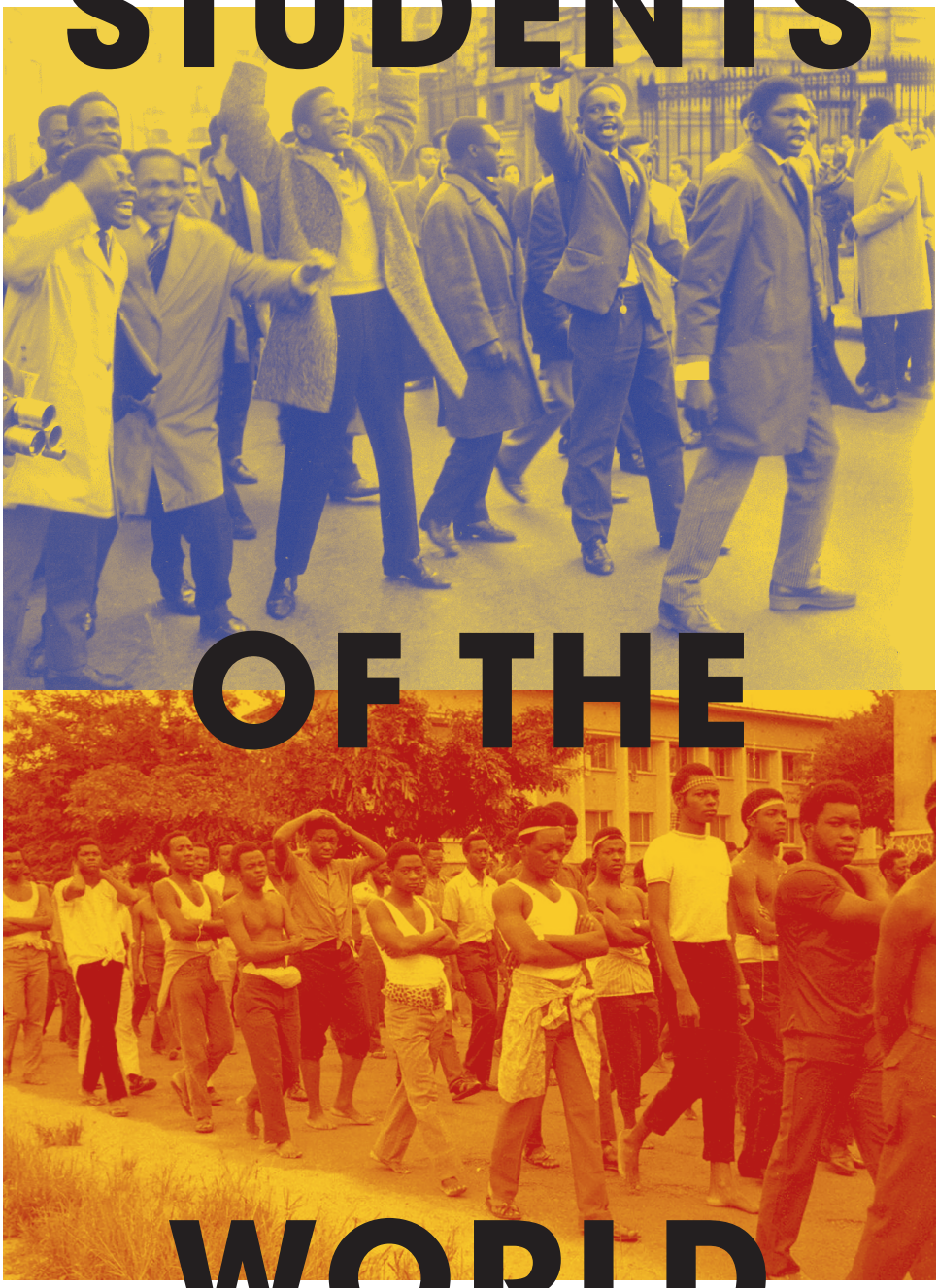
STUDENTS OF THE WORLD



GLOBAL 1968 AND DECOLONIZATION IN THE CONGO

PEDRO MONAVILLE

STUDENTS OF THE WORLD

A THEORY IN FORMS BOOK

Series Editors Nancy Rose Hunt and Achille Mbembe

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Cover art: (*top*) Black students demonstrate against Lumumba's execution (January 17, 1971) on February 2, 1961, in Paris. Photograph by Keystone Press / Alamy Stock Photo. (*bottom*) Student procession during the commemoration of the second anniversary of the June 4 massacre, June 4, 1971. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Alexandre Luba.

For Adia Yvonne Tshiabu,
beloved and shrewd student of the world

CONTENTS

PREFACE

MEMORY WORK IN THE AGE OF THE CINQ CHANTIERS

And this world, which appears to us as a fable . . . and never ceases to deny our reason; this world which envelops us, penetrates us, agitates us, without us even seeing it in any other way than the mind's eye, touching it only by signs, this strange world is society, it is us!

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *System of Economic Contradictions, or the Philosophy of Misery* (1846)

When I arrived at his office in the National Union of Workers of the Congo (UNTC) in downtown Kinshasa, François Mayala was sitting in front of a small radio set, listening to a news broadcast on Radio France Internationale. Meanwhile, a colleague of his had his head buried in a well-worn book on neurosis. The room contained neither computers nor cabinet files, and seemingly, no urgent tasks required completing. Fading green walls recalled the time when all the country's administrative buildings were painted in the color of President Mobutu's one-party state. In those years, the UNTC had been a powerful labor organization, but trade union liberalization and the shrinking of the formal economy had made it a shadow of its former self.

Mayala welcomed the distraction of my impromptu visit. I came with questions about the Congolese left in the 1960s, a topic he always discussed with passion. Revisiting this bygone era was not merely a matter of chatter. Mayala's leftist memories connected him to the world existentially.

Reminiscences of past politics sustained his peripatetic mind, years after opportunities to travel abroad and attend international labor conferences came to an end. Mobility was key for my own research, as I followed archival trails and developed networks of informants across the Congo and abroad. Mayala was curious to know where I had been and whom I had met. And as I was to fly to Europe a few days later, he asked me to bring him a copy of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's *The Philosophy of Misery* when I came to the Congo again. "Did you know that Marx wrote his *Poverty of Philosophy* in response to this book? Marxists do not like Proudhon, but I regret disregarding him for so many years," he explained.[1] Although Mayala deplored that Congolese, including himself, knew too little about anarchist thinkers like Proudhon, the tentacled city of more than ten million that was roaring outside of his office windows exuded its own kind of statelessness.[2] Cycles of war that started in the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide in 1994 continued to destabilize the country, while the social fabric had come to be pervaded with a new religiosity fixated on the figure of evil.[3] These and other developments unsettled long-standing certitudes. For Mayala and others from his generation of left activists, telling stories about the past was an act of resistance, an attempt at mending a fractured sense of time and reality.

Mayala's political imagination complicated widespread characterizations of postcolonial cities like Kinshasa as spaces of abjection and exclusion. A native of the lower Congo, Mayala had lived in Kinshasa since the 1950s. He had witnessed the proverbial transformation of "Kin-la-Belle" (Kin-the-Beautiful) into "Kin-la-Poubelle" (Kin-the-Garbage), a city now plagued with overpopulation, land erosion, a failing sewage system, and inadequate electricity supply. Yet, Mayala claimed full citizenship in the world, not in a distinct planet of slums.[4] Memories populated his lifeworld in Kinshasa, making distant times and places part of the everyday.

This book interrogates how a generation of university students redefined Congolese politics in the aftermath of independence, with a movement that made a call to decolonize higher education, build a strong and just nation-state, and cultivate solidarity across borders. Not having studied at university, Mayala did not directly participate in the student movement. But he did serve as a mentor to several student activists at the University of Lovanium in Kinshasa, including his younger brother, the late Moreno Kinkela. Sharing his personal collection of leftist publications with these students, Mayala enabled a turn toward Marxism that shifted the horizon of the student movement. Reading Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels's writings on colonialism had been Mayala's own "introduction to life"

while working as a clerk in the Office des Transports Coloniaux (Colonial Transportation Office) in the 1950s.[5] Back then, Marxism, both intellectually and in the materiality of its circulation, had an aura of danger and mystery. And after Mayala began work as a union employee, he did not fail to bring back revolutionary books, which he tucked under his shirt or sewed into the lining of his suitcase, whenever he traveled abroad. The "red library" that Mayala built in this way provided the group formed around his brother with precious weapons. The histories of revolutionary struggles and the radical critiques of imperialism that they read in Mayala's library emboldened these young men to break with the expectations to conform that weighed heavily on university students. The left outlined a path of subversive deviation, but it also offered an avant-gardist rhetoric compatible with the elitist bent of colonial and early postcolonial education. Mayala's brother and his friends came to see themselves as a political vanguard and their campus as a microcosm of the wider world of decolonization. They created a clandestine student structure that aimed to overthrow Mobutu's dictatorship. The authorities quickly arrested them and crushed their movement, but their initiative left a deep imprint on the Congo's postcolonial history.

Although their struggle returns us to the singularity of the era of the African independences, it also presents itself as a chapter in an unfinished story. Decolonizing the university has indeed reemerged as a powerful rallying cry in Africa and beyond since the early 2010s. However, discussions of this question are framed around epistemological stakes that too rarely account for historical precedents.[6] By reestablishing how, more than half a century ago, young Congolese connected the transformation of higher education with the broader struggle against imperialism and neocolonialism, *Students of the World* outlines an alternative history of the present.

(Af)filiations

In the 1960s, with a vibrancy reflecting the sudden freedom from colonial domination, Congolese political imaginaries branched off toward distant horizons. For the people who shared their stories with me decades later, this era was not fully past. And when I brought back books from Europe for Mayala and others, I could not help think that the configuration of my work reactivated material and intellectual transactions from the youth of my interlocutors.

