sup> Miller, 'Patrice Lumumba', 89.

<sup>126</sup> Reynebeau, 'Aan Lumumba is alles onaf'.

Baudouin's speech: *"In his eyes the independence of Congo was mostly a Belgian favour."*<sup>127</sup> Contrastingly, Torbeyns recalls the words of Lumumba: *"Lumumba addressed the Congolese people and praised their fiercely fought battle for freedom."*<sup>128</sup> The difference between Lumumba's acknowledging the Congolese for their work and king Baudouin's not doing so, causes Lumumba's words to be magnified; the deafening silence on the Belgian side amplified his words.

Torbeyns identifies with Lumumba, which is derived from the following: *"A young politician who proclaims the truth fearlessly and unvarnished, that's my kinda guy. In my fantasy, he added a mic drop at the end."*<sup>129</sup> There are three choices Torbeyns has made here to contemporise Lumumba. Firstly, she names him as a young politician; playing on his youth and bringing him closer to her own age. Secondly, the letters underlined in the quote, were in English in the original text in an otherwise Flemish text. This makes Lumumba also seem a part of the now; English in the Flemish language is often regarded as 'cool'. Finally, the fact that she shares that she fantasises about him adding a mic drop at the end of his speech. 'Mic drop' is a relatively modern phrase and is defined as: *"An act of intentionally dropping a microphone after you have given a speech or performance, as a way of making an impressive ending."*<sup>130</sup> The use of these three factors indicates that Torbeyns makes Lumumba relevant and feels close to him; she calls him 'my kinda guy'. Here post memory can be recognised, as Torbeyns places Lumumba in the present and the memory of him seems to be hers directly instead of one that she knows from textbooks.

Although in the next two paragraphs she touches similar points to Reynebau, saying they cannot know what direction Lumumba would have taken and the Congolese are left with 'what if's', she continues with a focus on the decolonisation that is linked to Lumumba. *"It is that decolonisation, of the minds, that the current generation Belgians with African roots work for with increased loudness. Their African ancestors yelled until their voices were hoarse to be heard a little, (...) The current generation has a megaphone and is more vocal than ever to break down the door to full-fledged emancipation."*<sup>131</sup> Lumumba's decolonisation she

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<sup>127</sup> Torbeyns, 'Patrice Lumumba'.

<sup>128</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>129</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>130</sup> 'Mic drop', *Cambridge Dictionary*, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020,

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/mic-drop>

<sup>131</sup> Torbeyns, 'Patrice Lumumba'.

connects to African youth who fight for equality. Torbeyns goes on to list different people and organisations to illustrate the number of Belgians with African roots that stand for this cause. She concludes this list with: *"The spirit of Lumumba is alive and kicking."*<sup>132</sup> Here she equates Lumumba with speaking up. She ends her first to last paragraph by saying it would be fantastic if Lumumba could be there on the sixtieth anniversary of his nation to be a source of inspiration to a new generation, with a reach far out of African communities. Here, a hope resonates that Lumumba could be an example for all people. Lumumba thus functions as part of collective memory. Where in Kandolo's text Lumumba functions as an umbrella for Congolese people and people of the Congolese diaspora, in Torbeyns text he can be part of the collective memory of the non-Western world that (needs to) stand up to the West.

Her last paragraph explains her title and illuminates a problem. Here she states that if Lumumba were there for the sixtieth anniversary, he could once more climb the stage and point out the colonial past to Belgium. *"To make the white world face the facts of their neo-colonial practices. Especially now doctors want to test a corona vaccination on Africans for no reason."*<sup>133</sup> In these two sentences she does not say 'Belgium' or 'Congolese', but the 'white world' and 'Africans'. What can be derived from these words is that the lives of Africans are still not recognised as equal and, thereby, that Lumumba's goal is not reached. Therefore, she imagines it would be Lumumba that would stand up and tell the white world this; that a vaccination would be tested on Africans would be detested by Lumumba. She ends her article in French, as if to speak as Lumumba, saying: *"It's sixty years after independence, but we're not decolonised yet. Mic drop."*<sup>134</sup> Again, she chooses the 'mic drop', through which she makes Lumumba into a contemporary figure. The reiteration of not being decolonized also resonates with Reynebeau's ideas; because a process is seen as unfinished Lumumba lives on. In Torbeyns article, Lumumba is part of collective memory. Although she is not Congolese herself, she does identify with Lumumba because he spoke up to the 'white world' that does not respect the 'non-white' world equally. Torbeyns is outraged that this white world would try out a vaccine on Africans and believes Lumumba would be just like her, standing up for the non-Western world.

