

# CONGO

## Tribes & Parties

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*For Hans this brief essay  
on the Components  
of the Zaïre  
Tumail -*

*June 26, 1983*

&

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## PREFACE

All the emergent states of Africa have to fight the push and pull of tribal politics, if they are to survive as unitary states. This is not surprising. The boundaries of the large colonies and protectorates which were drawn by European powers put very arbitrary lines round peoples of different languages and cultures, and many of these had long traditions of mutual hostility or of dominance by one tribe and subjection by another. There are, for instance, 200 distinct peoples in the Congo. Three of these are dominant groups with memories of ancient grandeur—the Ba-Kongo, Ba-Luba and Ba-Lunda—and the others are small and often scattered tribelets. Seventy-four dialects are said to be recognised and the major language groups differ as much as English and modern Greek. Four “commercial” languages, Ki-kongo, Chi-luba, Swahili and Lingala were recognised by the Belgians but the first three were of the lingua franca type and unfitted, Mrs. Douglas thinks, as a medium for political communication.

Tribal feeling has not diminished in Africa; in fact, it has often been increased by new economic rivalries. This pamphlet shows, for instance, that the Ba-Luba, widely distributed throughout the southern Congo as drivers, technicians, traders and cash-crop farmers are disliked for their success, and that this dislike has been expressed by the ballot box. Tribal consciousness is also strong in many African towns where large concentrations of people have made political activities possible and tribal riots have occurred. It has been the basis of political parties, *Abako*, the party of M. Kasavubu, which is strong in Léopoldville, is dominantly a Ba-Kongo party; *Conakat*, M. Tshombe's party in the Katanga area, is described by Mrs. Douglas as a local party with local Lunda leadership although it is not a purely tribal group; and *Bahubakat*, a splinter group from *Conakat*, is the party of the Ba-Luba in the Katanga area, associated with the name of M. Kalonji.

Tribal loyalties seem also to determine the basic attitudes of Africans towards central government and central leadership in the old colonial territories to which they have become heirs. This pamphlet shows that in the Congo the large tribes with proud traditions have tended to vote on separatist or federal lines, while the smaller tribes have on the whole

favoured a unitary state, sometimes perhaps as a measure of opposition to members of the dominant groups. In Uganda, it is the ancient kingdom of Buganda which has announced its secession from the unitary state. Some of the most interesting sections of the present work are those which describe the skill with which the late M. Lumumba, a small-tribe man, organised the unsophisticated, but widely distributed Mongo, to vote for his national party, the M.N.C., and to return it in strength to the House of Representatives. The authors' interesting analysis of the election results shows that it is not the numbers of a particular tribe which count in a modern election but their distribution throughout the different electoral provinces—a point which has not been clearly understood before I think.

The complication of some of the new electoral systems makes results strangely unpredictable. In the first 1960 election in the Congo the people had to vote for provincial representatives, who chose the members of the Senate; and for district representatives, who voted for the House of Representatives, with proportional representation applied throughout. Professor Biebuyek's illuminating analyses of the results of these elections show clearly the complexities, anomalies and surprises such a system of representation brings and make it obvious that, while it is impossible to understand modern elections in Africa without a knowledge of the ethnographic background, yet a tribal map is not enough. The figures must be separately analysed in each district. I do not think an anthropologist has ever used his specialised knowledge for this purpose before.

In view of the obvious importance of such studies to our understanding of the political problems of the emergent states, the R.A.I. is planning a series of pamphlets on this subject dealing with different regions in Africa and also in parts of Asia. Mrs. Douglas and Professor Biebuyek contribute the first of this series. Their analysis of the political implications of the tribal groupings in the Congo should throw an invaluable light on the present crisis in the new republic, but it is hoped that the ethnographic, linguistic and population maps and also the historical material will be of permanent value to students as well as to the staff of U.N.O. and other officials working for the rehabilitation of this new state.

AUDREY I. RICHARDS

*President*

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The Council of the Royal Anthropological Institute is grateful to Professor Biebuyck and Dr. Douglas for preparing this pamphlet and to the following for their help in various ways: Miss M. A. Bryan, Professor Daryll Forde, Mr. Philip Goodhart, M.P., Professor M. Guthrie, Professor Kenneth Robinson, and Professor A. N. Tucker.

## INTRODUCTION

### THE ELECTIONS

On the eve of the 1960 elections, the Europeans in the Belgian Congo<sup>1</sup> were saying: "Of course, they will all vote for their own tribe," implying that the results were a foregone conclusion. The prophecy was fulfilled in substance, but the results were nonetheless full of surprises. The grouping of the tribes was so complex that no one could have used it as a basis for political forecasting. Even now, it is difficult to disentangle the various allegiances that the election results represented. The Chief Belgian Minister in the Congo at the time, M. van der Meersch, remarked that it was not so much a matter of tribes throwing up leaders to promote their interests, as of leaders carrying one or more tribes along with them in their manoeuvres for support at the national level.<sup>2</sup> The nuance is fine, and in either case the need to distinguish the main tribal groupings remains. Tribal conflicts and riots provided a chaotic background to the transfer of power from the Belgian to the new republican government yet, for all their detail on the political parties, recent commentaries on the Congo crisis do little to relate their analyses to the tribal background.

The task, both of the United Nations officials and of the representatives of the international Press in the Congo, must have been made much more difficult by the absence of a convenient ethnographic guide to the tribes of the Congo. Whereas everyone knows of the one or two which have filled the news, the remaining 200 or so are just names, difficult to place, still more to class as to their likely allegiances. It is not too difficult to produce a map of tribal distribution, but to make a simple statement of the relations of the main groups is a daunting task. After half a century of colonial rule, many of the old divisions might no longer be significant. If elections were to be held again, they might well show

<sup>1</sup> In a geographical sense "the Congo" may be considered to include parts of the former French Equatorial Africa, Angola and Northern Rhodesia, but this booklet is concerned only with the former Belgian Congo.

<sup>2</sup> W. J. G. van der Meersch, *Congo, Mai-Juin 1960, Rapport du Ministre Chargé des Affaires Générales en Afrique*, (1960), p. 79.

different results, for many internal conflicts have arisen or been exacerbated since then. Nonetheless, the elections of 1959 and 1960 (not less because they were hasty and unprepared) lift the curtain a little, and give a glimpse of the conflicts in which the tribes were currently involved. Hence the immense value of Professor Biebuyck's survey of how the Congolese electorate voted, tribe by tribe.

The first elections held in December 1959 were to elect members of local councils for the city communes and rural districts. Further elections were held in May 1960 for the House of Representatives and the Provincial Assemblies. For the House of Representatives the electoral districts were arranged on the basis of one deputy for every 100,000 inhabitants; for the Provincial Assemblies, one councillor for every 30,000 inhabitants. The system of voting was by proportional representation within each electoral district, which seems a complicated procedure for a largely illiterate population unused to polling of any kind. The Senate was elected from the Provincial Assemblies who constituted themselves as an electoral college. Among the vast number of parties and individual candidates who presented themselves (these were eventually reduced to the nineteen main ones which Professor Biebuyck discusses), only two claimed to be national parties, offering candidates in all the provinces, one called P.N.P. and the other M.N.C.-Lumumba. P.N.P. showed promise in the earlier communal elections, but was outstripped by the other party in the parliamentary elections. After the latter, M.N.C.-Lumumba emerged as the only national party with widespread support, though it did not get a majority of seats either in the Senate or in the Chamber of Representatives. In the latter its candidates were returned in five of the six provinces (Katanga being the exception), and in the former in four (Kasai and Katanga excepted). In the Senate the distribution of seats was as follows<sup>1</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> Figures from W. J. G. van der Meersch, p. 97 and appendix.



M.N.C.-Lumumba with cartels, Coaka and U.N.C. <sup>2</sup>	24
Puna	8
Cerea	7
Conakat	7
Abako	5
Cartel Balubakat	5
P.N.P.	5
P.S.A.	5
M.N.C.-Kalonji	4
Unimo	4
Parti du Peuple, R.D.L.K., Reco, P.P.A., Independents	10

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In the Chamber of Representatives the results were:

M.N.C. Lumumba with cartels, Coaka and U.N.C.	41
P.S.A.	13
Abako	12
M.N.C. Kalonji	8
P.N.P.-A.R.P., Luka, Mederco, Front Commun	15
Reco	4
Puna	7
Cartel Balubakat	7
Conakat	8
Cerea	10
Independents, local interests, Abazi, R.D.L.K., Unimo	12

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It is probably not profitable to try to deduce any detailed political lessons from these results since the elections themselves were carried out in great haste and, in some areas, in an atmosphere of intimidation. M. van der Meersch says that certain parties had successes out of proportion to their real standing in the eyes of the electors, partly because of the tactical mistakes of their opponents "*et du climat de tromperie, voire de terreur créé en de nombreux endroits*". This very climate is likely, however, to have caused people to vote less as individuals than as members of larger groups. It does not, therefore, diminish the interest of the elections

<sup>2</sup> The names of parties are explained in Professor Biebuyck's survey.

for our limited purpose, since people were more likely to vote "tribally", and the alignment of the various tribes, as a result, comes under a clearer focus.