Various dynamics shaped my historical ethnography in the Congo. My mother is Congolese—she moved to Belgium in the mid-1970s, a few years

before I was born there—and interviewees keenly used a language of kinship with me, "our sister's son," as Mayala and others would call me. This imagined familial connection mattered but maybe less so than my affiliation with American academia or the fact that my work involved multiple trips, long conversations about events and networks, and a general attention to questions of ideology and organization. All these things invited informants to reminisce the transnational structures of activism and knowledge production in the 1960s. At this time, foreigners were particularly hungry for information about Congolese society and politics. And many students, because they were themselves seeking to expand their knowledge of the world, happily engaged with these interlocutors.

This kind of cross-fertilization seemed far away in the 2000s and 2010s, long after a self-declared apolitical humanitarianism had replaced the radical horizons of the 1960s as the new dominant discursive thread connecting the Congo to the world.[7] Yet, the habitus forged at earlier points of internationalist convergences have endured into the neoliberal era. Former activists' ways of speaking and looking at the world testified to this continuity. And the reverberations of past modes of political engagement that appeared during meetings with them directly enter into the framing of this book.

During my research, the 1960s came to life in multiple ways. Memories of this decade have held a specific value ever since Laurent-Désiré Kabila came to power in 1997. A leader in the Simba armed insurrection of the mid-1960s, Kabila reemerged three decades later as the spokesman of a new rebel group, the Alliance des Forces Démocratiques de Libération (AFDL). Together with the active support of Rwanda, Uganda, and a few other African countries where insurrectionary movements with roots in the era of revolutionary tricontinentalism had also captured power in recent years, he routed Mobutu's army.[8] As president, Kabila initially sought to erase the Mobutu era. One of his first measures was to change the country's name from Zaire (a name imposed by the late dictator in 1971) back to Congo.[9] Longtime opposition to Mobutu became a source of legitimacy, and several former figures on the student left served as ministers in the first Kabila governments, including Mayala's brother Kinkela as the minister of post and telecommunications. Kabila's mercurial personality and the war that followed his rupture with his Ugandan and Rwandese allies in 1998 created turbulences at the center of power, but the old rebel leader remained committed to the anti-imperialist rhetoric of his youth. After his assassination by one of his bodyguards in 2001, these ideological references lost much of their purchase.[10] Kabila's son Joseph succeeded him as

president. At just thirty years of age, he was one of the world's youngest heads of state. Less constrained than his father by the postcolonial political history of the Congo, Joseph reconciled with former Mobutu supporters, further empowered members of his extended Katangese family, sought the guidance of the so-called international community, and did not hesitate to marginalize leftist figures who had worked with Laurent.[11] In 2006, the young Kabila began to articulate his vision for the Congo as that of a "revolution of modernity" and billboards around Kinshasa advertised the cinq chantiers, the so-called construction sites that symbolized the state's voluntarism in developing infrastructures, employment, education, water and electricity, and health.[12] Memory was absent from the spectral rhetoric of this campaign.[13] It still became a chantier in its own right for the former student activists who had opposed Mobutu and worked with the old Kabila before his assassination. Having lost access to the presidency, they were invested in restoring the polarization between the left and the right that had structured their approach to politics for years but that now seemed illegible. By deploying memories of their activist past in newspaper columns, televised debates, and interviews with a young historian, they strategically reasserted their relevance in the present.

These former activists claimed fidelity to the ideals of their youth. They continued to debate ideas, write manifestos, and fight over strategy and leadership, just as they had in their student years. However, not all former students related to the past in this way. Some were prone to criticizing the shortcomings of the student movement. They considered that their generation had failed. In the words of the late Richard Mugaruka, a charismatic Catholic priest and university professor, the educated elite trained in the 1960s had taken for granted the symbolic and financial rewards of university education: he labeled them "the generation of the three keys," students who had expected to receive keys to a car, a house, and an office directly upon graduation. Despite their nationalist and revolutionary rhetoric, they served themselves, not the people, Mugaruka claimed.[14]

Self-criticisms denouncing these selfish aspirations were not new. For instance, a book written by a student activist in 1964 already opened with a preface that depicted the Congolese educated elite as "an amorphous mass of would-be bourgeois without any ideal or courage."[15] Yet, during my conversations with former activists, nostalgia was often more prevalent than lament. Many people, like Mayala, remembered the post-independence years as a golden age, when towering heroes that compared to Marx dominated African politics. Since then, nobody had managed to fill the shoes of these Lumumbas and Nkrumahs. Beyond questions of leadership, a whole

collective relationship to politics was lost. "Our children have become too focused on money," one of Mayala's colleagues commented during my visit at the UNTC—redirecting, toward the youth, a criticism first leveled at his own generation.[16]

Reverberations, Refractions, Resonances

Unlike Accra, Brazzaville, or Dar es Salaam, Kinshasa was not a state-sanctioned hub of revolutionary politics in the 1960s.[17] In the Congo, the left existed at the margins of the state, in semiclandestine reading groups, student clubs, and radical labor circles. One interviewee advised me to change my research focus and look at the history of the right, since the left had never been a real thing in the Congo.[18] This comment came with a certain dose of provocation. It also evoked the difficulty involved in determining the essence of the left. Initially associated with the Belgian polarization between Christian conservatives and anticlerical liberals, the left made its appearance in the Congo in the mid-1950s. By the time of independence, it came to index radical anti-imperialism and served as an important point of reference throughout the 1960s. Still, references to the left always remained overshadowed by the rhetoric of nationalism. Left politics did not manage to become institutionalized in practice, nor did they generate any authoritative memories. They nonetheless opened a space of possibilities and carried a strong sense of worldedness that continued to resonate among former activists of the 1960s. This generation had performed key mediations between the Congo and the world. Moving between rural boarding schools and urban spaces, universities in the Congo and abroad, classrooms and rebellion fronts, these students occupied interfaces of refraction that redirected political waves of great magnitude. Even after the Cold War bore its full weight on the Congo, student activists refused to accept the closing of the temporal horizon of radical emancipation that the struggle for independence had opened. This spatial and temporal imagination continued to reverberate as I was researching this book. Despite the tumultuous events of the past few decades, the wars of the 1990s and the 2000s, Congolese still related intensely to the first years of independence as an unfinished business. *Students of the World* engages with this memory work and situates the 1960s within a broader resonance chamber defined by struggles for emancipation and belonging of a longer duration. Bringing together archival materials and life stories, the political and the intellectual, events and the everyday, modes of being and modes of thinking, self-representations and outside constructions, I

strive to embrace historical complexities and move away from simplistic accounts that fail to problematize Congolese experiences of violence and oppression. While the students who are at the center of the book have often been overlooked in these accounts, their engagement with the question of the world in the age of decolonization offers a precious vantage from which to view our global present and its subaltern, insurgent cosmopolitanisms.[19]

Map of the Congo, ca. 1964. The gray areas represent the territories directly affected by the Mulele and Simba rebellions.

In 1966, the Mobutu regime decided to rename most urban centers in the Congo, abolishing old colonial-sounding toponyms and replacing them with more authentic names. The book uses the old colonial names when referring to the pre-1966 period and the current names when referring to the period after the change.

The relevant city names are as follows:

Leopoldville	Kinshasa
Elisabethville	Lubumbashi
Stanleyville	Kisangani
Coquilhatville	Mbandaka
Jadotville	Likasi
Costermansville	Bukavu
Port Franqui	Ilebo
Luluabourg	Kananga
Bakwanga	Mbuji-Mayi

My first debts of gratitude are to the many people who shared their stories about the Congolese student movement of the 1960s with me. I thank all of them for their time, hospitality, and generosity. Many of their names appear in the pages of this book. Some I must also acknowledge here individually, as their trust and clairvoyance had an unparalleled impact on my work. In Liège, years before I embarked on this project, Ambroise Kalabela Misombo planted the first seeds that would lead me to research this history. Ambroise's unflinching loyalty to the ideals of his youth made clear to me the unquestionable importance to document the trajectory of his generation of Congolese left cosmopolitans. My uncle, Grégoire Mukengeshayi, belonged to this generation as well. Hearing him speak about the many paths he traveled in the 1960s, from Tshikapa to Berlin via Poznan, was another early source of inspiration. In Kinshasa, Yoka Lye Mudaba and Isidore Kabongo were two absolute founts of knowledge, always welcoming, always witty. Jean-Baptiste Sondji, Guy Yangu, and the late Célestin Kabuya never tired of my requests to guide me through the history of their student cell at Lovanium University, including during a memorable trip to the infamous Luzumu prison where they had been detained for two years in the early 1970s. Ernest Wamba dia Wamba again and again challenged me to ask better questions. I am humbled that he believed so much in my work and saddened that he will not be able to see this book in print. Jean-Baptiste Mulemba, Elisabeth Mweya, Antoinette Da Silva, Paul Inongo,

Aubert Mukendi, Valérien Milingo, and Mukendi Wa Nsanga were storytellers extraordinaire whose voices will long resonate with me.

Colleagues at the University of Kinshasa, the University of Lubumbashi, and the University of Kisangani—including several who had been part of the student movement themselves—made fieldwork possible, while offering precious guidance and feedback. I want to thank in particular Marie-Madeline Mwifi, Kiangu Sindani, the late Jacob Sabakinu, Noël Obotela, Jean-Marie Mutamba, Elikia M'Bokolo, Isidore Ndwayel, Donatien Dibwe, and Léon Tsambu. Many foreign faculty and researchers who had worked in Congolese academia in the early postcolonial era also answered my questions and critiqued early findings. I am especially grateful to Johannes Fabian, Bogumil Jewsiewicki, Martin Klein, Herbert Weiss, Crawford Young, Jan Vansina, and Tamar Golan for their generous engagement with my work.

The idea for this project first emerged in 2004, during a semester I spent as an exchange student in New York. Fred Cooper and Ann Stoler provided the best introduction to North American graduate education; both also connected me with Nancy Hunt. Reading *A Colonial Lexicon* had changed my perception of the possibilities of historical writing, and when Nancy invited me to study with her as a doctoral student at the University of Michigan, I was ecstatic. An exceptional mentor and constant source of inspiration, Nancy made this work and many other adventures possible. At Michigan, I am also grateful for the insightful mentorship of the members of my dissertation committee: Kelly Askew, Butch Ware, and Geoff Eley. Mbala Nkanga connected me to key interlocutors early on. And even though they are too many to list here, I am very thankful to all the faculty and fellow graduate students who shared ideas, feedback, and constructive criticisms of my work. Absolutely essential in Ann Arbor was the friendship of Maxime Foerster, Bertrand Metton, Tasha Rijke-Epstein, Isabelle de Rezende, Kai Mishuris, Candice Hamelin, Monique Johnson, Frieda Ekotto, and Monica Patterson. Fernando Arenas was another dear friend. His optimism and kindness mattered so much. How I wish he could read these few words of gratitude.