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<sup>132</sup> Torbeyns, 'Patrice Lumumba'.

<sup>133</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>134</sup> Ibidem.

Both Kandolo and Torbeyns identify with Lumumba and refer to him in a way that conforms to post memory and collective memory. Post memory, because they both identify to Lumumba in present-day context and speak of him as a present, rather than a past figure. Collective memory can be found in both their texts, as they both place importance on Lumumba's Independence Day speech. This act of speaking up is significant to both authors, because they believe it is still necessary today. Both authors feel that there is a lack of respect and recognition from Belgium and the West in general. This lack of recognition continues to place Lumumba as a nationalist figure whose role has not yet played out. Additionally, the neo-colonial stance towards the DRC or Africa that Kandolo and Torbeyns perceive also keep Lumumba in place as an anti-colonial symbol. The perception they share that black lives are not considered as important as white lives, make them embrace Lumumba, who did think they were of equal value.

Torbeyns and Reynebeau both demonstrate how Lumumba is brought into the present. Reynebeau does this by giving the example of how Lumumba's death was linked to racist lynchings in the American South in Harlem. Torbeyns achieves this with phrases such as 'my kinda guy' and 'mic drop'. The adaptation of Lumumba either to other events or giving him modern attributes, places Lumumba in the here and now. Another common topic in both their texts is the 'unfinishedness' of Lumumba. The fact that he was killed before he could prove his worth makes him a promise of greatness that could not be fulfilled. The blame for this can fall on (neo-)colonialism and, on the flip side, it is used as a way to reinforce Lumumba as the nationalist hero that could have been.

Pandzou's text does not celebrate Lumumba in the way Torbeyns' and Kandolo's articles do. Pandzou sees the independence more as a communal effort, he uses plural rather than singular to talk about the independence. Here it is seen that the degree of identification with Lumumba makes a big difference in remembering him. Whereas Lumumba is the main subject in Torbeyns' and Kandolo's texts, he is mostly a figure amongst others in Pandzou's. Pandzou places more importance on the symbolic meaning of Independence Day and although he does reference and appreciate Lumumba's intentions, he also believes it is up to the Congolese to 'win the war' whereas Lumumba 'won the battle'. In Pandzou's text, Lumumba has done his share, whereas in Kandolo and Torbeyn's texts Lumumba's part is not over yet.

## Chapter Four

### UN Character Sketch

Lumumba has been both demonised and elevated to sainthood. This is reflected at the start of the UN Character Sketch which states: “(...) *he has become a figure of myth and legend – to some a martyr, to others a monster.*”<sup>135</sup> The author of this text is Brian Urquhart. He is a British national and worked for the UN from 1945 onward.<sup>136</sup> Urquhart is a veteran international civil servant. He was one of the UN’s first staff members and was part of the UN for decades.<sup>137</sup> He was among those that went to the DRC after Lumumba asked the UN for help because of the Katanga secession.<sup>138</sup> This Character Sketch allows for an insight into a perception of Lumumba from a source that represents (part of) the International Community. As martyr and monster are two opposites which seem to exclude each other, this Character Sketch can aid the understanding of the paradoxical Congolese perspective; as the way the West perceives Lumumba also influences the way Congolese people see him. In the Character Sketch, Urquhart emphasises Lumumba, the individual. Unlike the Lumumba recognised in the preceding chapters, Urquhart does not speak of Lumumba as a symbol. This is exemplified by Urquhart’s mention of Lumumba’s occupation before becoming prime minister: “*Under Belgian colonial rule, Lumumba had been a postal clerk and then a beer salesman.*”<sup>139</sup> Here, Urquhart speaks of Lumumba as a regular man. The sentence does not serve any other purpose than informing the reader that this is what Lumumba did prior to his political career. This is different from other mentions in literature on Lumumba’s former jobs, for instance in the book *Lumumba in the Arts*. Here, Elikia M’Bokolo is interviewed on Lumumba and he says: “*We can be surprised not to see Lumumba being represented as a salesman often, since his political eloquence was partly due to his ability, as the commercial director of a brewery to efficiently advertise a beer from Kinshasa. This is how the protagonist [Lumumba] created himself.*”<sup>140</sup> From M’Bokolo’s perspective it is evident that Lumumba’s past employment was an attribute to his later political life, whereas in Urquhart’s text the mention of his previous