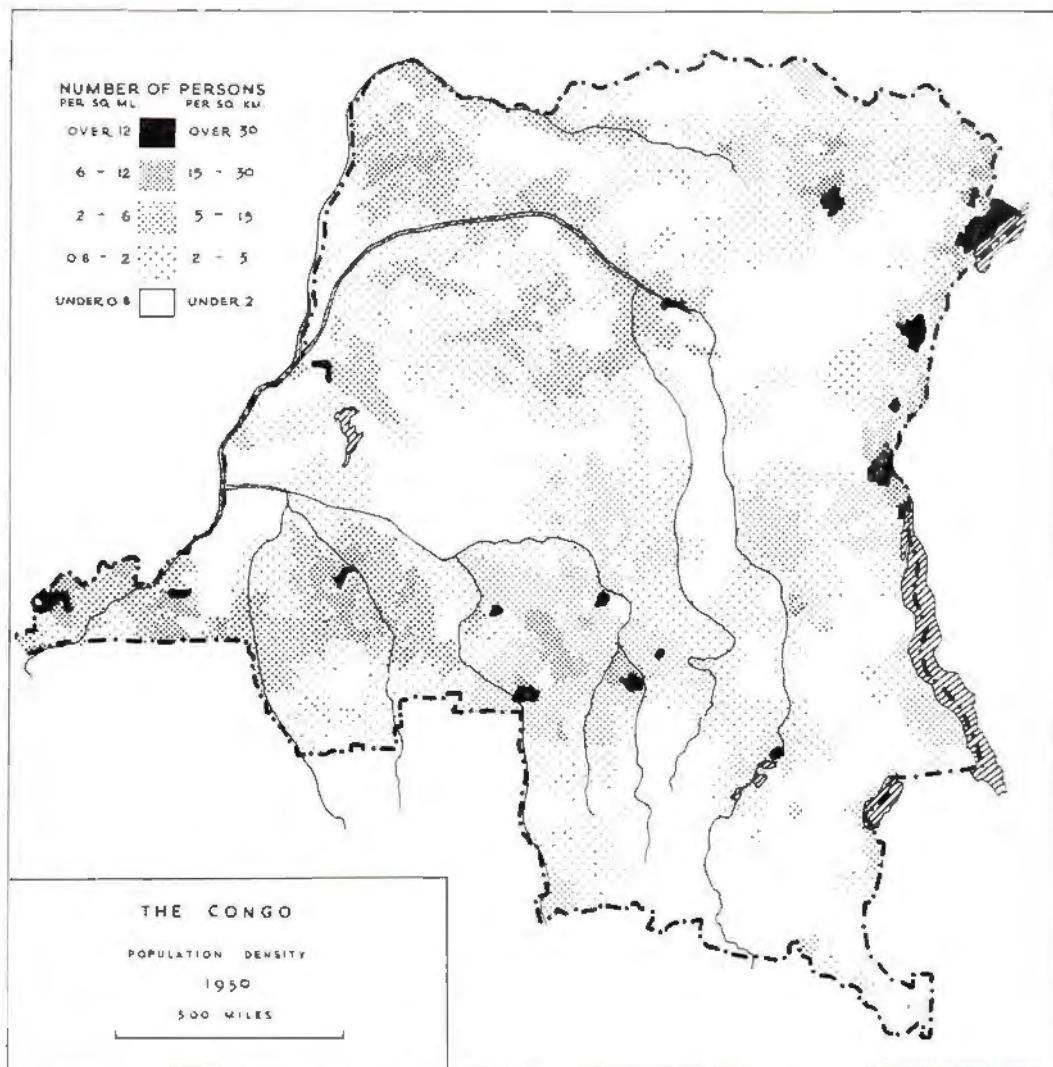
#### GENERAL BACKGROUND

In the other new African states, independent or emerging, internal politics tend to be on tribal lines, particularly if one or two large tribes threaten to dominate the rest. In the Congo as a whole no one tribe or combination dwarfs the other, but this does happen on a smaller scale in some localities. The Congo is a large square on the map, with two jutting feet sticking out of the south-west and south-east. From these corners, two large powerful groups have threatened national unity by their desire, not to dominate, but to secede from the new state: the Ba-Kongo in the south-west, and the Ba-Lunda in Katanga in the south-east. The other main centre of trouble has been the Ba-Luba. None of these three tribes is big enough to dominate the whole Congo. Only the Ba-Kongo are a territorial as well as a tribal group, and even they are challenged in Léopoldville town itself.

When we ask what these particular tribal groupings have that the others have not, the answer is not mere size. They all three have traditions of political domination and past unity, and all three have benefited significantly more than their neighbours from the economic development of the last sixty years. The last is probably the most important factor.

It is true that in the Congo there are hunters, and pastoralists, and that some agricultural tribes specialise in weaving, or ivory-carving, or iron-working. But, by and large, the vast majority are cultivators, sparsely settled in small villages and with little contact with one another until this century. The differences between the traditional economies of the dominant tribes are so superficial that we cannot account for their present conflicts by any obvious contrasts in their way of life, such as those between Masai herdsmen and Kikuyu cultivators in Kenya.

Much of the Congo is a vast, nearly empty region (see Population Map, No. I). It is easy to forget that it is about as big as Western Europe, with a population of only thirteen million—not much bigger than Greater London –or, to make a more telling comparison, that it is three times



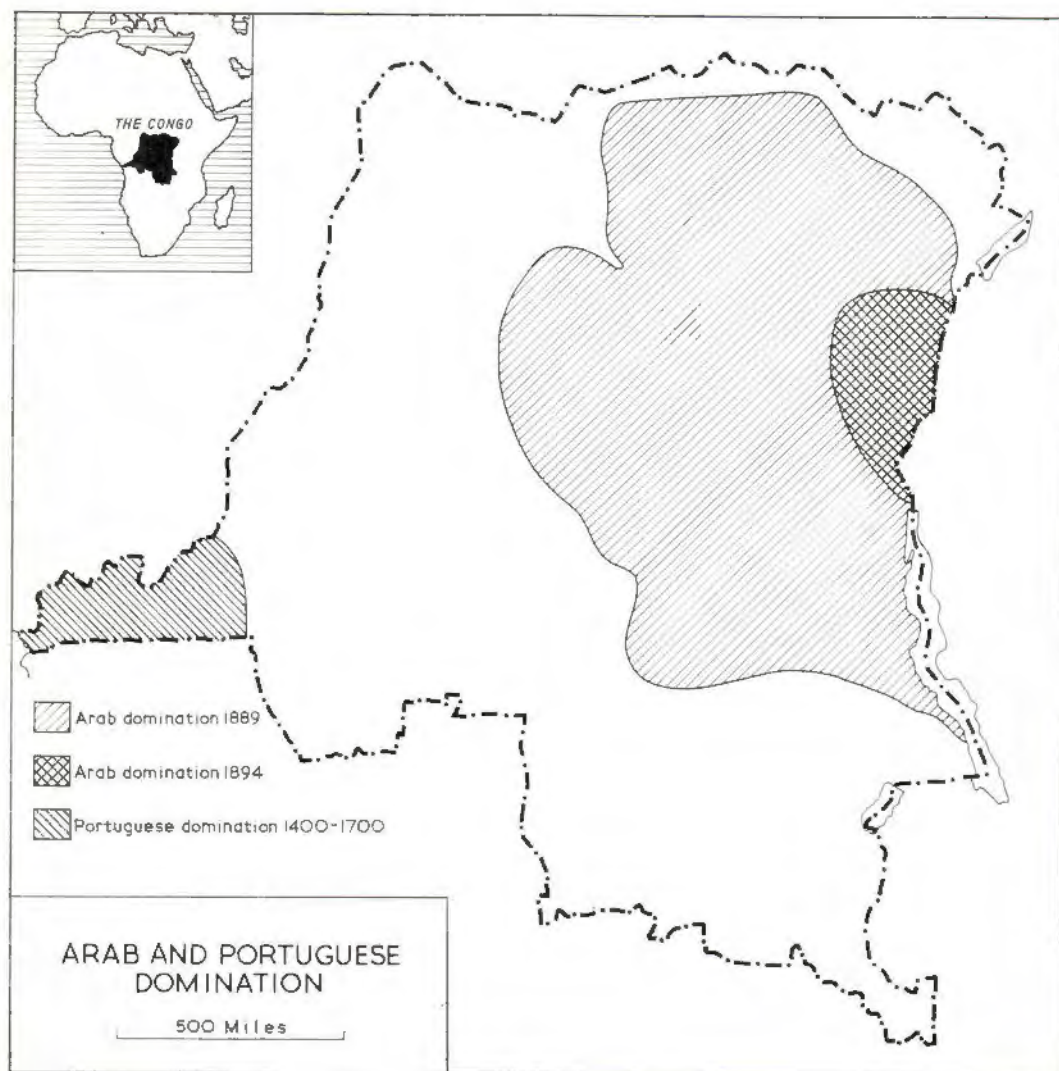
Map No. 1

bigger than Nigeria, with about one-third its population. The fertile north-east has always supported a dense native population. The low density elsewhere is to some extent explained by poor soil, thick forest, and endemic disease. For the Congo as a whole, it is generally the case that the denser populations correspond to the areas which have seen the greatest economic development in this century. This is significant for Congolese politics, for the different tribes have not profited equally from the new opportunities. The conflicts and loyalties which have developed in the last seventy years turn out to be more important politically than many ancient antagonisms or alliances. Even within the same large tribal groups, some sections responded eagerly and others negatively to the new opportunities of the Belgian colonial period. This makes it impossible for us to take a map of tribal distribution and show on it a straight conformity between tribal and political allegiance.

#### HISTORY

Congo history, as we know it, can be divided into the periods of the great foreign occupations: first, the Portuguese from the west in the fifteenth century; then, the Arabs from the east in the nineteenth; a little later, starting from the west, King Léopold II's Free State. The more distant the periods, the less relevant are they to current affairs; consequently, by far the most important period was the fourth, that of Belgian colonial rule, from 1908 until 1960. The first three periods tend to be identified by their more notorious aspects: the Portuguese slave trade, the Arab slave trade, and the rubber trade of the Free State.

It is no accident that tribal histories tend to date from the sixteenth or seventeenth century. The first intrusion from outside Africa is also the point at which written records are available. Our historical map (No. II) shows the area of Portuguese occupation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Their base was well to the south, in present Portuguese Angola, and their occupation of what later became the Belgian Congo was very restricted. Their actual influence was more widespread than the map suggests, since the River Congo itself was used as a waterway for transporting slaves and ivory down to the coastal markets. The tribes about it seem to have been milling around in their attempts either to exploit their



Map No. II

opportunities or to move away from the danger spots—one tribe dispossessing another of its territory and touching off a series of movements further and further inland.

The first European contact undoubtedly gave a tremendous impetus to African political organisation. Some kingdoms were destroyed, but others became large empires in response to the challenge of the times. The Kongo kingdom seems to have been already organised when the Portuguese first set foot on the coast of Angola in 1482, but these coastal areas were too close to the foreign bases not to be devastated by the effects of the slave trade. According to Father van Wing, it took 200 years for the Kongo empire to disintegrate.<sup>1</sup> The more remote "empires" of the Ba-Lunda and Ba-Luha, on the other hand, seem to have expanded and dominated surrounding tribes, largely because of the stimulus to political organisation, both for defence, and for the sake of sharing in the profits of the trade, at the expense of their enemies. Portuguese domination in the Congo, though it continued till the nineteenth century, declined in importance as Portugal itself declined before competition from Britain and France in the eastern markets at the end of the seventeenth century. As we shall see, the legacy of those days, in current affairs, seems small. The Ba-Kongo, Ba-Luba and Ba-Lunda look back to their early "empires"; some of the tribes they dominated are still loyal to them, others are taking the first chance to throw off their control. But which tribe sold which into slavery seems no more a live issue than British and Portuguese rivalry of the same period.