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A large part of the research for this book dates from my time at Michigan. Generous funding from several entities within the university—the Eisenberg Institute for Historical Studies, the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, the Rackham School of Graduate Studies, the Institute for the Humanities, and the African Studies Center—as well as from the Social Science Research Council, the Spencer Foundation, the Council on Library and Information Resources, Vocatio, and the National History Center allowed me to conduct archival and oral history research in multiple locations in Europe, Africa, and the United States. Further support from NYU Abu Dhabi, as well as a grant from the Friends of the University of Wisconsin Libraries, made possible key follow-up research stays in more recent years.

Kinshasa was the most central location in my research. My debts of gratitude there are numerous. Out of the many friends and family members who cared for me in the city, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge

Doodoo Lanza, Kaniki Kasongo, Sapin Makengele, Triphe Kialungila, Tcheques Bukasa, Théophile Kanyinda, Hervé Ngandu, Thomas Lumbi, Dorothée Clette, Didier de Lannoy, Agnès Bandimbi and her children, and my dear cousin John Tshitoko Malele. In Lubumbashi, I thank Emilie Zola, the late Georgette Borremans, as well as Maman Suzanne and her children. Of the various destinations where this work took me, I also have to mention Berlin. I am extremely thankful for Daniel Tödt's and Andandita Bajpai's invitations to visit the city as a guest researcher, respectively at Humboldt in 2011 and the Zentrum Modern Orient in 2017. Anandita and Daniel, together with Peter Lambrechts, Candice Hamelin, Koen Claerhout, Farah Barakat, Abdoulaye Sounaye, and the Mukengeshay and Kabasela families helped me move this project along in critical ways, both in Berlin and beyond.

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Two chapters of the book expand on already published works: a shorter version of chapter 4 appeared as "The Political Life of the Dead Lumumba: Cold War Histories and the Congolese Student Left," *Africa* 89, no. S1 (2019): 15–39, and the second part of chapter 7 is a revised version of "Making a 'Second Vietnam': The Congolese Revolution and Its Global Connections in the 1960s," in *Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties*, ed. Chen Jian, Martin Klimke, Masha Kirasirova, Mary Nolan, Marilyn Young, and Joanna Waley-Cohen (New York: Routledge, 2018), 106–18.

My mother belongs to the generation of the students I write about in this book. Very few Congolese women of this generation were allowed to access university education, and she was not one of them. However, as I finally reach the end of this long research project, I realize how much her struggle for survival has inspired much of what I have done. I am so thankful to her, to my father, and to my siblings, François, Luc, and Amalia, for their support, trust, and understanding. I also warmly thank Alice, Elise, Yvan, and Ghislaine Mouton for welcoming me in their family. I stayed with Yvan and Ghislaine many times during the writing of this book, and I so much appreciate how they always went out of their way to allow me to do my work. Many close friends similarly cared and helped: thank you, Philippe, Roland, Julien, Laurent, Nadia, Didier, Nicolas, François S., and François C. Without Amélie, there would be no book. An exigent writer, she has been a major source of inspiration. She read through many drafts cheered me up through difficult times and kept me going. Her love makes it all more beautiful.

INTRODUCTION

THE SCHOOL OF THE WORLD

The radical contemporaneity of mankind is a project.

Fabian, *Time and the Other*, xi

Hubert and Muriel Humphrey spent the first night of 1968 waltzing on a dance floor in Liberia. The US vice president and his wife were attending a ball in Monrovia for the inauguration of President William Tubman's sixth term in office. Liberia was the first stop on a trip that took the Humphreys to eight other countries across Africa. The tour was meant to strengthen US positions in the disputed Cold War battleground. At the beginning of an electoral year, the Johnson administration was also willing to impress voters at home that it supported independent nations in Africa.[1] Humphrey, well versed in this kind of political salesmanship, had been on so many missions to defend the Great Society that one journalist described him as "the most travelled presidential backstop in history."[2] Jet lag may have been an inconvenience on these trips but more so the placard-bearing opponents to the Vietnam War whom Humphrey encountered wherever he set foot, from France to New Zealand.[3] In Africa, too, activists portrayed this "Happy Warrior" of American liberalism as the war criminal "Himmler Humphrey."[4] Although the vice president asserted that "Vietnam did not absorb more than 30 minutes" of his two-week tour, members of his delegation acknowledged that the war "came up everywhere."[5]

Vietnam was certainly on people's mind in Kinshasa, the fourth stop on the tour. Barely an hour after Air Force Two landed in the Congolese capital, two hundred students from the University of Lovanium blocked Humphrey's motorcade as it went from the airport to General Joseph Mobutu's presidential compound. The protesters used familiar elements from the grammar of international solidarity with Vietnam: they burned an American flag, pelted eggs at the delegation, chanted pro-Vietminh slogans.[6] But the protest's location added a further layer of meaning. The students gathered in front of a monument that commemorated Patrice Lumumba, the hero of Congolese independence, after hearing a rumor that Humphrey would stop there briefly. To them, this visit was simply unfathomable: had not the United States ruthlessly undermined Lumumba when he served as prime minister? Had not the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) played a prominent role in the events that led to his assassination on January 17, 1961? How could Humphrey salute Lumumba's memory in these circumstances?[7] The students felt compelled to stand up to this "shameless hypocrisy" and "show [their] hatred of American foreign policy to the world."[8] That so many "democratic and progressive movements around the world unabashedly opposed American imperialism's criminal actions in Vietnam" made their action against Humphrey an "internationalist duty."[9] By bringing Lumumba and Ho Chi Minh together, the students placed Kinshasa and Saigon as two interconnected dots on a map of anti-imperialist resistance. Imagining themselves as a part of a transnational political community, they found the resolve to brave police repression when nobody else in Kinshasa was daring to challenge the Mobutu regime.

The protest at the Lumumba monument lasted only a few minutes. Soldiers quickly freed the US delegation, using their rifle butts to hit students in the face before hauling them off to jail.[10] Meanwhile, Humphrey reached the presidential compound for his meeting with Mobutu. The general intended to use the visit to plead for an increase in the US support to his military.[11] He may have believed that his guest's unpleasant encounter with the rebellious mindset of Congolese students contained a silver lining, as his main argument in support of his request for US money and equipment was that communist subversion was growing in the Congo. Yet, Mobutu was anxious to have Humphrey leave with a good impression of Kinshasa. At a dinner later that day, he offered Muriel Humphrey an eight-carat, uncut diamond, reportedly to make up for the tomatoes that students had thrown at her husband.[12] His gift to Hubert was a leopard-skin hat, headwear associated with Lumumba and his radical supporters, which Mobutu had appropriated to claim the revolutionary bona fides of his regime.[13]

Figure I.1 "At the stopover in Kinshasa for refueling. With the vice president [Hubert Humphrey] is the minister of the interior Etienne Tshisekedi." Photographer unknown, January 9, 1968 (source: Minnesota Historical Society, Hubert Humphrey Papers).

Cosmopolitan Horizons

This book traces the history of the Congolese student movement from its roots in the Belgian colonial era to its confrontation with the state in Mobutu's post-colony. Students formed only a small minority during this period, but they occupied a central position, one situated at the crossroads of development and nation building. More than any other group, they lived the future-oriented sensibility of the time. Working in the margins of formal politics, they outlined problems, reformulated issues, and gave criticisms. After the coup that brought Mobutu to power in 1965, the new regime initially attempted to co-opt the students' ideas and energies. Failing to win their complete loyalty, Mobutu resorted to violence. In 1969, soldiers killed dozens of students during a street rally in Kinshasa. Then, two years later, scores of their peers were compulsorily drafted into the military as a collective punishment.

This repression did not totally eradicate the student protests. However, it did give way to a "catastrophic loss of political ideals."[14] What was lost in the Congolese case was not futurity and the idea that time might bring

radical change. Indeed, after Mobutu's attack on the students, revolutionary movements became more numerous, if increasingly fractioned. What was lost was the cosmopolitan edge that authorized students to act as mediators between the Congo and the world.

Humphrey was a minor figure in the trajectory of antagonism between the students and the state. Yet, his visit emblematized the importance of spatial considerations in the political psyche of the 1960s. Students mattered in the politics of independence in postcolonial Congo thanks to the mediations they performed and not due to their numbers.[15] Their geographical imagination challenged colonial assignations. Defending Lumumba's memory and expressing solidarity with Vietnam, students projected themselves beyond the political architecture bequeathed to the Congolese at the time of independence: they acted neither as ethnic subjects nor as moderate Congolese patriots but as African nationalists and third world internationalists who saw the Congo as open to many revolutionary winds.