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<sup>135</sup> Urquhart, ‘Character Sketches’.

<sup>136</sup> ‘Marking Sir Brian Urquhart’s 100th birthday, UN honours life-long servant of ‘we the peoples’’, *UN News*, February 28<sup>th</sup> 2019, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/02/1033712>

<sup>137</sup> ‘Character Sketches by Brian Urquhart’, *UN News*, consulted November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/spotlight/character-sketches-brian-urquhart>

<sup>138</sup> Urquhart, ‘Character Sketches’.

<sup>139</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>140</sup> M’Bokolo, ‘The history of Patrice Lumumba’s historiography’, 105.



work is not explained. M'Bokolo concludes by saying: *"In 1959, when he was arrested for political reasons, his character had already been created. This may be the part that is missing."*<sup>141</sup> Urquhart also mentions this arrest in his Sketch, but what he says contrasts with M'Bokolo's statement. According to Urquhart, Lumumba was arrested during a 'noisy demonstration', saying it was the 'first and only time' he was arrested by the Belgians. The emphasis, of this 'first and only' seems to reflect that Urquhart wants to ensure that his audience is in no doubt that the Belgians cuffed Lumumba only once. M'Bokolo states that Lumumba was arrested for political reasons, but Urquhart only mentions a 'noisy demonstration'. In comparison, Urquhart understates the reason for arrest and this diminishes its weight. Urquhart's text suggests it could have been a coincidence that Lumumba was arrested at the 'noisy demonstration'; he could have been one of many. From the interview with M'Bokolo, however, it becomes clear that Lumumba was targeted for arrest due to political reasons.

In parts of his text, Urquhart omits elements that do appear in other writings and consequently, the reader misses necessary context. The first neglect takes place in the following: *"Five days after independence, the Force Publique, the Congolese army in which there was not a single African officer, mutinied and threw out its Belgian officers. The leaderless army began to harass and assault the Belgian civilian population (...)"*.<sup>142</sup> In this extract, the mutiny of the Congolese army seems to have appeared out of the blue. Additionally, Urquhart portrays them as a threat to the whites, but it was not exclusively whites who suffered the consequences of this mutiny: Congolese citizens were not exempt from the army's actions. What Urquhart elides is that a Belgian officer took a piece of chalk and wrote 'Before independence = After independence' on the chalk board.<sup>143</sup> This statement indicated things would not be changing in the Congolese army and this shattered hopes and perspectives of the Congolese in the army who had believed things would be different. These words let the Congolese soldiers know they would not be treated as equals and could not count on respect from the Belgians in their ranks. Thus, there was a provocation for the mutiny. The Belgians in the army had not trained any Congolese to become officers, so once they were expelled from the force because of the words on the chalk board, the army did not

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<sup>141</sup> M'Bokolo, 'The history of Patrice Lumumba's historiography', 105.

<sup>142</sup> Urquhart, 'Character Sketches'.

<sup>143</sup> De Witte, *De moord*, 40.

have leaders to look to. The unfolding of events, therefore, should not solely be placed at the hands of the Congolese army.