Arab domination affected the other side of the Congo, and came much later, but, being so much more recent, is more relevant to current politics. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Arab trade expanded inland from the east coast of Africa where it had been established for a long time. The Congo was reached by a route across Lake Tanganyika, from a trading station, Ujiji, on the eastern shore of the lake, which was on a regular caravan route to Zanzibar. As the century came to a close, the depredations of this slave trade increased, and when the Congo Free State was founded, in 1885, the Arabs actually controlled a large part of the eastern Congo. Some of the leaders of the local population were their

<sup>1</sup> "The prestige and authority of the King, the cohesion of the tribes, peace, all were slowly ruined by St. Paul of Loanda", *Études Bakongo*, 1959 edition, p. 21.

associates, often taking Arab titles, and leading their followers in raids and battles on the Arab side. A large region in which Swahili (the Bantu speech of the east coast) is the lingua franca is one legacy of that time.

As the Arab slave trade was pursued with more and more effect, explorers, including Stanley and Livingstone, shocked Europe with their reports of its terrors. Wissman, for example, was horrified to find the fertile, well-tilled land between the Lomami and the Sankuru rivers depopulated and bare in 1887. This is the territory of the Ba-Songe, Ba-Tetela and northern Ba-Luba. With the Arab, as with the Portuguese slave trade, some tribes profited and others were ruined.

Léopold II's Congo Free State, founded in 1885, was transferred to Belgium as a colony in 1908, partly in response to the outcry against the ruthless exploitation of native labour in the rubber trade. But before this, its vigorous anti-slaving campaigns had resulted in the expulsion of the Arabs in 1894. Tribes which fought on the Arab side retained a tradition of hostility to Belgian rule.<sup>1</sup>

There is no need here to discuss the period of Belgian colonial government, except in so far as it has affected tribal politics. The administration was based on traditional tribal units, local notables were used as assessors in disputes tried by the district tribunals, and affairs were conducted in the appropriate native commercial language. The Belgians tried to rule through the traditional native chiefs, and where this did not make for efficient government, the latter were given honorific positions, and the administrative framework was built on "administrative" chiefs, chosen from the most intelligent and co-operative people that could be found. The administration was remarkably thorough and efficient. Though this was not, as has often been pointed out, a period of political development, the economic advance was tremendous. Labour was enlisted for mines, roads, railways, and, where the soil was good, for cash-crop cultivation, for food to supply the large towns and for sisal, cotton and palm oil for export. The tribes which responded most positively to these opportunities, were those which at the moment of independence were most aware of the political issues at stake, the Ba-Luba and Ba-Kongo.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Ba-Tetela, on p. 22 (below).

<sup>2</sup> And also the Ba-Yaka and Ba-Pende.

If we want proof that their response to the twentieth century is more important politically than their traditions of past glory, we should compare these tribes with the Ba-Kuba. These latter people are renowned through Africa for their artistic treasures: their sculpture and textiles are in all the great European museums; their political system was a highly developed confederation of chiefdoms extending over 100,000 people. They were too far east to be in danger from Portuguese slave-raiders, and too far west for the Arab slave trade. But they also managed to remain withdrawn, emotionally at least, from Belgian influence, cherishing their memory of past glory. It is symptomatic that when the railway was built through their territory, Ba-Luba immigrants, and not they, provided the labour force, and took up the skilled technical jobs. Professor Biebuyck shows that when independence came, Ba-Kuba, in effect, had lapsed into a political backwater, merely joining the local opposition to the go-ahead, rich Ba-Luba.

A similar theme emerges from what Professor Biebuyck has to say about the influence of the chiefs in modern politics. Some of the traditional chiefs have, apparently, retained their influence, but not so the "administrative" chiefs. When the time for elections came, the latter, who owed their position not to tribal tradition but to the backing of colonial power, were able to arouse little popular support. Perhaps these "administrative" chiefs realised their personal stake in the colonial system, or perhaps their experience of government gave them a bigger dose of political realism. There were complaints about their lack of enthusiasm for immediate independence which have some parallels in Southern Nyasaland, where Congress leaders tend not to be found among government chiefs or headmen. The men who worked in the Belgian administrative framework have none of them become prominent national leaders. Those who have come to the top since independence are neither the traditional nor the "administrative" chiefs, but new men who have had some education in a variety of positions. M. Lumumba was a postal clerk, M. Tshombe a trader, M. Sendwe a medical assistant; M. Kasavubu is an ex-seminarist, teacher and clerk.

In short, it seems that the recent colonial period has most profoundly changed the Congolese picture, even though the administration was to some extent based deliberately on tribal foundations. Professor Biebuyck



suggests that urban Congolese are less conscious of tribal solidarity, but it would be interesting to know whether this applies only to a select number of second generation, skilled technicians in the big towns, or more widely. It seems that in many cases the workers migrating into mining and urban areas become more intensely conscious of their tribal loyalty in the face of local hostility. Certainly the new men at the top lead parties supported by their own tribes, however detribalised they personally may feel. The changes due to colonial rule consist more of encroachment of one tribe into the territory of another than of a blurring of tribal distinctions.

## LANGUAGE

For lack of any clearer criterion of tribal grouping we have chosen the linguistic one. The majority of Congolese speak one of the family of Bantu languages. The tribal map gives the positions of the most important tribes and groups, showing the main linguistic groups they fall into. Such a grouping does not necessarily say anything about the population concerned, other than that their languages are closely related. Even this is not as straightforward as it sounds. The languages of some tribes include diverse elements linking them to more than one major group, and it is impossible to draw clear-cut lines between groups.

The map shows that the Kongo-speaking area to which the Ba-Kongo tribe belongs includes many other tribal groupings. The Luba-speaking area shades off into the area of Lunda, intermediate between Luba and Kongo. The simple linguistic grouping which we have marked on the map Luba-Lunda includes, in the Luba part, the Bena-Lulua and Ba-Songe, rivals of the Ba-Luba, and in the western Luba part, the Ba-Chokwe, rivals of the Ba-Lunda. Between the big language groups there are barriers to communication; within them the most intense conflicts take place.

To get an idea of the extent of the differences between the main language groups we can say that a vernacular language in one differs from a vernacular in another as much as English differs from modern Greek. Within any one group the differences are, of course, a matter of degree.

Consequently, there is a real problem of communication in the Congo. The Belgians met it by adopting four commercial languages: Lingala in the centre and north, the Congo version of Swahili in the east (including Stanleyville), Ki-kongo in the west, and Chi-luba in the south-east. The last two are crude and simplified forms of the languages of Ba-Kongo and Ba-Luba—how attenuated they are in use depends on the speakers. More inflexions are used between African speakers than between Europeans and Africans. This means that they can be as crude as pidgin English, or as subtly expressive as any living language. This has obvious political consequences, for speaking in an unfamiliar language could seriously hamper the oratorical style of a politician. Many of them are indeed gifted linguists, but it must be difficult for M. Gizenga, for example, coming from a Ki-kongo speaking region, to make much impact in Orientale Province where he has been since the death of M. Lumumba.

This point can be taken still further. Of the four commercial languages, Lingala is an incomparably better medium of communication than the others. As the vernacular on which it was originally based is now extinct (it was never spoken in more than a few villages), it is now a real *lingua franca*, an artificial language, and nothing else, developed by the various riverain peoples of the Middle Congo in the 1890's to meet their own needs of communication. Reporters who have mentioned Bangala tribes in their despatches are misled by the habit of Ba-Kongo in Léopoldville of referring to all and sundry who speak Lingala as "Bangala". Europeans tend to use an attenuated, pidgin form of Lingala, and so do the non-Bantu tribes of the north-west Congo, who use it for communicating with Bantu-speakers. But the large number of tribes speaking Bantu vernaculars in the centre and north of the Congo, who use Lingala between themselves, have the advantage of communicating in a fully inflected language, which cannot be said of the various tribes using commercial Ki-kongo and Chi-luba amongst themselves. This must go a long way to explain the success of M. Lumumba's political campaigning in the Lingala-speaking region. M. Mobutu's tribe, the Ba-Ngbandi, speak excellent Lingala. Hence his good standing in Léopoldville, which is divided between Ki-kongo speakers related to the Ba-Kongo tribe, and Lingala speakers, the northerners, people from upstream, representatives of the great central block.

## MAIN TRIBES

How many of the current rivalries derive from the seventeenth century? If we take the main tribal groupings from west to east, the answer is only a few. Three, the Ba-Kongo, Ba-Lunda and Ba-Luba look back with pride on their great "empires" of that period. The word can mean little or much in the way of political organisation. Historians disagree about the actual degree of control enjoyed by traditional rulers in the past.

(i) *Ba-Kongo*. Certainly the Portuguese thought that in the Kingdom of Kongo they were dealing with a king, ruler of subordinate chiefdoms, and comparable on a smaller and more primitive scale to their own king. But at this distance it is difficult to be sure how much they were, by their very presence, changing the thing they were observing into the thing they took it originally to be. A congeries of little chiefdoms, whose heads were related, intermarried and ranked one above the other, does not necessarily imply stability, or a high degree of centralisation, but the presence of rich invaders, doing trade, and lending their support to the representatives they dealt with, is likely to stimulate political organisation in the initial period of contact. However, in the course of the 200 years after 1482, the caravans and markets of the slave trade, and the presence of a foreign power, combined to destroy the kingdom of Kongo in San Salvador. But the belief in an ancient kingdom has remained a powerful political image, even to this day.

Only a small area of this early kingdom is found inside the Belgian Congo (the small tribes collectively called Ba-Kongo, and individually known as Ba-Sundi, Ba-Mpangu, Ba-Kongo, Ba-Yombe and Ba-Zombo). The majority are in Portuguese Angola, and some in ex-French territory on the right bank of the River Congo. Their line of movement has been northwards, into the lands on both sides of the river estuary originally inhabited by the Ba-Teke group of tribes (see Tribal Map, No. III). Until Léopoldville became a great trading centre in this century, no Ba-Kongo village was to be found within twenty miles of Léopoldville town itself.<sup>1</sup> This is the more remarkable since there has been such

<sup>1</sup> Professor M. Guthrie, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, attests this on the basis of personal investigation.

massive infiltration into that politically very important area that now the Ba-Kongo are the majority of rural inhabitants around the town, and more than half in the town itself. Consequently, Léopoldville is divided politically between Abako, the party of the Ba-Kongo, and the rest, in active opposition. One of the sources of opposition dates from the sixteenth century. The tribal map shows that the linguistic group speaking related Kongo languages is much larger than the group called Ba-Kongo tribes which solidly support the Abako party. The Ba-Yaka have been antagonists of the Ba-Kongo since they invaded the Kongo kingdom in the sixteenth century, and to this day it seems that the same tribe has been to the fore in the local opposition to Abako. This ancient hostility is exceptional. In general it would seem that the most important factor, both of Ba-Kongo solidarity and of the opposition they arouse in their neighbours, is the advance which they have made in this century.