Decolonization had increased the valence of youth as a political category throughout the world.[16] Governments in "young countries" promoted visions of their young citizens as preeminent makers of the nation.[17] State schemes to mobilize the youth also created conditions for dissent. In the Congo as in several other African countries, university students held far higher academic qualifications than those of most people in power, credentials they used to defend their own views and oppose the political establishment.[18]

Their mobility, more than anything else, set young educated Congolese apart in their society. Students were socialized in institutions that claimed the borderlessness of knowledge and science. Scholarships to travel and study abroad were easily attainable. Many young Congolese were also prolific letter writers, able to expand the space of their activism through international postal exchanges. The capacity to circulate across different intellectual, political, and social worlds, as well as the books they read, the clothes they wore, the music they listened to, and the worldviews they professed—all this brought distant horizons closer. These diverse cosmopolitan dispositions allowed students to shape, contest, and redefine the meaning of decolonization.[19]

The cosmopolitanism of Congolese students hinged on feelings of generational distinction.[20] This cosmopolitanism was also thoroughly gendered in accordance with a normative masculinity that constrained how the few women able to access university education could participate in campus politics. The colonial system had showed little interest in female

education, and high schools only began graduating young women with qualifications for university entrance well after independence. This imbalance reflected the type of subjects that Belgians had sought to engender when they established the first Congolese universities at the end of the colonial period: mobile, rational, and efficient collaborators and technicians who would modernize the Congo and foster a society marked by middle-class values. In Belgian colonial eyes, only males could be candidates for such positions.[21] Many Congolese internalized this view, and male students used colonial gender norms to their own advantage. They were attached to an image of themselves that supported their pretensions to serve as a political and social avant-garde.[22] Their perception of a certain masculine ethos as consubstantial with respectability and expertise created frictions after women gained more prominence on campuses at the end of the 1960s, but it was deeply ingrained.[23]

In the eyes of many, being a student meant being a man of the world. This logic of distinction was self-limiting at times, but claims to worldliness helped students build a counterhegemonic movement against the power of the state. Mobutu sought to legitimize his rule by imposing a specific understanding of national identity and cultural authenticity. He could only resent the authority and autonomy that students gained by evading his state-sanctioned epistemologies and aesthetics.[24]

The Congo Crisis, Sartre, Senghor, and the Politics of Distance

When they protested against Humphrey's visit, Congolese students expressed their strong sensitivity to external political determinations. As Kwame Nkrumah argued when he exposed the predicament of neocolonialism in Africa, the Congo offered the clearest example of how economic, military, and political interference from foreign corporations and governments could weaken state sovereignty in recently decolonized countries.[25] These sorts of interference immediately followed the Congo's celebration of its independence on June 30, 1960. Within a few days, the country turned into a hotspot in the Cold War. Soon the whole world found itself there. The trigger was a mutiny in the army at the beginning of July. Belgium responded by unilaterally dispatching paratroopers to contain the mutiny, and Lumumba then broke diplomatic ties with the former colonial power. After the province of Katanga seceded from the central state with financial backing from Belgian mining interests, the Soviet Union offered Lumumba its support. Around the same time, the United Nations voted to send a major civilian and military mission, with contingents from

countries including India, Ghana, Malaya, and Sweden. Meanwhile, envoys from anti-colonial movements in Algeria and Cameroon, diplomats from China and the United Arab Republic, and spies from Czechoslovakia, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States all bustled about behind the scenes with competing agendas.[26]

The Congo crisis "became the ultimate litmus test for where one stood in the polarized global order of the early 1960s"; it crystallized existing tensions between the Afro-Asian bloc at the United Nations and the Western countries that dominated the liberal internationalist postwar order.[27] Events in Leopoldville or Elisabethville reverberated far and wide. A whole generation of activists, ranging from Malcolm X to Rudi Dutschke, turned toward the Congo to understand the stakes of "a world suspended in time," one in which "race, immigration, decolonization, [and] international politics . . . were all in a state of flux."[28]

Although the international echoes of the Congo crisis are well known, historians of the Cold War have paid little attention to what people in the Congo themselves thought, said, or made of this moment of intense suffering and turbulence. Not much has been written about how the Congolese, and students in particular, engaged reflexively with the internationalization brought by the tumultuous transition to self-rule. Decolonization was a political drama of worldwide magnitude, and Congolese students were deeply aware of the vital need to situate themselves in relation to a multitude of distant interlocutors.

This engagement with the world took shifting forms, but it encouraged a trajectory of radicalization, as students progressively moved from a position of reformism to revolutionary nationalism and militant Marxism. However, different worldviews always coexisted at any given time. In the last years of the colonial regime, when most young educated Congolese were still tuning into the African programs on the Brussels-based *La Voix de l'Amitié*, more than a few were already listening to Radio Cairo and dreaming of Afro-Asian liberation.[29] Conversely, after the left and a rhetoric of revolution became hegemonic in the mid-1960s, some students remained immune to the attraction of Che Guevara or Mao Zedong. This was the case of Dieudonné Kadima Nzuji. Although he joined Lovanium around the time of Humphrey's visit to Kinshasa, Nzuji did not take part in the protest at the Lumumba monument. He considered himself apolitical, distrusted collective action, and had little patience for doctrinaire statements. Yet, he felt attuned to the philosophical and intellectual debates of the time. As a writer of poetry, he was particularly receptive to Negritude, the Pan-African literary movement that was begun by African

and Caribbean students in 1930s Paris. When the president of Senegal and Negritude veteran Léopold Sédar Senghor visited Lovanium on January 17, 1969 (a date that incidentally coincided with the eighth anniversary of Lumumba's assassination), Nzuji was absolutely thrilled.[30] He did not care that campus activists had called to boycott Senghor because of his brutal repression of the student movement of May 1968 in Dakar.[31] Had these activists caught Nzuji, they may well have roughed him up. But he nonetheless decided to attend the speech that Senghor gave at Lovanium.[32] The Senegalese president's allocution presented poetry as a politically engaged art, and Negritude as "the encounter of giving and taking," a movement that fully belonged to the twentieth-century and the "age of the universal." True culture, Senghor noted, was always about "rooting and uprooting" and Negritude poetry productively confronted African aesthetics with European forms.[33]

Senghor's mantra was the liberation of humankind from all forms of alienation.[34] He spoke to an important aspect of the student psyche—an existentialist stream that claimed a perfect correspondence between Africanity and universality. If solidarity with Vietnam brought Congolese students together in chorus with a global movement of refusal, Senghor provided another way of opposing imperial frameworks poetically and politically.[35] From the Bandung Conference to the Tricontinental, a shared desire to escape and transcend geopolitical determinisms nurtured new imaginary futures and encouraged dissident cartographies.[36] On Congolese university campuses, this consciousness of refusal animated poets and activists alike. Although a literary tradition like Negritude did not translate into a direct critique of power, it fostered critical reflections about cultural identity and the politics of knowledge. University students occupied the upper level of a hierarchical system that had been designed by the colonizers. They struggled with the contradictions of this alien educational system, while remaining intimately committed to the ideal of universalism.[37] Negritude, but also African theology, Afro-centrist Egyptology, and French existentialism, allowed them to reconcile the colonial essence of higher education with their ambition to decolonize Congolese culture, revive communal forms and patterns, and stand against the racism and condescension of white professors.[38]

These students experienced politics not as disjunctive but rather as cumulative. Take Anastase Nzeza. In 1968, he headed Lovanium's student government together with his friend Hubert Tshimpumpu. Both men belonged to the Catholic student association Pax Romana, sometimes presented as the rightist bastion on campus. Yet, Nzeza and Tshimpumpu

were no less outraged than their Marxist peers when they heard about Humphrey's possible stopover at the Lumumba monument. In 2010, when I asked Nzeza what led to the spirit of revolt that expressed itself in the protest against the US vice president, he answered by recalling a journey he and Tshimpumpu had undertaken to attend the World Congress for the Lay Apostolate in Rome in 1968. This trip "sharpened our consciousness," Nzeza recalled. On their way back to Kinshasa, the two students stopped off in Brussels, where they collected a lot of information about Vietnam. During their visit to Belgium, they attended a talk about the war by Jean-Paul Sartre. This was a major event for them and it reinforced their belief that "the Americans were imperialists that regimented the world, making war in Vietnam and supporting Mobutu."[39]

Many paths—even trips to Catholic youth congresses—led to Sartre in the global 1960s.[40] Nzeza's anecdote also attests to a porosity between social Catholicism and anti-war activism at Lovanium. Regardless of the various political orientations of the students, a shared structure of feeling emerged when they drank from the words of a famous philosopher of engagement, crossed a picket line to listen to a Negritude poet, or put their bodies on the line to stop a visiting American dignitary's convoy. Nzeza, Nzuji, and the protesters at the Lumumba monument all sought to mediate the politics of distance. They all related to decolonization as an unfinished project. And they all cultivated an ability to transcend the isolation of history and geography—that is, a specific worldedness.[41]

Sixties Histories and the Question of the World

In his report to Lyndon B. Johnson about his stopover in Kinshasa, Humphrey only briefly mentions the protest at the Lumumba monument, calling it "a minor incident in which a small number of communist-organized students sought to embarrass the visit."[42] However, despite this reluctance to dignify students with too much attention, some of the people who traveled with Humphrey acknowledged that politicized young people were threatening the stability of the Mobutu regime. In the words of the Belgian-born diamond mogul Maurice Tempelsman, the member of Humphrey's delegation most informed about Congolese affairs, Mobutu's isolation from the "younger, more activist part of the population" was a problem to which the United States would need to carefully attend.[43] After further encounters with young protesters in other countries on the continent, Humphrey himself acknowledged the urgency of countering

radical ideas among the youth in Africa.[44] This preoccupation reappeared a few months later in a report submitted by the CIA to Johnson and his cabinet. Titled *Restless Youth*, the report provided elaborate descriptions of student politics in nineteen countries around the world. Four of these countries were in Africa (the Congo, Senegal, Ghana, and Ethiopia), showing the CIA's awareness that the continent's educated youth were contributing to the worldwide radicalization of student politics.[45]

Ironically, until quite recently, the scholarship on the 1960s failed to emulate the CIA's encompassing approach by ignoring student politics outside of Europe and North America. More historians are now acknowledging the role that African students at home and abroad played in the global 1960s.[46] This new body of research does justice to the perceptions of young West African expatriates in Paris who, in May 1968, talked of a continuity between colonial violence in their home countries and the police repression against street protests in the Latin Quarter.[47] Historians have also unearthed just how prominent African students were in the imaginations of foreign powers on both sides of the Iron Curtain, as all Cold War powers sought to cultivate relations with young educated Africans.[48] *Students of the World* builds on these new comparative and connected histories of the 1960s, but it approaches the global as a field of struggle and not as "a neutral framework for the addition of singular histories."[49]

Scholars should problematize, and not simply emulate, the expansive geographical scope of documents like *Restless Youth*. The report's comparative methodology was not without problems of its own. Even though its section on the Congo was unsurprisingly well informed on local student organizations, the report's authors trivialized the Congolese students, describing them as self-entitled contrarians who suffered from a "leader complex" and espoused "some sort of socialism or vague Marxism."[50] In general, *Restless Youth* reproduced the mechanistic language of modernization theory, reducing youth protests to a by-product of affluence that became more acute as countries progressed through the stages of economic growth. This view may have escaped the trap of paranoid anticommunism, but it was ideological and essentializing nonetheless.