Another absence is that of Western names concerned in Lumumba's death, whereas Congolese are named. *"The Luba leader, Albert Kolonji, had vowed to make Lumumba's skull into a flower vase."*<sup>144</sup> The Luba are a tribe. In this section, Urquhart singles out Albert Kolonji, but does not mention, for instance, Gerard Soete who had said he would come back to Congo to finish off Lumumba.<sup>145</sup> Soete was a Belgian officer who was in Belgium at the time of the arrest and was one of the people that dissolved Lumumba's corpse in sulphuric acid.<sup>146</sup> Another example is found in this quote: *"On the aircraft, the specially picked Luba guard worked over their hated enemy with such brutality that the Belgian air crew locked themselves in the cockpit."*<sup>147</sup> Although 'Luba' is not a personal name, it is the name of a specific tribe and it refers back to Albert Kolonji. Urquhart describes how Lumumba was beaten by a Luba guard while the Belgians hid, yet Urquhart fails to mention that after the plane had landed, a Belgian was seen beating Lumumba.<sup>148</sup> Thus, it is only the violence of the Congolese that is named and that of the Westerners is silenced. In positive contexts, a Western name is used, as seen here: *"Thus, while Hammarskjöld and his representatives demanded his release, Kasa-Vubu and Mobutu, with the help of their Belgian mentors (...)"*<sup>149</sup> A Western name is used to describe that Westerners wanted Lumumba released. In the negative context of having a part in Lumumba's murder, however, Urquhart opts to refer to them as 'Belgian mentors'. He does name Kasa-Vubu and Mobutu, where he might have also said 'Congolese leaders'. In all three of these examples a form of silencing is found. Avoiding the use of Western names in negative contexts evades responsibility and makes the Congolese look like the main culprits. This keeps Lumumba alive, because it is a continuation of the idea of the West's superiority to Africa.

As mentioned before, Lumumba in this Character Sketch is mostly presented as an individual. Throughout the text, Lumumba is gradually portrayed as an unstable individual. *"He was the quintessential loose cannon, willing to accept help from any source willing to provide it."*<sup>150</sup> These words follow the statement that Lumumba went to the Soviet Union

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<sup>144</sup> Urquhart, 'Character Sketches'.

<sup>145</sup> De Witte, *De moord*, 276.

<sup>146</sup> Ibidem, 306.

<sup>147</sup> Urquhart, 'Character Sketches'.

<sup>148</sup> De Witte, *De moord*, 237.

<sup>149</sup> Urquhart, 'Character Sketches'.

<sup>150</sup> Ibidem.

after the US denied them help, and the help from the UN did not turn out the way Lumumba expected. Taking into consideration that Lumumba's options were not bountiful at this point, it is misleading to say 'any source'. This statement is used to reinforce that Lumumba was unstable to the degree that he would turn to anyone. *"In conversation, Lumumba was mercurial to an extraordinary degree. He would threaten violent retribution one minute and plead for vast and diverse quantities of aid the next."*<sup>151</sup> This might have been true; Urquhart had seen Lumumba in person, and yet he also shares that Lumumba no longer wanted to see the UN. Since Urquhart was part of that delegation, one does wonder how often he was in close contact with Urquhart. Nonetheless, this is a part of Lumumba's character that might be silenced in Congolese narratives because it does not fit with the idea of Lumumba as a martyr. Urquhart continues his descriptions of Lumumba as unsteady: *"Lumumba proved incredibly difficult. (...) He was intoxicated by unaccustomed power and overstimulated by the world press, which had made him an overnight celebrity. He reacted violently to those who did not instantly agree with him, so that rational discourse was virtually impossible. He showed no interest in the essential hard work of government — only in the politics and publicity of it."*<sup>152</sup> Unlike the quote preceding this one, this text is suggestive. It paints Lumumba as a person not actually interested in government and as a person one could not have a rational conversation with. The suggestion of psychological imbalance is also seen here: *"Lumumba's lack of patience, experience or common sense was made more dangerous by his formidable powers as a demagogue."*<sup>153</sup> In this sentence Urquhart describes characteristics of Lumumba that he associates with treachery, and expresses him to have been lacking in common sense. Another example is the following: *"As Lumumba became progressively more irrational, he would fly into a rage at the smallest difference of opinion or imagined slight. Some said he was on drugs, others that he was being manipulated by the disreputable cabal of self-appointed foreign advisers who had attached themselves to him. These included a Guinean courtesan (Madame Blouin), a Yugoslav quack, a super-radical French expatriate, and a crazy Ghanaian ambassador."*<sup>154</sup> Here Urquhart adds the suggestion of drugs, but he delivers no proof and thus discredits Lumumba's saneness based on rumours.