This tribe inhabits a compact area from the coast to Léopoldville. In the town itself its ascendancy derives from its readiness in the last sixty years to labour, to trade and to farm cash crops, in short to participate actively in the modern economy. Although they dominate in the town they are not unchallenged there. No amount of organisation or tribal solidarity would have made them the political force they are today if they had not moved in large numbers into the politically strategic capital town. This is one instance of the tendency for the political scene to be dominated by old tribes in new positions.

(ii) *Ba-Lunda*. The Ba-Lunda were originally neighbours of the Ba-Luba on the upper reaches of the Bushimaie River. There is little distinction between their languages. They formed small, independent chiefdoms, which combined and fragmented according to the energy of their leaders. About 1600 they started to expand westwards, dominating local tribes as far as the Kwango River.<sup>1</sup> Southwards in this period, the Ba-Lunda dominated the Ba-Chokwe on the Lunda Plateau, and founded tributary kingdoms. To the south-east, an early movement of Ba-Lunda founded the Bemba empire, in Northern Rhodesia. Their second wave of expansion was about 100 years later, when Ba-Lunda founded

<sup>1</sup> Their most westerly outposts are the Ba-Mbangala, who offered fierce opposition to the Portuguese agents and managed to make their own profits out of the slave and ivory trade. Ba-Pende, Ba-Kwese, Ba-Suku, Ba-Holo all came under Ba-Lunda influence.

prosperous eastern kingdoms as far as the Luapala River.

The simplicity of their economy always limited the political scope of the rulers. Even in the seventeenth century, after firearms had begun to trickle through, increasing the possibility of domination, an earlier political pattern still held good. After a short, sharp battle, or even without one, the invader generally confirmed the subjugated hereditary rulers in office, while reserving a pre-eminent role for his own dynasty. In return for a not very onerous tribute, the conquered gained a share in the prestige of the ruling dynasty. The links between the tributary kingdoms were kept alive not so much by force of arms, as by persuasion and the prestige of the leader. The fact that these so-called empires were small and short-lived before the arrival of the Portuguese, and that after 1600, when Portuguese influence was widely felt, they expanded and created new, complex political forms, is obviously no coincidence. They expanded in response to a new need for political organisation.

Most of the tribes which accepted Lunda suzerainty adopted Lunda titles, and sent tribute back to the ruler, the Mwata Yamvo, in Western Katanga, while at the same time the conquering newcomers were themselves assimilated, linguistically and socially, into the culture of their subjects. For example, the Ba-Lunda started out, as Ba-Luba have mostly remained, practising patrilineal succession, but have long since adopted matrilineal succession where it is the local custom.

Loyalty or opposition to the Ba-Lunda is a rallying point to this day. Professor Biebuyck tells us that in the Kwango district of Léopoldville Province, the alignment between the political parties is largely on the basis of pro- and counter-Ba-Lunda. The anti-Ba-Lunda feeling is led by the Ba-Chokwe, themselves originally a part of Ba-Lunda culture, but who have had a different history. With firearms obtained from the sale of ivory and slaves, they became famous slave-raiders, who made great expeditions into the interior. As late as the end of the nineteenth century they subjected their former rulers, invaded the Kwango and Kwilu regions, and in western Katanga actually drove out the ruling Mwata Yamvo in 1887. When he was restored ten years later, his power was considerably reduced, and hostility between the two tribes has been one of the sources of conflict in Katanga, as Professor Biebuyck shows.

Although the Ba-Lunda dynasty is supposed to have been founded

by a prince of Ba-Luba origin, the former have never been subordinate to the latter, and the two groups expanded in different directions. Their current opposition can only partly be due to their historic rivalry, and much more to contemporary divergence of interests. It is not clear how much the Katanga party, Conakat, is a tribal party of the Ba-Lunda, even though it is led by M. Tshombe, himself of that tribe. Professor Biebuyek says that some Ba-Luba chiefs still adhere to it, and according to M. van der Meerse, it originally included the Ba-Luba who subsequently broke away as Balubakat, after a disagreement on policy. Taking the slogan "Katanga for the Katangese", Conakat was in favour of local autonomy from the start, while the leaders of Balubakat preferred decentralisation within a unitary state. Their wide distribution through Kasai Province as well as Katanga is enough to account for the Ba-Luba preference for a larger political union. The fact that the Ba-Lunda are equally, or more, widespread suggests that Conakat is not a tribal party so much as a local one, dominated by local Ba-Lunda.

(iii) *Ba-Luba*. Luba history has followed a series of swings, up and down, each set off by external contact. This energetic and ingenious people, who now stand at various points of conflict in Kasai and Katanga Provinces, were originally not distinguished culturally from neighbouring tribes speaking variants of their language. Like these others, they were cultivators and hunters, organised in a number of little independent chiefdoms, which combined and fell apart on various occasions in their history. They expanded through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, reaching a peak of political domination in the eighteenth century. On the tribal map (No. III) the Luba-speaking area is roughly the north-eastern half of the Luba-Lunda language grouping, the Bakwa-Luntu and Bashi-Lange being the most westerly members. Just as their political organisation was brought to a peak by the first external stimulus, so it was to some extent destroyed by the next, which brought the northern Ba-Luba into too close contact with the Arab slave-raiders. In the 1880's many of their chiefs moved westwards, while other chiefdoms were totally destroyed. The current antagonism between Ba-Luba and Ba-Tetela, which they tend to attribute to Ba-Tetela resentment of earlier Ba-Luba rule, probably gets some of its edge from Ba-Tetela retaliation when they were in the service of the Arabs at the end of the century.

When the Arabs were driven out, railways were built and mines opened throughout Katanga and Kasai provinces. The other tribes were hesitant about supplying labour for these enterprises, but not the Ba-Luba. This was partly because they were overcrowded in their own territory, and partly because of personal friendships between some of their chiefs and individual Europeans. The Bashi-Lange for instance (members of the Ba-Luba group) were devoted friends of Wissman, who founded the city of Luluabourg (as the name implies, on Bena-Lulua territory) with their help. Ba-Luba volunteered for work, gained a fine reputation for skill and industry, and brought their families to join them. So started the migration which has placed Ba-Luba as skilled mechanics, drivers, clerks and cash-crop cultivators near every important mine, railway and river port in the Kasai Province as far north as Port Francqui.

Their rapid assimilation of European techniques certainly brought new problems and new disasters for them when the wheel made its next turn. The local populations, whom they had surpassed in wealth, and whose territories they occupied, saw independence as a chance to turn against them. For sixty years the Bena-Lulua had resented Ba-Luba economic dominance in their tribal territories and tried to expel them even before independence came. Hence the fighting in 1959 around Luluabourg, the exodus of Ba-Luba into old Ba-Luba territory, the failure to plant adequate crops in the reception areas, and the grim sequence of famine.

In spite of their skill, energy and economic success, the Ba-Luba were not politically dominant anywhere at the time of the grant of power to the Congolese. Their wide dispersal makes it reasonable that they should have thrown in their lot with one of the national parties, such as the Movement National Congolais, led by M. Lumumba. But disagreement between M. Lumumba, of the Ba-Tetela, and M. Kalonji, a man of their own tribe, early split the party. With M. Lumumba in power in the Central Government, the Ba-Luba probably felt that they were under-represented at the national level. Locally, too, they were caught on the wrong foot. The tribes of the Kasai were united on one issue: common resentment against the Ba-Luba. In Kasai Province (where M. Kalonji expected to dominate the provincial government) the elections went so much against his party, that the proposed provincial government offered



him only three ministerial posts, as against eight for the rival party, M.N.C.-Lumumba.<sup>1</sup> Katanga, the territory of their former empire, where thousands of Ba-Luba were still living, broke away into *de facto* independence. The Ba-Luba in Katanga, who formed a party called Balubakat, had earlier separated from Conakat on the issue of central versus local autonomy. Ironically, both Ba-Luba parties eventually favoured local autonomy for the Ba-Luba. Scattered where their search for employment led them, and unpopular to boot in areas where they settled, Ba-Luba countered the hostility around them by attempting to form two further independent states, Southern Kasai, dominated by M. Kalonji's party, and Lualaba-Katanga, dominated by Balubakat. The Ba-Luba are a pre-eminent example of a tribe whose main conflicts with its neighbours derive from modern times.

(iv) *Ba-Mongo*. The three important tribal groupings we have just discussed have traditions of past unity and power. Not so the Ba-Mongo, a collection of little tribes, organised in small independent communities, who have not been in the habit of combining for any common action, nor shown a striking sense of unity. The main surprise of the 1960 elections is the way in which they consistently backed a single political party, and so contributed to M. Lumumba's sweeping victory. Nowhere else has common language been a sign of political unity. The Kongo-speaking area on the map is divided between many political parties; the Ba-Chokwe and Ba-Lunda oppose one another within the Lunda-speaking area;<sup>1</sup> the same for the Bena-Lulua and Ba-Luba within the Luba-speaking area. If anyone familiar with the Ba-Mongo had been tempted to predict before the elections, he would have been most unlikely to have foretold that the unity of the Ba-Mongo would have been so effective even allowing for their advantage in being in the Lingala-speaking area. Two large offshoots of the Ba-Mongo culture, the Ba-Tetela and the Ba-Kusu, recognised their affinity, and voted with them to support the most successful national party, M.N.C.-Lumumba. M. Lumumba, himself a man of the Ba-Tetela, organised a very efficient campaign among these Ba-Mongo tribes from his base in Stanleyville. If the ethnographic map is compared with the map of administrative divisions, Ba-Mongo and related groups are found in all the provinces except Katanga. Professor Biebuyck says

<sup>1</sup> W. J. G. van der Meersch, *op. cit.*, p. 356.



that the party which was specially intended to represent the Ba-Mongo, Unimo, arrived too late on the scene. It was brilliant political strategy which inspired M. Lumumba to concentrate so early on organising these tribes. If the system of voting had not been by proportional representation, his ascendancy would have been even more marked. Conversely, if the provincial boundaries had been drawn in such a way as to include the Ba-Mongo within a single province, M.N.C.-Lumumba might never have emerged as a national party. The early years of the Congo Republic might have been very different. In the five provinces (out of six) in which sizable blocks of Ba-Mongo were found, the party of M.N.C.-Lumumba was returned at the elections of the Chamber of Representatives for a national party. But for this well-distributed backing, the prospect of maintaining the Congo as a single state might possibly have seemed, even to those who most strongly favoured it, so dim and unrealistic as not to have been worth a trial.