A desire to celebrate simultaneity and shared political affects sometimes drives scholarship on student politics in the 1960s. However, accepting the "global" as a neutral descriptive category effectively depoliticizes what were highly disputed questions at the center of a hegemonic struggle. As emic categories, the "global" and its historical cognates helped a multiplicity

of insurgents to imagine new revolutionary futures. But the same terms also contributed to a "police conception of history" that aimed to contain the most radical potentialities of decolonization.[51] It is no accident that in parallel to operations that secretly channeled funds to anti-communist labor unions and student associations in the United States and around the world (including in the Congo), the CIA established a yearslong program of covert support to highbrow literary magazines in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, South Asia, and Latin America. These magazines, promoting the international circulation of literary works that were not seen as threatening American hegemony, created a fully engineered "experience of global simultaneity" that was meant to capture, transform, and neutralize the transnational imagination of Bandung and nonalignment.[52]

Congolese students initially responded rather positively to American attempts at projecting this tamed imagination of global connections. Later, many students related to radical projects that envisioned world politics as unabashedly revolutionary and antisystemic.[53] The main point, though, is that these students were world makers at a time when the question of the world was highly debated.[54] Cold War politics tangibly inscribed the Congo within maps of oppression and resistance. But the international affinities, lineages, and trajectories that defined student politics were never a given. They had to be made and imagined.[55] At the beginning of the 1960s, young Congolese denounced dictatorships in Latin America that were "supported by US dollars and US tanks, exactly as in our country."[56] Soon, they "worr[ied] about a possible Vietnamization of the Congo."[57] And when they stood in front of the Lumumba monument in January 1968, they challenged dominant geographical and historical perspectives. To Humphrey's US-centered one-worldedness, they opposed their own "global making politics."[58] Protesting brought them closer to insurgents from around the world, and this proximity, in turn, strengthened their determination to refuse the world as it was.

Students of the World analyzes how connections with distant peers—real and imagined—increased young Congolese's room for maneuver. Yet, it refuses to reify any local-global dyad, for this binary erases students' experience of the relative, discontinuous, and serendipitous nature of political space.[59] The activists and intellectuals discussed here did not simply import, adapt, and translate, nor did they just invent. They compared, juxtaposed, and also claimed their belonging in moving, overlapping, and unbounded geographies of struggle.

Politics as Pedagogy

The global transactions of Congolese students are not unique, but the timing of their movement is. Selected colonial subjects of the French and British Empires migrated to London and Paris as students and turned these cities into sites of anti-imperialist activism already before World War II.[60] By contrast, very few Congolese were allowed to travel internationally and virtually none studied at university level until the 1950s. This specific situation can be explained by an obsessive policy of ideological containment. The nervous state—Nancy Hunt's powerful metonym for Belgian colonialism's fixation on securitization—worried much about Marxist and Garveyist contaminations.[61] Colonial administrators scrutinized the movement of ideas and people, and they worked together with missionaries and private conglomerates to maintain the colonized within social and political enclosures.[62] The British scholar Thomas Hodgkin called this tropism the Platonism of Belgian colonialism: the belief that "the Congo can avoid corruption and revolution if it is insulated from the outside world."[63]

Not until 1952 did the colonial authorities first allow a young Congolese man to attend a university in Belgium. The man's name was Thomas Kanza and he joined the University of Louvain as a student in psychology.[64] By that time, Senghor, who had graduated from the Sorbonne two decades earlier, was serving his second term as member of the French National Assembly; Kwame Nkrumah, who had studied at the University of Pennsylvania and the London School of Economics in the 1940s, was overseeing the Gold Coast's transition toward self-government; and established African student organizations were active in both the French and British Empires.[65]

Two years after Kanza moved to the metropole to pursue his education, the Catholic Church and professors from the University of Louvain opened the first university in the Congo. Lovanium propelled the colony into a new time. Until then, the so-called évolués, the colonized elite, all occupied subaltern clerical jobs.[66] University education led students (sometimes the children of these évolués) to dream bigger. Curriculums in medicine, law, mathematics, economics, sciences, and the humanities prepared them for positions that did not yet exist. At the same time, higher education made the inner contradictions of late Belgian colonialism even more apparent. It promised forms of self-government that the colonial system was structurally unable to deliver. Students were not willing to wait for the realization of racial equality and their frustration led them toward anti-colonial politics.[67]

Independence was no longer a distant aspiration when students emerged as a distinct group in Congolese society. Instead, it was a tangible reality that produced state formations, bureaucracies, liberation struggles, new possibilities and urgent challenges.[68] Whereas colonial humanism, Bolshevism, or surrealism may have politicized earlier generations of students in West Africa, these Congolese students first and foremost belonged to the era of decolonization. This was a time when education took an unforeseen prominence throughout Africa. In the Congo, the Catholic Church continued to expand its network of schools and by the mid-1960s had formed the fourth largest Christian school system in the world.[69] The government, international organizations, and foreign foundations also invested actively in schooling, allocating many of their resources to secondary and higher education. University student numbers grew from a few hundred in the late 1950s to more than ten thousand a decade later. More young Congolese could imagine themselves as university students, and this transformed collective perceptions of the future.

From the very beginning, the students had seen well beyond colonial reformers' horizon of semi-emancipation, but they had few models to emulate in attempting to articulate their own vision. Stepping onto university campuses in the mid-1950s, these students entered virgin territories that significantly differed from other spaces of socialization for the colonized elites. No established traditions were directly available to help them figure out their place in the "world of tomorrow."[70] This does not mean that they felt stuck in "the space between the no longer and the not yet" that Simon Gikandi has identified as characteristic of Africa's age of decolonization.[71] Neither were they fully exposed to the vicissitudes of the world, as Jan Vansina writes that Equatorial Africans were in the mid-twentieth century.[72] Some students felt deeply connected to the past. They reappropriated Congolese cultural traditions through the lens of Africanism.[73] Many others experienced the present as a moment of germination. They sometimes groped and fumbled, but they were not lost. Education meant the development of individual and collective potentialities, and the students' ability to speak with authority about the future gave them fortitude. They found composure not only by mining the past but also by looking ahead and sideways.

Young Congolese learned about the world through official and hidden school curricula, as well as through various encounters outside of formal institutions. For many, politics appeared as an avenue for self-education. "We were in the school of the world," Kalixte Mukendi Wa Nsanga told me during an interview.[74] As a young man, Wa Nsanga found opportuni-

ties to learn as much at political rallies as in libraries. He studied first at Lovanium before moving to Germany, where he was part of a clandestine Maoist organization (see interlude III and chapter 7). At the time, he often deplored that many of his fellow students professed revolutionary ideas but actually dreamed of inclusion in the ruling class. When he met with Chinese or Albanian diplomats, he warned them about the fake radicals within the Congolese student diaspora.[75] He believed that some students had a narcissistic relation to radical politics and were more content to use theoretical references to impress others than to advance the struggle. This criticism pointed to a tension at the core of the students' political identity: on the one hand, many students aimed to serve the oppressed; on the other hand, their aspirations, the quality of the food they were served at university restaurants, the comfort of their campus bedrooms, their suits and ties, and the relative generosity of their state scholarships distanced them from the rest of the population. Yet, their influence—their capacity to speak for the people and be heard by the state—depended on these material conditions and on their cosmopolitan distinction as a mobile, educated, and politicized elite.

Postal Correspondences and Extraversion

Massive investment in higher education in the 1960s ushered in a new era in knowledge production around the world. Writing about South Asia, Kris Manjpara has talked of the decade as a time of "lettered decolonization," one that witnessed the emergence of postcolonial humanities.[76] In the Congo as well, decolonization produced a new literature and generated a critical discourse that challenged established scholarly disciplines. The following three examples are illustrative: Valentin Mudimbe's theorization of the colonial library, George Nzongola's attention to popular resistance, and Gérard Buakasa's sociology of the invisible. All these projects grew from the intellectual conversations enabled by the expansion of Congolese academia and by these scholars' direct participation in student politics (respectively at Lovanium, the University of Louvain, and Davidson College in North Carolina).[77] *Students of the World* documents the institutional, social, and political milieu that engendered Congolese postcolonial letters. The book also approaches the Congo's lettered decolonization literally, by looking at postal correspondences that enabled the Congolese to secure symbolic and material support in their pursuit of education and politics.[78] Young Congolese wrote to a multiplicity of individuals and to groups ranging from the Belgian Communist Party to

the American Federation of Labor. They took part most enthusiastically in the transnational circulation of political affects that was facilitated by the context of decolonization, which they truly experienced in the way defined by Achille Mbembe as a process of "dis-enclosure of the world."[79] Correspondence, even more than formal education, produced students of the world.

A "way of manifesting oneself to oneself and to others," letter writing always combines introspection and exposure.[80] In this sense, letters constitute an ideal genre of historical sources for this book, which both builds on works that theorize Africa's position in the world and on studies that investigate the logics of African worlds.[81] Following Jean-François Bayart, some scholars have used the concept of extraversion to bring these two traditions together. In Bayart's words, political actors in Africa strategically "mobiliz[ed] resources derived from their (possibly unequal) relationship with the external environment," doing so to gain, reinforce, and challenge power within their own societies, thus showing that a "relationship with the rest of the world . . . is consubstantial with [the continent's] historical trajectory."[82] Bayart has argued that these strategies of extraversion have been constitutive of African societies for centuries, allowing Africans to make their own history despite the reality of an unequal inscription in the world economy that is age old. My approach departs from this longue durée optic. Although clear lines of continuity related to extraversion emerge in central Africa's history,[83] I unearth the specificity of a historical configuration and of a political generation. In this way, I am hoping for a far closer rendering of the historical experience of the students. When writing letters and otherwise engaging with distant interlocutors and imaginaries, they did not apply strategies from some existing playbook with the intent to reproduce the status quo. Rather, they experimented with a set of constraints and possibilities, their minds firmly fixated on the transformation of their immediate conditions and those of the world beyond.