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<sup>151</sup> Urquhart, 'Character Sketches'.

<sup>152</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>153</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>154</sup> Ibidem.

Just as with the Belgians that remained unnamed, here too Urquhart leaves out most of the names of the people he says Lumumba associated with, yet does describe them as ‘quack’, ‘super-radical’ and ‘crazy’. Not naming them makes it hard for a reader to find out which people Urquhart is referring to. Therefore, its purpose is solely to display Lumumba as an unpredictable person that is void of sense. Considering that in the eyes of many Congolese people Lumumba is a hero, this part of the text lacks the tact expected from an official UN Character Sketch.

Other parts of this sketch use rhetoric that suggests Lumumba was responsible for his own demise. In the text, he is accused of having ‘asked for it’. *“He seemed determined to surround himself with tension, fear and resentment.”*<sup>155</sup> The word ‘determined’ indicates Lumumba consciously attracted ‘tension’, ‘fear’ and ‘resentment’. In the next text, Lumumba is presented as a lethal factor and as a person devoid of common sense: *“He cut off all contact with Hammarskjöld and Bunche after Hammarskjöld refused to take him along when he led the first UN troops into secessionist Katanga. (Lumumba’s presence would certainly have aborted the expedition and probably have got himself and Hammarskjöld killed as well.)”*<sup>156</sup> Urquhart does not explain why Lumumba’s presence would have aborted such an endeavour and expresses no understanding that as a leader of his country, Lumumba would want to join in regaining part of his country. Urquhart also adds that Lumumba would have probably got himself and Hammarskjöld, re-establishing the instability and near-death wish he believes Lumumba had. *“Even in captivity, Lumumba’s undoubted charisma made Kasa-Vubu and Mobutu, and perhaps also the United States and Belgium, nervous.”*<sup>157</sup> The charisma attributed to Lumumba here is beyond human. Even in captivity Urquhart imagines Lumumba to have exercised powers and to a degree that made those around him uneasy. The indicative ‘undoubted’ is applied by Urquhart to describe a situation he was not a witness of and, thus, presents this situation as a fact even though it is an uninformed and subjective matter. The captive, the victim, is blamed for making the others nervous. Thereby, it nearly excuses the death of Lumumba. It is as if he called it upon himself because he was being charismatic to a degree that made his opponents anxious.

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<sup>155</sup> Urquhart, ‘Character Sketches’.

<sup>156</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>157</sup> Ibidem.

In his final paragraph, Urquhart concludes: *“The real-life Lumumba, as seen by those who tried to help him, arouses little interest. A courageous, intelligent, unstable, and inexperienced young man went disastrously wrong. (...) He had no interest in the laborious work of effective government and demanded instant results and solutions. He was oblivious to the human consequences of his actions. If he had had the time and the power, he might well have become the worst of tyrants.”*<sup>158</sup> By saying ‘real-life Lumumba’ Urquhart’s presumes to be an expert on who Lumumba was and this is a big claim to make. It is based solely on Urquhart’s view. ‘Disastrously wrong’ also indicates his personal view on Lumumba. Again, Urquhart emphasises Lumumba as an individual in that sentence. The paragraph fails to mention, however, that Lumumba was opposed from multiple sides. Finally, Urquhart’s past conditional of Lumumba stands in stark contrast to the past conditional he is given by most Congolese people.

In his text, Urquhart opposes the collective memory of Congolese on Lumumba seen in preceding chapters. Urquhart establishes Lumumba as an (unstable) individual. He also omits parts of history, such as the Belgian officer’s ‘Before Independence = After Independence’. Portraying Lumumba as an unstable and unsuitable leader justifies the UN’s action in the DRC and consequently, creating this memory of Lumumba makes sense from Urquhart’s point of view. In other writings on Lumumba such less desirable parts of Lumumba’s character are silenced, so it is not only Urquhart who participates in silencing. However, Urquhart continuously destabilises Lumumba and portrays him as a hazardous person, at times solely basing this view on rumours and presumptions. The importance of Lumumba as a nationalist figure is, thus, left untouched.