M. D.

<sup>1</sup> Their languages are not, in fact, very similar.

## *THE PARTIES AND THEIR TRIBAL AFFILIATIONS*

### TRIBAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUND

The political parties in the Congo Republic have been very much influenced by the tribal groupings. In order to analyse that influence, we need some introduction to the general social background.

The tribes of the Congo fall into at least 200 distinct cultural groups whose economies vary as widely as their languages. Many, specially those in the central forest belt, are hunters who do little or no agriculture. The majority are cultivators, while in the eastern corner there are a few pastoralists. If we add to these original distinctions the uneven response they have made to modern opportunities, the range of local differences becomes clear. Some peoples such as Ba-Kongo or Ba-Luba have become prosperous, and relatively wealthy, through agriculture while others are still at a very low level of development.

Equally wide differences obtain in social organisation. In the east and north succession and inheritance is patrilineal, in the south-west they are generally matrilineal, while in Kasai and Katanga both customs are found. The range of variation of political systems is no less wide. Pygmy groups live in simple bands; Ba-Tetela, Ba-Lega or Ba-Yombe are organised in chiefless political systems; there are petty states like those of Alur or Ba-Nyanga; highly centralised systems like those of the Ba-Lunda; confederations like the Ba-Kuba Empire and military conquest states.

The belief that a tribe has once, albeit long ago, formed a powerful nation has been in several cases built up to serve current political needs. The Ba-Kongo people, actually sub-divided for centuries into independent groups, draw great inspiration from the tradition of the fourteenth-century Congo kingdom. Among the Ba-Yaka, the paramount chief has become even more a symbol of their unity than before. Thus, even where politically speaking there had been nothing but a cluster of autonomous chiefs, as among the A-Zande or Bena-Lulua, party

propaganda has made much of the idea of an ancient kingdom.

In general, the traditional chiefs have not played such an effective part in the modern political scene as was expected. Their polling results were poor, and their attempts to set up their own party, or to draw their followers with them in allegiance to one definite party, have been unsuccessful. First, we should distinguish genuine traditional chiefs from chiefs who were administrative officers of the colonial régime, supported, if not actually imposed, by the administration. The latter have been criticised from all sides because of their alleged lack of fervour for immediate and unconditional independence. At one stage before the elections of 1959 it seemed as if their influence would be important. Many supported the national party, P.N.P., which was on that occasion fairly successful. However, later many of these chiefs left P.N.P. and in the next elections of May 1960 that party lost ground. But we cannot say whether it was because many chiefs withdrew their support or because of other influences at work.

In the case of the authentic traditional paramount chiefs the picture is different. In Katanga, Mwata Yamvo of the Ba-Luba, Munongo of the Ba-Yeke, Kabongo or Kasongwa Nyembo of the Ba-Luba have been very influential. In Léopoldville the Kyamfu paramount of the Ba-Yaka, and in Kivu one of the Ba-Shi chiefs have no less been forces to be reckoned with. Only among some peoples of Orientale Province does the influence of the genuine traditional paramount chiefs seem to be weaker.

The significance of messianic cults should not be underestimated. Kitawala, for example, a movement which has swept through the central forest belt, has certainly stimulated the awareness of a unity transcending tribal divisions. On the other hand, the Kimbangist movement among the Ba-Kongo people which gave rise to the "Église de Jésus-Christ sur la terre" has inspired some of the exclusive solidarity felt by the Ba-Kongo tribes.

Any analysis of the political behaviour of the modern Congolese must refer to the administrative sub-divisions established under Belgian colonial rule. The Congo was (and still is) divided into six provinces, each comprising three to five districts, and these were sub-divided again into territories. Inevitably, these administrative units often cut across tribal and linguistic boundaries, but to some extent their very existence has

created solidarities of another kind. In 1959 the districts and their populations were as follows:

*Léopoldville Province*

Léopoldville town	..	..	..	..	..	367,979
1. District du Lac Léopold II	..	..	..	..	..	292,200
2. District du Kwilu	..	..	..	..	..	1,157,512
3. District du Kwango	..	..	..	..	..	473,821
4. District des Cataractes	..	..	..	..	..	500,688
5. District du Bas-Congo	..	..	..	..	..	397,086
TOTAL	..	..	..	..	..	3,189,286

*Equatorial Province*

6. District de l'Ubangi	..	..	..	..	..	552,896
7. District de la Mongala	..	..	..	..	..	524,947
8. District de l'Équateur	..	..	..	..	..	321,455
9. District de la Tshuapa	..	..	..	..	..	402,234
TOTAL	..	..	..	..	..	1,801,632

*Orientale Province*

10. District du Haut-Congo	..	..	..	..	..	671,611
11. District du Bas-Congo	..	..	..	..	..	494,297
12. District du Haut-Congo	..	..	..	..	..	611,304
13. District de l'Ituri	..	..	..	..	..	697,421
TOTAL	..	..	..	..	..	2,473,633

*Kivu Province*

14. District du Nord-Kivu	..	..	..	..	..	909,055
15. District du Sud-Kivu	..	..	..	..	..	891,648
16. District du Maniema	..	..	..	..	..	461,119
TOTAL	..	..	..	..	..	2,261,822

*Katanga Province*

Elsabethville and Jadotville	..	..	..	..	..	238,716
17. District du Tanganika	..	..	..	..	..	442,716
18. District du Haut-Lomami	..	..	..	..	..	483,223
19. District du Lualaba	..	..	..	..	..	271,676
20. District du Haut-Katanga	..	..	..	..	..	217,972
TOTAL	..	..	..	..	..	1,654,176

*Kasai Province*

21. District du Kasai	..	..	..	..	..	497,098
22. District du Sankuru	..	..	..	..	..	490,235
23. District de Kabinda	..	..	..	..	..	504,139
24. District de la Lulua	..	..	..	..	..	667,161
TOTAL	..	..	..	..	..	2,158,633

The total population of the Congo thus amounted in 1959 to 13,539,182. The average density per square kilometre was 5.8, but there were wide regional differences: Fifty per square kilometre in many parts of Bas-Congo district, ninety-one in Kabare Chefferie of Southern Kivu District, and over 200 in a few parts of Northern Kivu Districts, but only 2.2 in Walikale territory (Northern Kivu) and 0.86 in Monkoto District (Equatorial Province).

#### PARTY STRUCTURE AND HISTORY

For this analysis of the political scene we have to take as our point of departure the communal and territorial elections held in December 1959, and the Parliamentary elections of May 1960. An immense number of small parties, independent candidates and a few traditional chiefs were returned. Since 1959 there has been a gradual weeding-out of the smaller parties, which either dissolved, or merged with the larger parties in order to protect their special interests. We list below the names of the most important parties, the provinces in which they are based, the names of their leaders and the tribes from which the leaders come.

##### *Nomenclature of the main parties, their leaders and leaders' tribes*

Abako	Alliance des Ba-Kongo (Léopoldville Prov.); M. Kasavubu (Ba-Yombe).
Abazi	Alliance des Ba-Yanzi (Léopoldville Prov.); M. Mayamba (Ba-Yansi).
A.R.P	Alliance Rurale Progressiste (Kivu Prov.).
Atcar	Association des Tshokwe du Congo de l'Angola et de la Rhodesie (Katanga Prov.).
Balubakat	Ba-Luba du Katanga (Katanga Prov.); M. Sendwe (Ba-Luba).
Cerea	Centre de Regroupement Africain (Kivu Prov.); M. Kashamura (Ba-Havu).
Coaka	Coalition Kasaienne (Kasai Prov.); M. Kamanga (Ba-Kete).
Conakat	Confédération des Associations du Katanga (Katanga Prov.); M. Tshombe (Ba-Lunda).
Luka	(This name does not seem to have any particular meaning.) (Léopoldville Prov.); M. Delvaux (Ba-Yaka).

M.N.C.	Mouvement National Congolais—(a) the Lumumba faction (throughout the Congo); (formerly) M. Lumumba (Ba-Tetela); (b) the Kalonji faction (Kasai Prov.); M. Kalonji (Ba-Luba) and M. Ileo (Mongo/Ekonda); (c) M.N.C.-Nendaka.
Medereco	Mouvement de l'Évolution et de Développement Économique Rural du Congo (Equatorial Prov.); M. Anekonsapa (Ba-Ngbandi).
M.U.B.	Mouvement de l'Unité Basonge (Kasai Prov.); M. Kubangi (Ba-Songe).
P.N.P.	Parti National du Progrès (throughout the Congo); M. Bolya (Mongo).
P.S.A.	Parti Solidaire Africain (Léopoldville Prov.); M. Gizenga (Ba-Pende), M. Kamitatu (Ba-Ngongo).
Puna	Parti de l'Unité Nationale (Equatorial Prov.); M. Bolikango (Ngombe).
R.D.L.K.	Rassemblement Démocratique du Lac Kwango-Kwilu (Léopoldville Prov.); M. Massa (Ba-Sakata).
Reko	Ressortissants de l'Est du Kongo (Kivu Prov.); M. Lwauwa (Ba-Shi).
Unimo	Union Mongo (Equatorial Prov.); M. Bomboko, M. Ndjoku (Mongo).
U.N.C.	Union Nationale Congolaise (Kasai Prov.); M. Mukenge and M. A. Ilunga (Bena-Lulua).

It is also worth including at the end of this list some other prominent Congolese leaders: M. Omari (recently governing Kivu) is of the Ba-Zimba tribe and a member of M.N.C.-Lumumba. General Mobutu is of the Ba-Ngbandi tribe (commonly referred to in the Congo as the Mongwandi tribe). General Lundula, of the Ba-Tetela, supports the M.N.C.-Lumumba. M. Lutula (who is sympathetic to P.N.P.), the President of the Sankuru-Lomami State, is of the Ba-Tetela, and M. Moanda (Abako), now President of the Central Kongo State, is of the Ba-Kongo tribe.