Although Bayart's theorization of the "connection between the two spheres of the internal and the external" directly talks to a tension at the core of Congolese student politics in the 1960s, extraversion is an imperfect concept for use in the context of this study. Students themselves battled against the economic and intellectual extraversion of early postcolonial Africa. The Franco-Egyptian dependency theorist Samir Amin used the term in a 1967 book about capitalism in Ivory Coast that circulated widely among African students.[84] Later, the Beninese philosopher Paulin Hountondji (who taught in Congolese universities from 1970 to 1972) talked of extraversion as typical of the situation of a postcolonial genera-

tion who found itself captive to "an intellectual history centered elsewhere in the great industrial and scientific capitals."[85] Although students were aware that leveraging distant sources of support was a condition for political survival, many of them would also have identified with "the search for ourselves," the attempt to place Africa "at the center of its own history" that Hountondji posited as the opposite of extraversion.[86]

The Congolese international outgoing mail substantiates the participation of students and other young letter writers in an "anti-imperialist community of sentiment."[87] On a par with informal discussion circles and study groups, periodicals, dancing bars, and the radio, international correspondence also contributed to the construction of politicized publics in Congolese urban centers.[88] But even more importantly, these letters served as tools in the mediation of distance. As such, they testify to the contingent and nearly experimental ways in which the Congolese experienced the opening-up that originated with decolonization. Independence came with promises of equality, dignity, and better lives, while placing the Congo at the center of a world fractured by antagonistic forces and passions. This configuration explains how a whole generation of young educated Congolese came to relate intimately to the Sartrean notion of authenticity and the urgency to escape from the alienation of the colonial mindset.[89] They had to come to terms both with the fact that political sovereignty produced new relations of dependency and that the unfinished struggle for liberation demanded the careful appropriation of distant references and foreign vocabularies. In the act of correspondence, they negotiated the ambiguities and paradoxes inherent in the intense internationalization of the decolonization era.[90]

The Structure of the Book

Students of the World is not strictly speaking a social or intellectual history of student politics. By bringing together biographies, diverse archival fragments, and an attention to memory work, the book captures the history of a particular disposition, of a mode of knowing and being in and of the world that responded to new openings in an era of independence. As Adom Getachew recently reminded, anti-colonial nationalism carried global "revolutionary implications" as "a project of reordering the world" that frontally clashed with the "world-constituting force" of Western imperialism.[91] As thinkers and political actors, students paid attention to the reconfiguration of forms of sovereignty and statehood in the aftermath of empire, and they weighed in on debates about the institutional remaking

of the international order. However, they did not intervene in these debates from the position of statesmen or scholars. Accordingly, in this book, I approach decolonization and world-making less as normative problems in political theory and more as intersubjective processes that transformed perceptions of selves and others.[92] The politics of the students was rooted in the specific juncture they occupied in Congolese society as the country's educated youth and in the generational and cognitive field of experience that this juncture created. Their intellectual skills allowed them to look at the international sphere as a space of connections in which they could insert themselves.[93] Doing so, they assembled a plurality of worlds together.[94] Their labor of imagination and mediation forms the core of this study.

Based on a broad and contrasting corpus of sources, the book's chapters focus alternatingly on institutional micropolitics, activism, and the many routes traveled by students. Conducting research in private and public archival repositories in the Congo, as well as in Albania, Belgium, Britain, Congo-Brazzaville, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States, I browsed through the archives of various schools and universities, delved into papers by former activists and militant publications, as well as documents from political parties, labor organizations, foreign governments, and international institutions. Ethnographic research and conversations that lasted over many years with several dozen former students also provided me with the material to retrace individual trajectories and better understand the singularity of the global 1960s in the lives of this generation of educated Congolese. Many of these former students—whom I met in Kinshasa, Kisangani, Lubumbashi, Dar es Salaam, Nouakchott, Abu Dhabi, Berlin, Brussels, Paris, Bethesda, and Montreal—opened their libraries and shared their private papers with me. They also often told me about personal documents on the student movement that they had lost or had been forced to destroy. These stories in themselves revealed much about the turbulent half century of independence in the Congo. Similarly, the wide geographical dispersion of my informants and of the archives I researched reflected the many connections that entered into the making of the postcolonial era.[95] They also spoke of histories forgotten and of others that could have been—various threads that *Students of the World* develops through a textured narrative that moves across conceptual, spatial, and temporal scales.

The book is composed of four chronologically ordered parts, each with a distinct physiognomy: the first part investigates the material and spatial production of political imagination through Congolese postal routines; the second studies campus micropolitics and student subjectivity; the third

provides a narrative of the Congo crisis centered on the educated youth; and the fourth turns toward the affects, passions, and dramas that marked the Congolese experience of the 1960s. Interludes present biographical refractions of Congolese world politics and introduce the sections.

Chapters 1 and 2 provide a historical background to the study by investigating the role of long-distance communications, and most notably postal exchanges, in shaping political imagination during the colonial period and at the very beginning of the independence era. As chapter 1 shows, the postal service enabled the literate Congolese to project themselves into the broader world in the first part of the twentieth century. The biography of Patrice Lumumba, who began his professional life as a postal employee, illustrates how postal communications enabled the colonized to circumvent the limitations of colonial education and learn about the world. Chapter 2 continues to investigate the postal articulation of politics but moves the chronological focus to the moment of decolonization in the late 1950s and early 1960s. International correspondence helped many letter writers navigate the chaos of the Congo crisis. Upon independence, more young Congolese were allowed to study abroad, which created communities of letter writers bearing new kinds of knowledge and new motivations for intervening in Congolese affairs.

The next part of the book explains how an education system meant to maintain the colonial status quo ended up producing the very activists that dismantled colonialism. Most Belgians feared that educated colonized would become too difficult to manage. Yet, in the 1930s and increasingly after World War II, Catholic seminaries and a few elite secondary schools introduced a highly select group of Congolese boys to the humanities and the sciences. As chapter 3 explains, the colonial state was continually pressured with demands for more schools. Indeed, many alumni from elite schools joined the ranks of the nascent anti-colonial movement. Chapter 4 explores this trajectory of politicization in one institution, Lovanium. Established in 1954 on a hill outside of Leopoldville, the university was set up to train a technical elite that would work hand in hand with the Belgians. Within the space of ten years, however, students had derailed this plan. By protesting against Lovanium's colonial character, they transposed global conversations about cultural alienation onto the scale of the campus.

The book's third cluster of chapters follows the evolution of student politics in the first half of the 1960s as the internationalization of the Congo crisis radicalized students. Lumumba's assassination in January 1961 was particularly instrumental. Although many students had been reserved about national politics before this pivotal event, the global outcry at Lumumba's

Figure I.2 "Black students demonstrate against Lumumba's slaying: Negro students with a sprinkling of white leftists demonstrated before the Belgian embassy in Paris this afternoon." Photo Keystone, February 1961 (source: author's collection).

death encouraged them to reflect on their place in the world (see figure I.2). Chapter 5 retraces the creation of the Congolese Student Union in 1961 and its emergence as a central force in Congolese nationalism in the months that followed. As chapters 6 and 7 explain, the subsequent Lumumbist armed rebellions further radicalized students. Some joined in the insurrections, often as its propagandists and advocates. And many among those who did not still responded to its revolutionary rhetoric and participated in moving student politics toward the left.

General Mobutu came to power in November 1965, when the Lumumbist insurrections were already starting to recede. The last two chapters in the book reveal how Mobutu used his relationship with the students to establish his regime and transform the Congo. Several student activists took up important positions within the new administration, bringing the radical rhetoric of the student movement to the center of power. As chapter 8 narrates, Mobutu's relationship with the students remained an asset for his regime until just before Humphrey's visit in January 1968. However, once the antagonisms became impossible to ignore, the general decided to suppress student discontent. Chapter 9 focuses on a cycle of repression

that lasted from 1969 to 1971, when the state used violence to terrorize the students into submission and undercut the cosmopolitan dispositions that had supported their rise as a political force after independence.

Continuing reverberations from the unfulfilled promises of decolonization make it important to seize the singularity of Africa's global 1960s. Decolonization mobilized dreams of liberation that have found other figurations through history. But it did so at a moment marked by mutations in the structures of imperialism, new left ideas, and friction between liberal internationalism and third world solidarity. Attending to the hesitations, contradictions, and experiments of the students in their quest for knowledge is a way to account for the unpredictable and the contingent, a way to look at decolonization not as the deployment of an idea but as a struggle for and over meaning(s).[96] As Ali Mazrui noted a long time ago, colonial education produced a class of culturally captive Africans, yet it also endowed them with the tools needed to fight this cultural alienation.[97] The quest to process the contradictions of education was crucial in the transition to independence. Decolonization was not a context for Congolese students; it was the world in which they lived. It was their horizon—in the sense of "something that circumscribes all the particulars of a given landscape, its visual part, but transcends it," making present both what is immediately visible and what is possible.[98]

Preface

1 François Mayala, personal interview, unrecorded, Kinshasa, August 10, 2010.
2 On the Congo and the figure of state collapse, see Trefon, *Reinventing Order*; Reno, "From State Collapse"; Autesserre, *Trouble with Congo*, 41–83.
3 See Yoka, *Kinshasa, signes de vie*, 24–28, 119–26; De Boeck and Plissart, *Tales of the Invisible City*, 75–138; De Boeck and Baloji, *Suturing the City*, 153–90.
4 See Davis, *Planet of Slums*.
5 François Mayala, personal interview, unrecorded, Kinshasa, December 3, 2010.
6 But see Mamdani, "African University," and Mbembe, "Decolonizing the University."
7 Humanitarianism is certainly neither foreign to ideology nor to the history of the third-worldist left. See Mann, *Empires to NGOs*, 165–242. Similarly, the "relation of the self to the world" that Liisa Malkki sees as a central motivation in the professional trajectory of today's aid workers is in keeping with the psychological determinations of Western third worldism in the 1960s. Malkki, *Need to Help*.
8 See Roessler and Verhoeven, *When Comrades*.
9 On Kinshasa's memoryscape in the late 1990s and 2000s, see Jewsiewicki, "Reading in Kinshasa."
10 As president, Laurent-Désiré Kabila had to compromise with the cluster of political forces that constituted the AFDL and with an international

context hostile to his revolutionary rhetoric. His claimed loyalty to the left nationalism of the 1960s coexisted with a pragmatic embrace of the social market economy. See, for instance, Mukendi and Kasonga, *Kabila*, 68–71.