(Neo-)colonialism is mostly denied in Urquhart’s character sketch of Lumumba. According to Urquhart, the interference of Belgium was necessary because the Congolese army was mutinous, but he failed to mention the trigger of the mutiny; which was the misconduct of a Belgian officer. Additionally, by only naming Western names in positive context and not naming them otherwise, Urquhart also increases the opposition between the West and Africa. This gives a coloured outlook on the situation, where it should be neutral coming from an organisation that claims to be for all nations. There is no obligation to give

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<sup>158</sup> Urquhart, ‘Character Sketches’.

Lumumba the benefit of the doubt as there is no telling what would have happened if Lumumba had continued to be in power, but what is missing from Urquhart's entire text is a regard and understand of Congolese people. They hardly play a part in his piece and if they do, it is as an enemy, such as the Luba tribe. This enhances the idea that the International Community, or West or white people, do not care for what Congolese, or black people or Africans, think; but want to show their opinion as the one that is correct. This perpetuates the idea of the West versus Africa and that Lumumba is still needed, because things have not changed - illustrating Lumumba's symbolic value as a nationalist and anti-colonialist.

## Conclusion

As has been demonstrated in this research, Congolese people's memory of Lumumba continues to maintain Lumumba as a symbol of nationalism and neo-colonialism. Different types of memory are recognised in the preceding chapters. Chapter one consists of an interview with the Congolese artist Sapin Makengele on his drawing *Congo Crisis*; chapter two discusses the film *Stop Filming Us*; chapter three consists of three articles written in the Flemish paper *De Standaard* and chapter four is a UN Character Sketch of Lumumba by Brian Urquhart.

In chapters one through three it has become apparent that Lumumba, as an exemplary symbol of nationalism, is entrenched in Congolese collective memory. The first and foremost reason for this is the courage that Congolese people recognise in Lumumba. Indeed, Lumumba's Independence Day speech continues to have an impact on Congolese people today. He is seen as an example for Congolese youth, as seen in chapter two; for Congolese people in general, as seen in all three chapters; and even as an example for the entire non-Western world, as found in chapter three. The reason for still upholding Lumumba as a symbol is partly that the imbalance of power between the Western and non-Western world is still felt by people of Congolese descent and those close to them. This was seen in Torbeyns article where she first criticised the West for wanting to try out a corona vaccine in Africa, and then resurrected Lumumba by contemporising him through her choice of words. Other reasons seen in the first three chapters for Lumumba's continued existence as a symbol of nationalism, are that he is still talked about in schools as the father of the nation, that Lumumba was decreed a national hero by Mobutu, and the circumstances surrounding Lumumba's death. His death, and the 'unfinishedness' that it brought with it, has caused Lumumba to be immortalised with good intentions. As he never lived to show that he would live up to his promises, it is widely believed amongst Congolese people that he would have done so, and thus to them Lumumba represents a man who would have done anything for his country had he been given the chance.

In chapter two, alongside the notion of post memory, Lumumba is recognised as a symbol of anti-colonialism. Congolese people want to write their own histories instead of merely referring to Western histories as sources. Some say their minds are still colonised; a concern also found in chapter three, and they need to find a way to move beyond this.

Lumumba fought for these same things and the memory of him is such that Congolese people today see it as their own. As they continue to fight what Lumumba fought then, they feel intimately connected to him; his strife is theirs and their strife is his.

Furthermore, parallels between the DRC today and the DRC in the time of Lumumba are an important factor in retaining Lumumba as a symbol of nationalism and anti-colonialism in both collective and post memory. In collective memory, this symbolism is important because many Congolese people can identify with him and they build an imagined community; in post memory, the symbolism is important because the likeness of the current situation to Lumumba's situation creates a memory of Lumumba that is not handed down indirectly, but experienced first-hand. Such parallels include corrupt leaders who do not let the DRC and Congolese people reach their full potential, the perceived façade of Independence that goes hand in hand with Western interference in the DRC, and a lack of recognition from the Western world towards Congolese people. This lack of recognition ties back to the courage Lumumba displayed; he *did* give Congolese people recognition. In doing so, he both became an example for other Congolese people on how to behave and he displayed his anti-colonialism by standing up for his fellow Congolese. To Congolese people, this lack of recognition reveals itself in the badly maintained Lumumba square in Brussels, in the racism towards people of the Congolese diaspora and in the interference of the West in their lives; they do not feel they are considered equal. Unsilencing the past as well as what is happening in the present is perceived as crucial by many of the Congolese people that share their views in the preceding chapters: in chapters one through three Congolese people are encouraged or even urged to speak up.