The names of many of the parties reveal the local basis of their organisation. Even some of those whose names have national pretensions, such as U.N.C., are in fact tribal parties. It is tempting to make the whole political analysis in terms of tribalism and tribal parties versus nationalism and national parties, but this would be too simple. Many of the local and tribal parties become significant at the national level by alliances with parties of other regions. For example, M.N.C.-Lumumba, outstanding as the only party which had electoral success in five out of the six provinces, is involved in a nation-wide network of alliances as we shall see. Correspondingly, Abako, M.N.C.-Kalonji, Puna and P.N.P. are linked together in an "anti-lumumbist" movement. What is striking about these so-called cartels is that the political ideologies of the respective members seem to be largely irrelevant. Certainly the cohesion of some of

the great tribes should not be underestimated. Indeed, the very national parties which condemn tribalism as a regressive element have had to rely on tribal divisions for support. On the other hand, some tribes, the Ba-Luba, for example, are split between different parties, standing for contrary policies. Some big tribes such as the Ba-Tetela have not set up a party of their own. Tribes of very different culture in the Kasai have combined to support a single party, because of their common opposition to the Ba-Luba, and again tribes sharing basically the same culture, such as Ba-Lunda and Ba-Chokwe in Katanga, are deeply divided.

Congo political parties, by any standards, are very young. Most were founded only two years before independence. The exception is Abako, which was established in 1948 as a cultural movement aimed at fostering the Kongo language and institutions. It became a fully fledged party in 1956 with the publication of the first Congolese political manifesto. The other major parties, M.N.C., P.S.A., and Cerea, which started in 1958, did not even have this experience of organisation, although some of their origins can be traced to the "Cereles d'évolués" or even to semi-secret associations. Some of the local parties started only a few weeks before the elections of May 1960, and so found themselves at a fatal disadvantage in their own areas, where better organised national parties had already won over most of the electorate. Some of the parties were formed from numerous small local groupings. P.N.P., for example, came from the fusion of twenty-seven smaller parties.

Often parties which seem on the face of it to be solid enough break down into separate factions, although continuing to bear the same name. M.N.C. split into M.N.C.-Lumumba, M.N.C.-Kalonji, M.N.C.-Nendaka. Cerea broke up into Cerea-Kashamura, Cerea-Weregemere, Cerea-Rutshuru, Cerea-Masisi, Cerea-Beni, Cerea-Butembo, etc. Other parties, too, broke up into two factions, one moderate and one more extremist. For example, P.S.A. is divided between the more moderate wing under M. Kamitatu, and a more extremist one, M. Gizenga's. As time passed, alliances or cartels were formed, either through personal friendships between party leaders or because minority groups hoped thereby to defend their own interests against the local dominant party. As we shall see, the widely differing tribes of Kasai combined to defeat the dominant Ba-Luba. The first political movement of the Bena-Lulua in Kasai was

known as Lulua Frères, and at first was allied with Conakat in Katanga because of their common antagonism to Ba-Luba. Later the party, now called *Partie de la Défense du Peuple Lulua*, seemed to be favourable to P.N.P. policy, but later again the Bena-Lulua supported U.N.C. which finally linked up with M.N.C.-Lumumba. The consistent element throughout was Bena-Lulua hostility to Ba-Luba. The tendency of parties to combine and recombine is well illustrated by P.S.A. Together with Abako, Abazi and M.N.C.-Kalonji they formed a common front, before the commune and district elections of 1959, and succeeded in organising an almost total election boycott; but later, when the Parliamentary elections of the following year were to be held, P.S.A. and M.N.C.-Kalonji went into strong opposition against the rest. These alliances reflect the changing character of the struggle for power.

Other cartels were also formed, expressing the reaction of parties, one against the other, particularly while the first central Government was being formed. So, about the middle of June 1960, M. Ilco of M.N.C.-Kalonji was the focus of various combinations reacting against the alternative focus afforded by M. Lumumba to which Cerea and P.S.A. adhered. Personalities and local loyalties were more significant than official party policies in the formation of these alliances. At one time, one such cartel included parties which advocated variously that the constitution of the future Congo state be a federal state, a single national state, and separate, independent states.

Even within one and the same province one party might be split in its alliances. In Katanga, Balubakat in Kolwezi town combined with *Fédération Kasaienne* and Atcar, whereas, in Kipushi territory, F.K. belonged to the cartel of their opponents.



## POLITICAL OBJECTIVES

Considering the newness of the parties, and considering how quickly events have overtaken them since their foundation, we cannot but admire them for managing to build up any support in a continually shifting political context. Often their pronouncements have been outdated as soon as they were published. For example, the territorial and communal elections of 1959, even before the results were known, had lost significance because of the abstentions of the major parties: Abako, P.S.A. and M.N.C.-Kalonji. Again, while early in 1959 the main parties were fixing their sights on a demand for Parliamentary elections in 1961, even by the end of the year this was regarded as too moderate and was abandoned. No wonder that their programmes have a makeshift, provisional air. They have scarcely had time to elaborate policies, apart from insisting on independence and their own choice of various polling procedures.

It is not easy to discover anything definite about the programmes of the different parties. The clues are scattered through various small publications, local newspapers often written in the vernacular, manifestos, tracts and addresses. They are often contradictory and have changed considerably as the months went by. By 1960 all parties wanted immediate independence but varied in the definition of its meaning. On the future constitution of the state there were from the outset two views: some were in favour of full political and economic unity of the Congo, others, while they favoured economic union of the provinces, jibbed at a single political control and advocated federation, or an even looser association of states. Some thought that the constituent states of such an association should have the right to secede, and others that they should not. There were various suggestions about the future relationship with Belgium, and as many again concerning electoral procedure.

For example, the M.N.C. conference at Bukavu declared its intention to defend the unity of the Congo and condemned federalism outright. It considered that in a federation based on a conglomeration of little tribal units there was a risk of arbitrary and autocratic political leadership. The M.N.C. did, however, wish to combine unity with decentralisation of authority to the provinces, to take account of the great diversity of local

customs. They called for immediate independence, and a central democratic government, maintaining the administrative framework in its broad outlines. They promised to protect foreign capital, and recognised that the integrity of the new state would have to rest on a stable national economy. An important principle in their programme was that the economically developed territories should give employment to peoples from less favoured areas.

At its general Congress in March 1960, Puna made a very similar statement:

1. The unity of the Congolese territory must be defended.
2. The Congo should not fall after independence under any foreign power. The new democratic republic should be headed by a president elected by Parliament, district courts should be suppressed, a commission of enquiry should be set up to study legal customs.
3. Foreign investment should be encouraged, on condition that the local inhabitants should benefit from the enterprise developed in their region.
4. Compulsory schooling for all children between six and fourteen, equal pay for equal work and unemployment allowances were all advocated.

Similar statements from the conferences of other national parties could also be quoted.

## SURVEY OF POLITICAL PARTIES

We can now proceed to a province-by-province survey of party strength and of the political alignments of the tribal groups.

### 1. *Léopoldville Province*

Six parties have emerged here: Abako, P.S.A., Abazi, R.D.L.K., Luka and M.N.C.-Lumumba.

Abako, the party of the Ba-Kongo people, completely dominates two districts, Cataractes and Bas-Kongo, where it holds all the seats. It also leads in Léopoldville town itself where over 50 per cent. of the population is Ba-Kongo. Abako was early alienated from the other political parties in Léopoldville Province by its advocacy of a federalist constitution. After the Brussels Round Table Conference (1960), when disagreement on constitutional forms came into the open, Abako, holding two districts and well supported in Léopoldville town, could afford to stand alone, and gave up its earlier alliance with P.S.A. and Abazi. The latter two parties combined with other parties in Léopoldville town, R.D.L.K. and M.N.C.-Kalonji. Luka, recruited from Ba-Yaka tribesmen, traditionally at odds with Ba-Kongo, together with P.N.P., set up a common front against both Abako and the parties dominated by P.S.A. The Common Front attracted those parties with very small representation in Léopoldville town: Unibat of the Ba-Teke group, Assoreco representing the riverain peoples referred to as Bangala, Puna of the Ngonbe, and also a secessionary faction of Abako led by Daniel Kanza. It succeeded in winning one seat in the Parliamentary elections, as against three won by Abako. Abako is supported only by the Ba-Kongo peoples, who number about 1,000,000, with the single exception of a group of Ba-Wumu, who, though of Ba-Teke culture, have been associated with Ba-Kongo for so long that they have identified themselves with Abako.

In the district of Lac Léopold II there are two major tribal groupings, the Ba-Teke and the Mongo. By and large each supports its own party. The Ba-Sakata, Ba-Boma, Ba-Dia, with the other Ba-Teke support R.D.L.K. and the E-Konda, Boliu, Ba-Nkutshu, toe the Mongo line, supporting M.N.C. though neither party has 100 per cent. allegiance from

the appropriate tribe. It was in this district that M. Lumumba found one of his strongest supporters, M. Mpolo, subsequently Army Chief of Staff.

In the Kwango district, again, one party, Luka, is supported by the Ba-Yaka and by Ba-Lunda-dominated groups, while the other party, P.S.A., organised the other tribal groupings (that is the Ba-Mbala, Ba-Ngongo and a large proportion of the Ba-Suku and Ba-Sonde tribes) into a local opposition to Luka. In Kwilu district, P.S.A. is dominant, because it has the support of a distinct group of tribes, Ba-Pende, Ba-Mbala, Ba-Kwese, Ba-Mbunda, Ba-Huana (Ba-Hungana). It also has the support of those of the Bashi-Lele and Ba-Wongo who are in the district, though the main body is in the Kasai Province. The other party, Abazi, offers only weak opposition to P.S.A. It is supported by Ba-Yansi and Ba-Dinga who belong to the Ba-Teke group. Abazi was originally allied with P.S.A., but now it stands alone, and has even set up its own government over what it proclaims as the Kwilu State.

## 2. *Equatorial Province*

This province is characterised by a belt of dense and often swampy rain forest, and by a very low population density. Ubangi, the most north-westerly district of the Congo, is populated by a variety of tribal groups, many of them, such as Banda, being extensions of those from the Central African Republic. In the 1960 elections most of the parties represented purely local interests, but two parties of national importance made some impression: P.N.P. and Puna, which was supported by Ngombe and Mbanja, and also by the so-called Bangala-speaking peoples. More recently still, Puna has managed to absorb many of the local parties.

The Mongala district is divided politically between Puna and P.N.P., and, interestingly enough, the political division does not seem to correspond to any of the ethnic divisions. Even the basic distinction between Bantu and Sudanese seems to have no political significance. Puna is supported both by Ngombe and Ba-Buja, who are Bantu, and by Ngbandi, who are Sudanese.