11 See, for instance, De Villers, *Histoire du politique*, 165–89, and White, "Political Undead." The creation of the Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie (RCD) in 1998 was a first important moment in the dissolution of the ideological markers initially reasserted by the Kabila regime. A rebel group created to give a Congolese face to the Rwandese and Ugandan war against Kabila, the RCD gathered prominent Mobutists and radicals from the Congolese diaspora, including many former left student activists. See Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory*, 201–16.

12 See Pype, "Political Billboards."

13 See De Boeck, "Inhabiting Ocular Ground."

14 Richard Mugaruka, personal interview, unrecorded, Kinshasa, November 3, 2009. For detailed self-critiques of the role played by this generation in postcolonial Congolese politics, see the various interventions in Sabakinu, *Elites et démocratie*.

15 Jean-Claude Tammaire, preface to Dikonda, *Face à face*, 12. Dikonda's own trajectory illustrates the versatility he himself once denounced. Before positioning himself on the left in the mid-1960s, he had been closely associated with Albert Kalonji, an arch-opponent of the left nationalist orientations of then–prime minister Patrice Lumumba. Decades later, he cofounded a major party opposed to Mobutu and was forced into exile but ultimately changed allegiance and joined the Mobutu regime as a provincial governor after having been found guilty of misappropriating funds from his party. See Colette Braeckman, "Il avait été un des fondateurs de l'UDPS: Mort du Professeur Dikonda," *Le soir*, March 24, 1992, as well as Patrick Wenda Tshilumba, personal interview, recorded, Kisangani, October 11, 2010.

16 On "practical nostalgia" among older Kinois, see Pype, "Dancing to the Rhythm."

17 On Dar, see Ivaska, "Movement Youth."

18 Kabeya Tshikuku, personal interview, recorded, Kinshasa, August 3, 2010.

19 See De Sousa Santos, *Epistemologies of the South*.

Introduction

1 On the impact of the civil rights movement on Johnson's foreign policy in Africa, see Lerner, "Climbing off the Back Burner."

2 Simeon Booker, "Humphrey's African Safari: Nine Country Tour Reveals Store of Respect for US, but Smoldering Resentment in Some Places," *Ebony* 23, no. 5 (March 1968): 51.

3 See Solberg, *Hubert Humphrey*, 355–75; King, *History of New Zealand*, 548; Klimke, *The Other Alliance*, 155–56; Rikir, *Le P.C.B.*, 19; and Temkin, "American Internationalists."

4 "La tournée 'triomphale' de Himmler Humphrey," *Dipanda*, February 19, 1966, 5.

5 Benjamin Welles, "Humphrey, after African Tour, Seeking Changes in Policy," *New York Times*, January 13, 1968, 12.

6 "Humphrey's Car Blocked by Congolese," *International Herald Tribune*, January 5, 1968, 3. On broader reactions to the Vietnam War in Africa, see Hodgkinson and Melchiorre, "Vietnam War."

7 The 1975 US Senate's Church Committee provided many revelations about the CIA's part in destabilizing the Congo in 1960. See Kalb, *Congo Cables*. For more details on the events that led to Lumumba's assassination, see De Witte, *Assassination of Lumumba*, as well as Gerard and Kuklick, *Death in Congo*. What the students had probably not known was that Humphrey had defended Lumumba in 1961 against widespread allegations that the Congolese prime minister was a communist sympathizer. *Executive Sessions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Historical Series): Volume XIII, Eighty-Seventh Congress, First Session, 1961* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1984), 643–46.

8 UGEC-Lovanium, "A l'attention des camarades qui ont manifesté le 4 janvier 1968," 4 January 1968, Jules Gérard-Libois Papers, Africa Museum, Tervuren.

9 "L'UGEC et le nouveau régime," *Courrier africain* (*Travaux Africains du CRISP*) 77 (March 1968): 5.

10 H. A. Ryan, "Lovanium Student Participation in Anti-American Demonstration, U.S. Information Agency Memorandum of Conversation," January 9, 1968, Central Foreign Policy Files 1967–69 [hereafter CFP], Box 356, NARA. French sources argued that the Congolese government knew of the student protest ahead of time and informed local CIA agents (Vaïsse, *Documents diplomatiques: 1968*, 1:57).

11 When officials in Washington, DC had considered reducing their support for the Congolese army, the US ambassador in Kinshasa argued that air defense was absolutely necessary in the struggle against "anti-Western rebels" (George McMurtrie Godley, telegram to Dean Rusk, March 14, 1966, LOC, Averell Harriman Papers, Box 448). See also "Telegram from the Embassy in the Congo to the Department of State," January 5, 1968, reproduced in Howland et al., *Foreign Relations*, 823–26. On Mobutu's leveraging strategies, see Rich, "Manufacturing Sovereignty."

12 Kamitatu, *La grande mystification*, 238–89. In 1974, the *Washington Post* revealed that Muriel kept the diamond despite regulations mandating officials to return to the state any gifts worth more than US$100,000. Maxine Cheshire, "Humphrey Turns in Gift Gem," *Washington Post*, June 13, 1974, A1.

13 "Le vice-président des Etats-Unis à Kinshasa," *Congo-Magazine* (January 1968): 26.

14 I borrow this phrase from David Scott's work on the failure of the 1983 revolution in Grenada. Scott, *Omens of Adversity*, 99.

15 Early studies of higher education in Africa tended to focus on social stratification and processes of class formation, but they rarely engaged with questions of political imagination. See, for instance, Wallerstein, *Africa*; Coleman, *Education and Political Development*; Arrighi and Saul, *Essays on Political Economy*, 44–103; and Hanna, *University Students*. Important works about Congolese higher education and student politics in a similar vein include Verhaegen, *L'enseignement universitaire*; Kasongo-Ngoy, *Capital scolaire*; and Bongeli, *Université contre développement*.

16 Pursley, "Stage of Adolescence."

17 See, for instance, Straker, *Youth*, 19–55; and Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism*, 84–114.

18 See Ivaska, *Cultured States*, 124–65; and Blum, *Révolutions africaines*, 79–98.

19 Like Sarah Van Beurden, I look at the 1960s and the first few years of the Mobutu regime as a critical period in the decolonization of the Congo, a process that continued to unfold well beyond the colonial regime formally ended on June 30, 1960 (see Van Beurden, "Art of (Re)possession," 144).

20 For an approach to postcolonial African cosmopolitanism that similarly emphasizes generational dynamics, see Callaci, *Street Archives*, 18–58. Parallels can also be drawn in the way students and "vernacular cosmopolitan" devotees in dissident churches used colonial infrastructures of mobility and communication to craft political identities that set them apart from others in their own society (see Cabrita, *People's Zion*, 18–21, 197–228; and Peterson, *Ethnic Patriots*, 37–49). Yet, the students' liminal position vis-à-vis the world of expertise and elitism placed them at odds with religious dissidents and reformers. Likewise, students did not necessarily embrace the views of the elite political actors who favored federalist alternatives to the nation-state, a position associated with cosmopolitanism in the recent scholarship on African decolonization (see Fejzula, "Cosmopolitan Historiography"). Some students questioned the "global political scenario" of decolonization and its focus on nation-stateness (see Lee, "Between a Moment," 19), but many did not. Instead, they simultaneously and unproblematically embraced nationalism, Pan-African internationalism, tricontinentalism, and world socialism (for an argument about the imbrication of cosmopolitanism with nationalism and internationalism in a different context, see Clark, *Moscow*, 1–5; see also Glassman, "Creole Nationalists" for a critique of the opposition between nativism and cosmopolitanism in an East African context). Crucially, their cosmopolitanism politicized the students at the same time that it remained politically undetermined. It was visceral and existential first and foremost—emerging, as it did, from the experience of higher education and its promises of intellectual advancement, personal emancipation, and social mobility.

21 On late-colonial educational policy toward women, see Hunt, "Domesticity and Colonialism"; Mianda, "Colonialism"; Bandeira Jeronimo, "Restoring Order"; and Lauro, "Women in Congo."

22 See the parallels with Lumumba's own ambivalences about the status of women as political subjects in Bouwer, *Gender and Decolonization*, 13–37.
23 On the impact of colonialism on the "sur-masculinization" of power in the Congo, see Biaya, "La culture urbaine," 348.
24 On the genealogy of Mobutu's authenticity project, see Van Beurden, *Authentically African*, 107–14.
25 Nkrumah, *Neocolonialism*.
26 For a recent article mentioning the Czechoslovakian intelligence service's interest in the Congo, see Telepneva, "Code Name Sekretar," 10. On interferences from other countries, see chapters 2 and 6.
27 Di Capua, *No Exit*, 182; O'Malley, *Diplomacy of Decolonisation*, 2.
28 Ambar, *Malcolm X*, 3, 142. On the significance of the Congo crisis on Dutschke and the German student movement, see Brown, *West Germany*, 24.
29 See colonial police reports on listeners of Radio Cairo in "Sécurité, confidentiels divers" (1953–59), GG6150, AA; and Michel Elesse, personal interview, unrecorded, Kinshasa, July 28, 2015.
30 Kadima Nzuji, personal interview, recorded, Brazzaville, September 22, 2010.
31 A few months earlier, West German student radicals had staged a well-publicized protest against Senghor at the Frankfurt Book Fair for the same reasons. See Brown, *West Germany*, 116–21. For a detailed account of the "Senegalese May," see Gueye, *Mai 68*.
32 Afraid that Senghor would end up speaking to an empty room, Lovanium's academic secretary reportedly requested that the university's janitors and custodians attend the speech. Polydor Muboyayi Mubanga, personal interview, recorded, Kinshasa, July 25, 2011.
33 Senghor, *De la négritude*. The speech responded to Wole Soyinka's criticisms of Negritude as an incarnation of French cultural imperialism. Recalling his long-term dialogue with the Harlem Renaissance, Senghor argued that the imperialism of Negritude, if there was one, was "negro-African, not French."
34 See Diagne, *Bergson postcolonial*, 37–64.
35 See Wilder, *Freedom Time*, 64–68, 206–40.
36 See Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution*, 5; and Lee, "Between a Moment," 26. On the history of futures and reverie in colonial Congo and on the role of imaginary futures in 1930s South Asian anti-colonial internationalisms, see Hunt, "Espace, temporalité"; and Goswami, "Colonial Internationalisms."
37 See Mobe, "Intellectualités estudiantines."
38 Negritude was not universally appreciated among Congolese students. Some rejected it as false consciousness and as a romanticizing discourse. And although more nuanced in his critique, Mudimbe—who had been a student at Lovanium before he emerged as a major Congolese intellectual

in the late 1960s—developed his understanding of Africa in tension with Senghor's Negritude. See Kasereka, "Mudimbe Senghorien."