Finally, Lumumba as a symbol of nationalism is discerned in mnemohistory, which concerns itself with the past as it is remembered. Chapter one reveals a wish for the history on Lumumba to be told and remembered in more detail. He is referred to as the father of the DRC in the first two chapters and placed on a pedestal by two out of four authors in the third chapter. In the text of Pandzou, there is more nuance on the person Lumumba and his part in the Independence; Pandzou does not only speak of Lumumba, but also of other Congolese that made this happen. Pandzou does think Independence Day should be remembered and Lumumba alongside it, for the symbolic importance of the victory, but he does not identify with Lumumba like other Congolese people do in the chapters. This shows that the extent to which one identifies with Lumumba, thus, also influences the way in which Congolese people



would like Lumumba's history to be remembered. The one chapter in this research that found a different approach to Lumumba, was the fourth chapter. This was the chapter regarding the Character Sketch written by Brian Urquhart. Here, the way in which the author wished for Lumumba to be remembered varied from the wishes in the preceding chapters. Lumumba was portrayed as an unstable individual, rather than as a symbol. His importance to Congolese and African people today is not mentioned. Parts of the text make use of partial remembrance; they do mention an event, but leave out facts that are a crucial part of it, thus silencing a part of the history. This happened, for instance, when the author Urquhart failed to mention the names of Western people in negative contexts, but did mention them in a positive context. The final chapter nuances the martyr image of Lumumba, as it is plausible that he was not always the saint like leader, but it also disregards the memory of Congolese people towards Lumumba today and this furthers the image that the West does not recognise Congolese people.

Silencing and unsilencing parts of Lumumba takes place in the different sources that are analysed in the chapters. The greatest difference is seen between chapter one and chapter four, where in the first he is regarded as a saint and in the last as an unfit leader, but also in other chapters the different viewpoints allow for some nuances in the memory of Lumumba. The importance of alternate sources is reflected through this, as these alternative sources allow for a far greater amount of people to share their feelings and views of and towards the ways in which they perceive history. It has become clear that for Congolese people today, both in the DRC and those of the Congolese diaspora, that Lumumba remains an important figure.

To conclude, Lumumba's courage to speak up, his ability to recognise the worth of Congolese people and the continued perceived lack of recognition for Congolese or African people and their history of the West; are what have led to Lumumba being a continued symbol of nationalism and anti-colonialism to Congolese people today.

In my research, I have used media sources to include a larger body of voices than conventional sources would allow. I believe this enriches the field of history as it recognises that history is indeed the study of interpretation and, thereby, also acknowledges that there is no one truth, but many truths. Comparing and contrasting such truths would be interesting for further research. I also think it can generate interest among the non-scholarly, as sources such as YouTube videos are widely available and their comment sections generally

allow for discussions to take place. From such comment sections, one could derive different positions and feelings towards the topic. The limitation of these sources was that they were all mainly targeted at a Western audience. For further research, it would be interesting to look at sources targeted at Congolese people and also to consider sources in Lingala and French to see whether there are differences between these sources and why. It would also be interesting to ask people about Lumumba from different demographics; for instance, by executing oral history in primary schools, high schools and amongst the working body of Congolese people. It might also be interesting to see the difference between questions and answers when the interviewer is Western and when the interviewer is non-Western.

With regard to Congolese history and the way it is perceived, a variety of sources allows for a more nuanced view. As seen in *Stop Filming Us*, Congolese people do not feel represented in Western media and would like to see a greater variation of their country and citizens depicted. Rather than a black and white view on the DRC, I hope my research can help the reader see that there is more to the DRC than conflict. When Congolese people are included, like Lumumba included them during his Independence Day speech, a richer history can be written. When we unsilence the past, we do justice to the present.

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