In the district of the Equator, Puna and Unimo emerge on top. Puna was supported by the riverain peoples speaking Bangala, and by Ngombe. Unimo, which calculated on the support of the substantial Mongo groups,

had surprisingly small success. In practice, the Mongo vote was split between Unimo and M.N.C.-Lumumba.

Finally, in Tshuapa district, M.N.C.-Lumumba shared control with P.N.P. This was again surprising, as this district is a Mongo area and in general the Mongo tribes backed M.N.C.-Lumumba. In this case, however, some local candidates were able to sustain competition from M.N.C.-Lumumba because they had nationally famous leaders. In this province, ethnographically very fragmented as it is, parties with supra-tribal aspirations had the greatest success. The poor results of Unimo were due to its late appearance in the field. When it was formed, the Mongo vote had already been captured by M.N.C.-Lumumba.

### 3. *Orientale Province*

The population of this province, ethnically speaking, is very mixed. Sudanese and Uganda tribes extend right into the region, and amongst them are scattered pygmy groups.

The Bas-Uele district comprises A-Zande and Ababua peoples. In the Haut-Uele, the main groups are Mangbetu and Mamvu and Mabudu, as well as outlying Zande groups. The Haut-Congo district is mainly inhabited by the Ba-Kumu—Ba-Bira, though to the west there are also Mongo peoples, and in the centre other smaller groups again. The Ituri district is divided between forest in the west and savannah in the east. In the former there are extensions of the Ba-Kumu—Ba-Bira group, and Mamvu—Lese. In the east there are Lughara and Alur, whose main groups are in Uganda, and also Ba-Lendu.

We have already seen that in areas which are tribally very mixed there is less scope for regional parties to make an appeal. In this respect this province is consistent with the rest. In the complicated mosaic of tribes, only two parties have emerged successful: M.N.C.-Lumumba and P.N.P. M.N.C.-Lumumba nearly swept the board. At the Parliamentary elections they gained twenty-one out of the twenty-six seats and, at the provincial elections, forty-two out of fifty-one. P.N.P. was supported by some of the local chiefs among the Banua, Mayogo and others, and by the same token many of their subjects, reacting against them, backed M.N.C.-Lumumba. It is worth noting that M.N.C.-Lumumba has been successful

in the more isolated and backward forest areas, as well as in areas which lack well organised tribally based parties. This is the area in which the Kitawala messianic movement has strong hold, especially in the forest regions, and it is certain that some of its xenophobe doctrines helped to prepare the ground for M.N.C.-Lumumba propaganda. One of the fundamental principles of the M.N.C.-Lumumba party platform is that tribalism is outdated, regressive and even a threat to the future of the Congo itself. It is evidently a principle which is most easily accepted in an area where large tribal groupings are absent.

#### 4. *Kivu Province*

The tribal grouping in this province includes the Nande people, the Ba-Hunde— Ba-Nyange, the Ba-Havu, and the Ba-Shi, the Ba-Lega with the related Ba-Bembe, and the Ba-Kumu. There are also Ba-Kusu who are closely related to Ba-Tetela, and some other offshoots of the Mongo and Ba-Luba clusters. As well as these major Congo tribes there are minor groups of Ba-Fuliru, Ba-Bira and immigrant Ba-Nyarwanda pastoralists from the east. In short, we have another province in which the tribal grouping is very mixed.

In the Parliamentary elections a number of independent candidates, or parties representing strictly local interests, gained some support; for example, Reko, the party of the Ba-Shi people, and A.R.P., supported by the Ba-Hunde and Banya-Bwisha. In the provincial elections many more tribal parties emerged: Unerga, for the Ba-Lega, Un.B.Fi. for the Ba-Bembe. The former was allied to P.N.P. and the latter to M.N.C.-Lumumba, but in spite of these parties drawing away many of the votes, the political scene was dominated by two majority parties, Cerea and M.N.C.-Lumumba. Here, again, organisation told. First success was largely due to the alliances which they made with individual candidates and with local parties. Cerea received the solid support of the Nande people in the north, but one of its wings gained support from the Ba-Shi and the urban Ba-Lega. On the other hand, M.N.C.-Lumumba got the support of the peoples in the south of the province, Ba-Bembe and Ba-Kusu. Note that the Ba-Kusu and other Mongo groups are related to Ba-Tetela of Kasai, and that M. Lumumba was of Ba-Tetela origin.

Another point to note is that M. Lumumba's anti-tribal bias appealed to the influential islamised minorities in Kivu.

In this province we cannot say that the tribal grouping was irrelevant to the election results. Though the two national parties won the elections, they owed their success to tribal conflicts among the electorate.

### 5. *Katanga Province*

The Tanganyika district is inhabited by one of the sub-divisions of the Ba-Luba: the Ba-Luba-Hemba. There are also a few tribes of the Bemba group whose main body inhabits the Northern Rhodesian plateau. The Haut-Katanga district, in the extreme south-east of the Congo, is also peopled by related offshoots of the Ba-Bemba, Ba-Lunda and Ba-Lala—Ba-Lamba. The Lualaba district is divided between Ba-Luba and Ba-Lunda and Ba-Chokwe. The Ba-Yeke are a group of people of Ba-Lunda—Ba-Sanga origin who, in the nineteenth century, came under the foreign domination of Ba-Yeke invaders from Tanganyika. Finally, in the Haut-Lomami district, Ba-Lunda, Ba-Chokwe and Ba-Luba exist side by side.

The whole province is divided politically between two parties: Balubakat and Conakat, the one backed by Ba-Luba and the other by Ba-Lunda. Conakat was also backed by some of the traditional chiefs of this province who contributed to its great success in the elections of 1959.

The tribal affiliation to these parties, which seems clear enough on the face of it, is complicated by the alliances, or cartels, between them. The Ba-Luba and Ba-Chokwe combined against the Ba-Lunda. They formed a cartel of Balubakat, Fedeka and Atear, and linked up with M.N.C.-Lumumba and with the Basonge party, called the Mouvement de l'Unité Basonge.

The allegiance of Ba-Chokwe to the anti-Ba-Lunda group is at first surprising, since, as the tribal map shows, they share a common culture and language, but this is one of the cases in which past conflicts, stemming from the nineteenth century, have continued still unresolved. Another unexpected complication is that Ba-Luba do not all, without exception, support Balubakat. Some of the Ba-Luba chiefs have been won over to the Conakat by M. Tshombe, and also, in some cases, through personal

friendship with the paramount chief of the Ba-Lunda, the Mwata Yamvo, who supports Conakat.

#### 6. *Kasai Province*

The pattern of tribal grouping in the Kasai district of this province should be seen in two layers, as it were. There are the local tribes: Ba-Kuba, Ba-Kete, Ba-Pende, Ba-Chokwe, etc.; and superimposed on these, many thousands of recent Ba-Luba immigrants.

The Sankuru district is mainly inhabited by the Ba-Tetela, except for the south where there are thousands of Ba-Luba-Kasai immigrants.

Kabinda district is inhabited by Ba-Songe and Bena-Kanyoka, who are related to the Ba-Luba, and also by the largest groups of Ba-Luba-Kasai.

The Lulua district is peopled by Bena-Lulua, Bakete and Bakwa-Luntu (sometimes called Ba-Salampasu). Here, again, there are thousands of immigrant Ba-Luba.

The political alignment is as follows: M.N.C.-Lumumba carried off the votes of M. Lumumba's own tribe, the Ba-Tetela, also of Bena Kanyoka and Ba-Songe, organised in the first instance in the Front de l'Unité Ba-Songe. M.N.C.-Kalonji had equal success among Ba-Luba-Kasai groups and also with some sections of the smaller local tribes, the Ba-Pende, Ba-Chokwe and Bashi-Lele, away from their main group. The Bena-Lulua backed the Union Congolaise, which formed an alliance with M.N.C.-Lumumba. The minority groups combined to form an anti-Ba-Luba coalition, the Ba-Kete, Ba-Pende, Ba-Binji, Bakwa-Luntu, Ba-Lwalwa, who supported Coaka. The Ba-Kuba seem to have been divided between M.N.C.-Lumumba and M.N.C.-Kalonji, and the Bashi-Lele between M.N.C.-Kalonji and Coaka. In this province M.N.C.-Lumumba was able to form a cartel with Coaka and the Union Congolaise—an alliance between very different tribal groups, based on their common opposition to the Ba-Luba, who are regarded as intruders in most parts of the province.

The Ba-Luba of Kasai, who have inspired such striking solidarity among their opponents, are not immigrants or strangers in all parts of Kasai territory. Their traditional areas include Gandajika, Bakwanga



and parts of Dimbelenge, from which they have spread during the last seventy years. M. Kalonji claims that they are about 800,000 strong in the province, outnumbering the Bena-Lulua, 400,000, and the Ba-Tetela, 340,000. In Luluabourg itself in 1960 there were 72,000 Ba-Luba compared with only 26,000 Bena-Lulua. As far north as Mweka there were 35,000 of them. Their numerical strength and their progressiveness caused them to be much feared and resented by the tribes into whose areas they had migrated. The latter organised themselves politically and when their coalition gained the support of M.N.C.-Lumumba, the Ba-Luba party, M.N.C.-Kalonji, was outnumbered and outmanoeuvred. Tribal warfare had broken out between Bena-Lulua and local Ba-Luba even before independence, and started the mass exodus of Ba-Luba to their homelands around Bakwanga. Feeling, no doubt, that his people were inadequately represented in the provincial government, M. Kalonji seceded, refusing the portfolios offered to his party by the provincial government at Luluabourg.

#### SEPARATIST MOVEMENTS

We have seen the extent to which the major political parties are backed by tribal groups. In recent months the idea of a unitary Congo state has been abandoned and a Central African Confederation has been agreed upon by several of the political leaders. We can now ask how the various tribes see their place in such a confederation.

Even before independence, and before the first Central and Provincial Governments were set up, many leaders, fearing that their people would be inadequately represented, threatened to establish independent states. The first break-away state was Katanga, the south-eastern province, which included the two large towns, Elisabethville and Jadotville, under M. Tshombe. But Katanga is now divided into two parts, since there is also a northern independent state, Lualaba-Katanga, controlled by Balubakat, the party led by M. Sendwe. A southern Kasai State, controlled by M.N.C.-Kalonji, has also declared its independence.

For some time there had existed *de facto*, if not *de jure*, a Central Kongo state, controlled by Abako; this was officially proclaimed on

3 March 1961, by the nomination as President of M. Moanda, who had succeeded President Kasavubu as Chairman of Abako. The existence of this independent state will probably provoke the birth of a Kwango-Kwilu state, presided over by M. Kamitatu of P.S.A., but the establishment of such a state will not be plain sailing until the future of the Ba-Yaka, supporting Luka, and the Ba-Yansi, supporting Abazi, has been settled. It seems unlikely that they would favour absorption in the Central Kongo State. They might try to set up their own states. The President of Abazi, M. Mayumba, has actually proclaimed a separate government for Northern Kwilu, comprising the Ba-Yansi group of tribes.

A northern state, within Léopoldville Province, which was proclaimed independent on 13 March 1961, is that of Maindombe in the region of Lac Léopold II. This area is controlled by several parties: M.N.C.-Lumumba, R.D.L.K., and Abazi, but the initiative for the new state seems to come from R.D.L.K.

Various suggestions are in the air about the sub-division of Equatorial Province. One is that a state including Ubangi and Mongala Districts, and controlled by Puna, should be formed. The state of Anamongo (children of Mongo) has been proposed, which would try to include the Mongo who are well represented in Equatorial Province, but also in four other provinces. At the same time there is some talk of a Sankuru-Lomami state which would include the Ba-Tetela tribes, thereby implying that these, although related to the Mongo, should not be included in the Mongo state. However, the prominent Mongo leaders, such as M. Ileo, M. Bomboko, M. Bolya and M. Ndjoku, have not made any definite statements about the future grouping of the Mongo peoples.

As to Orientale and Kivu Provinces, there is little that can be said as yet. In Orientale Province the leaders tend to speak about "Oriental Kongo". Kivu Province has been involved in the struggle between Cerea and M.N.C.-Lumumba, reflecting the major tribal cleavages of the province. M. Omari of M.N.C.-Lumumba eventually succeeded in bringing his party into power after several attempts at setting up moderate governments had been made by Kabare and M. Bodji. The political struggle has been based more and more on tribal conflicts: Ba-Shi and Ba-Lega against Ba-Kusu.

In one of the former districts of Kivu province an independent state

called Maniema has been proclaimed by another M. Omari (moderate M.N.C.) who has set up a government in exile in Katanga. The scene is complicated by the fact that some of the best-known leaders of Kivu province are in Léopoldville: two are ministers in the Central Government, positions from which they can exercise pressure on affairs in their province. Certainly matters are too confused at present for it to be possible to foretell what states will finally emerge there.

Finally, many prominent leaders are disturbed by the prospect of a mosaic of little states, and are pressing for various forms of federation which would reconcile the need for unity with the desire for local autonomy.

D. B.

## SOME CONCLUSIONS

The question of a federal or unitary constitution has provoked many of the major conflicts in the Congo. There are proponents for every shade of decentralisation. The most dynamic leader, M. Lumumba, backed by the poorest, and (hitherto) least well-organised tribes, was committed whole-heartedly to the idea of a unitary state. The poorer areas have a natural interest in union with their richer neighbours. But the richest and most powerful local groups wanted local autonomy. This is consistent with experience elsewhere. Peoples who are unorganised and without traditions of past glory, are more willing to be subordinate to a larger political authority, while big tribes, if they cannot dominate, threaten to secede. Thus the special claims of Buganda and of Barotseland are likely to make difficulties for the future unity of Uganda and Northern Rhodesia. In the Congo it is the negative aspect which is the more important. The many small tribes in the central block were won over to the idea of a unitary state, and in the regions where powerful groups threatened to make break-away states, the smaller tribes, fearing to be dominated, threw in their lot with the national parties.

The ascendancy of M.N.C.-Lumumba was so important that we may dwell further on the factors which contributed to it. M. Lumumba's pan-African vision was translated, for the Congo itself, into a policy of nationalism transcending tribal differences. In a sense it was an anti-tribal party. So Africans who were living in urban areas, largely cut off from their tribal way of life, and the Islamic, Swahili-speaking peoples in the east who were not particularly interested in supporting tribal factions, provided fertile soil for a national programme. Professor Biebuyck suggests that, at the other end of the scale of sophistication, people who had adopted millennial cults were good ground for enthusiastic national party organisers, partly because they were used to accepting unrealistic promises, and partly because the cults had emphasized a supra-tribal brotherhood. Thus the big urban populations, the unsophisticated communities of Ba-Mongo, and the islamised elements, were natural sympathisers with M. Lumumba's aims. Success is a party's best ticket

to further triumphs. By virtue of its strength in these groups, an alliance with M.N.C.-Lumumba was worth having for minorities threatened by local domination from a powerful tribe or interest elsewhere. So, M.N.C.-Lumumba was able to attract votes by joining the common front against Abako in Léopoldville, and against the Ba-Luba in Kasai. They also joined the opposition against the dominant group in Katanga, which meant, confusingly enough, that they were against the Ba-Luba in the Kasai, but with them in Katanga.

Apart from the paradox of a national party, vowed to diminish tribal distinctions, yet backing one tribe in its conflicts with another, there is no real inconsistency in these alliances. The anti-Ba-Luba coalition in Kasai, Coaka, might or might not ally itself with the party supported by the Ba-Chokwe, but it would not make sense for it to join up with either the Ba-Luba parties, Balubakat, or M.N.C.-Kalonji. Equally, M.N.C.-Lumumba, the dominant national party, would hardly link up with Corakat or Abako, the two separatist parties which are strong enough to defeat its policies: but a less successful national party, such as P.N.P., is likely to be tempted by an alliance with the tribally based parties, such as Abako or M.N.C.-Kalonji, simply because of the need to muster the anti-Lumumba elements in order to be effective at all at the national level. On close scrutiny, the political groupings turn out to have a less arbitrary and less provisional structure, since they are ultimately based on tribal groupings.

"Schism breeds". One of the most interesting results of Professor Biebuyck's analysis is the demonstration of the way in which one separatist movement sets off another, so that peoples who have been relatively unconscious of any historical unity, the Ba-Mongo for example, are being pushed in that direction by the course of events. First they united to bring the M.N.C. party to power: now, responding to declarations of independence on all sides, they talk of forming a separate state of their own. The Ba-Teke group, the wedge on the map between Ba-Kongo and Ba-Mongo, has previously never shown any sense of solidarity. When the political parties were first formed, they supported two distinct parties, which had little in common but their opposition to locally dominant parties of Ba-Mongo, Ba-Kongo and Ba-Yaka. Responding to the need for greater organisation, these two parties gradually drew together, and now there is

even a prospect of an independent state, based on this linguistic group.

This suggests that a sense of nationhood is capable of springing up overnight on the most unlikely ground. If this is so, a glance at the borders of the Congo Republic gives cause for dismay. The Ba-Kongo are a relatively small outpost of a cultural grouping based on Angola. The Ba-Lunda extend far into Angola and a little into Northern Rhodesia. The Ba-Teke are related to tribes in the République du Congo. Nilotic- and Sudanic-speaking tribes in the north and east of the Congo have their roots in Uganda and the Sudan and in Oubangi-Chari. All these groupings may provide threats to the dream of a free, united Congo. No wonder that M. Lumumba tried to quell early separatist movements, and was tempted to use force to repress the attempts of M. Kalonji and M. Tshombe to set up independent states. If common culture were always held to imply an independent body politic, then everything of the former prosperous, unified Belgian Congo would be dissolved away, except the small and poor tribes of the central Congo basin itself.

Pressure of events could conceivably force tribal leaders into making territorial claims, or into acceding to claims made by leaders across the borders of the former Belgian colony. For example, M. Kasavubu disclaims any ambition to reconstitute the seventeenth-century Kongo Kingdom, but his hand could be forced by events in Angola. But the general result of this survey of tribal forces points the other way. Tribal conflicts are centred on new issues rather than ancient ones. Belgian colonial rule has made a framework which has live political significance for the inhabitants of the Congo.

The second general conclusion gives hope, for the future, of a federal Congo. The most obvious danger is disintegration into little autonomous states. The strongest forces for separation are in the south-east and the south-west, that is, in Katanga and in the Ba-Kongo area, but each of these includes tribes from other areas. Katanga is not tribally homogeneous. The Ba-Kongo are territorially compact, with the important exception of the many other tribes in Léopoldville itself. The Ba-Luba are dispersed. Although originally they saw their interests in a unitary state, they have been pushed into political withdrawal. Their territorial regrouping may make for more tolerance among their neighbours and pave the way for federal co-operation. The Ba-Mongo have a strong

economic interest in some kind of unitary or federal system, but none in total separation. The other groups which have recently declared themselves as independent states are small. The political unity of the federation would be most warmly supported by the poorest elements in it. It is the richest elements which, as we have seen, have separatist tendencies, but the tribal intermixing in their areas makes complete separation difficult. The varied interests which voted the party of M.N.C.-Lumumba to power and which expressed support for a unitary Congo republic, if well-organised within a federal system, would balance and control centrifugal tendencies. The alliances which that party made in the districts where it was least well-represented, suggest a promising pattern of counterbalancing forces in a future federation. In each area the dominant local tribe tends to provoke against itself a coalition of minorities, each with their main roots in a neighbouring area, and each, just because they are not dominant locally, favouring national unity. The very complexity of the tribal groupings should ultimately favour their collaboration in a federal state.

*Suggestions for further reading:*

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*Note to the Tribal Map, No. III*

1. The Bantu languages use prefixes which differ according to different classes of nouns, singular and plural, etc. Thus, Ba- or the equivalent is the plural prefix for "people", and Mu- the singular prefix for "a person". The tribal names are therefore always preceded by the plural personal prefix, Ba-, Wa-, Bena-, Bakwa-, Bashi-, and so on. Some of the tribal names have come into European usage with the prefix, as Ba-Kongo and Ba-Luba, and others without it, as Lunda and Mongo, and some with the singular, as Mo-Ngbandi (actually a Sudanese group). For the sake of uniformity, and in the hope of not bemusing people who are used to hearing some of the prefixes, we have kept them all, but attached them by a hyphen to the root words.

2. The linguistic groupings which have been marked with a thick black line merely comprise languages which are more like one another than they are like those of other groups. Only the four most important have been numbered and named on the map. Kongo, for example, is totally unlike Luba or Mongo. It is not realistic to draw a hard line between Lunda and Luba languages, which represent a gradual shading-off westwards from the Luba-speaking to the Lunda-speaking area.

3. North of the equator the linguistic groupings are so many, and so small, that they have not been shown on the map. The distinction between Bantu and non-Bantu language is shown by underlining the names of the latter.





Map No. IV