39 Anastase Nzeza, personal interview, recorded, Kinshasa, October 10, 2010.

40 Mudimbe famously referred to Sartre as an African philosopher to acknowledge his deep impact on his generation of African intellectuals. Mudimbe, *Invention of Africa*, 83–87. See also Young, "Sartre"; and DiCapua, *No Exit*, 11–13.

41 Worldedness should be understood in relation both to the Sartrean existential "presence to the world" and to the Senghorian framing of decolonization as human reconciliation on a planetary scale. See Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*; and Wilder, *Freedom Time*, 206–41. On worldedness in the context of the global 1960s, see also Connery, "World Sixties."

42 Hubert Humphrey, "The Vice-President's Trip to Africa: Report to the President," January 1968, Hubert Humphrey Papers, Vice-Presidential Foreign Affairs Files, Box 916, MHSL.

43 Maurice Tempelsman, "Report to the Vice-President," January 1968, Hubert Humphrey Papers, Vice-Presidential Foreign Affairs Files, Box 916, MHSL. On Tempelsman's personal business dealings in the Congo at the time of the visit, see "Humphrey Dumphrey," *Ramparts*, November 17, 1968, 41–46.

44 Besides Kinshasa, Humphrey also faced manifestations of hostility in Addis Ababa and Tunis where students organized pro-Vietnam and anti-American street rallies. See Zewde, *Documenting*, 33–44; and Hendrickson, "March 1968."

45 On the report's reception by the Johnson administration (including Humphrey, National Security Adviser Walt Rostow and Secretary of State Dean Rusk), see Klimke, *The Other Alliance*, 194–213. The report's conclusion is reprinted in Suri, *Global Revolutions*, 216–37.

46 See notably Christiansen and Scarlett, *The Third World*; Blum et al., *Etudiants africains*; Jian et al., *Routledge Handbook*; Hodgkinson and Melchiorre, "Student Activism." Monographs that identify "sixties moments" in Africa and develop histories of student protests at the time of global 1968 notably include Ivaska, *Cultured States*; Blum, *Révolutions africaines*; Zeleke, *Ethiopia in Theory*; and Zewde, *Quest for Socialist Utopia*. On the postcolonial dimension of 1968 in the francophone world, see Blum, "Années 68"; Hendrickson, "Imperial Fragments"; and Ross, *May '68*. See also Slobodian, *Foreign Front*; and Dedieu and Mbodj-Pouye, "Fabric of Transnational Activism," on the contribution of third world students to new far-left movements in both France and Germany.

47 "Communiqué de la FEANF," May 11, 1968, Jacques Foccart Papers, AG/5(F)/2610, AN.

48 On African students in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, see notably Katsakioris, "The Lumumba University"; and Burton, "Journeys of Education."

49 Revel, *Un parcours critique*, 54

50 Central Intelligence Agency, "Restless Youth," 1970, n.p., Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, Central Intelligence Agency, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/0002987248. For the CIA's vision of Congolese history, see the memoir of its first chief of station in independent Congo: Devlin, *Chief of Station*. As further elaborated in chapter 5, the CIA, working with young liberal activists, including future academic luminaries James Scott and Duncan Kennedy, played a crucial role in the creation of Congolese student politics in the early 1960s.

51 Using Jacques Rancière's work on ideology, Kristin Ross theorized a police conception of history in relation to May '68 in France that she equates with a refusal to recognize the singularity of the event by reducing it to its sociological determination and refusing to look at the novel forms of political imagination it produced: Ross, *May '68*.

52 Holt, "Bread or Freedom." See also Rubin, *Archives of Authority*; and "The CIA as an Equal Opportunity Employer," *Ramparts* 7, no. 13 (June 1969).

53 Wallerstein, "1968."

54 See Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*.

55 See Featherstone, *Solidarity*, 1–12.

56 Ferdinand Kayukwa, speech at the International Union of Students' 7th Congress in Leningrad, August 1962, IUS archival collections, IISH. Cuba was a particularly important reference as the Cuban revolution shaped US perceptions of Lumumba in 1960. A few years later, while Che Guevara joined Congolese rebels in eastern Congo, the CIA employed Cuban exiles as pilots in counterinsurgencies in the Congo. Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes*, 87–198, 323–24.

57 Duncan Kennedy, "Report on the 2nd Congress of the US Section of the Union of Congolese Students," June 1964, USNSA International Commission, Box 188, HIA. Incidentally, Averell Harriman, who redefined the US engagement in Vietnam as John F. Kennedy's and Johnson's ambassador at large in the mid-1960s, saw himself "as the toughest Congo-fighter" in the US administration (Robert Komer, "Memo for Governor Harriman," October 21, 1965, A. Harriman Papers, Box 448, LOC). Increased involvement in Vietnam made the stabilization of the Congo more pressing for the US government. See Namikas, *Battleground Africa*, 186–222; and O'Malley, *Diplomacy of Decolonisation*. On US interventionism in the Congo, see Gibbs, *Political Economy*; Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention*, 56–77; and De Witte, *L'ascension de Mobutu*.

58 Tsing, *Friction*, 85–86. On the antagonism between African "freedom dreams" and Cold War realities, see Allman, "The Fate of All of Us." On the power of foreign discursive constructs in shaping the Congo's position in international relations, see Dunn, *Imagining the Congo*, 61–104. On US one-worldedness, see Apter, "On Oneworldedness," 386.

59 Sorensen, "Alternative Geographic Mappings." For a typology of transnational connections in the global 1960s, see Langland, "Transnational Connections"; and Langland, *Speaking of Flowers*.

60 See Matera, *Black London*; Goebel, *Anti-Imperial Metropolis*; and Ray, *Crossing the Color Line*.

61 Hunt, *Nervous State*.

62 Jewsiewicki, "African Peasants"; Jewsiewicki, "Political Consciousness"; Likaka, *Rural Society*; Higginson, *Working Class*; Henriet, "Concession Experience"; Seibert, "More Continuity." See also Gray, "Territoriality"; and Stanard, "Revisiting Bula Matari."

63 Hodgkin, *Nationalism*, 55.

64 A handful of Congolese had studied in non-university higher education institutions in Europe before Kanza. The most famous was Paul Panda Farnana, who studied at a school of tropical agriculture in France and then at an institute of commercial and consular sciences in Belgium a few years before World War I. See Bontinck, "Mfumu Paul Panda Farnana," 594–95.

65 See, for instance, Chafer, "Students and Nationalism." People in Portuguese African colonies also enjoyed a rather limited access to higher education before the 1960s, but there, the opening-up of educational possibilities (notably through scholarships from socialist countries) started years before the ultimate downfall of colonial rule in 1974. See, for instance, Katsakioris, "Students from Portuguese Africa."

66 On the évolués and elite politics in the Belgian Congo, see Mutamba, *Du Congo belge au Congo indépendant*; and Tödt, *Lumumba Generation*.

67 The students' frustrated expectations can be compared to the dynamics around the labor question, whereby increased rights and welfare resulted in more, not fewer, protests and claims from workers. See Cooper, *Decolonization*.

68 On Congolese student politics, see Tshimanga, "La jeunesse étudiante"; and Mobe, "Intellectualités estudiantines."

69 Boyle, *Class Formation*, 114–16.

70 See Paul-Lomami Tshibamba, "Quel sera notre place dans le monde de demain?," *La voix du congolais* 1, no. 2 (1945).

71 Gikandi, "*Arrow of God*."

72 Vansina, *Paths in the Rainforests*, 239–48. Vansina contrasts this cognitive insecurity with the social and intellectual constructions that allowed people to generate institutions and bodies of thoughts in previous eras. These constructions included the model of big man leadership, the use of wealth to accumulate power, and the ability to attract dependents with specific knowledge that allowed to adapt to difficult and changing environments (see also Guyer and Belinga, "Wealth in People"). According to Vansina, this political tradition died in the 1920s because of the violence and cognitive challenges of the colonial conquest, which left people in the region disoriented and unsecure. Several scholars have questioned

Vansina's diagnosis, showing how Congolese continued through the colonial and postcolonial periods to function as cultural bricoleurs, mixing the old with the new, and using central elements of the tradition—from therapeutic lexicons to idioms of witchcraft and bigmanship—as tools to engage with alien epistemologies. See Hunt, *Colonial Lexicon*; Gondola, *Tropical Cowboys*; and MacGaffey, *Kongo Political Culture*. See also Bernault, *Colonial Transactions*.

73 See Vellut, *Congo*, 461–62. Some of these students later produced major works that recovered oral traditions, epics, and material artifacts that could reactualize elements of an ancient cultural patrimony in the present. For a paradigmatic example, see Biebuyck and Mateene, *The Mwindo Epic*. The culturalist bent of Flemish missionary Catholicism often informed the intellectual genealogy of the Congolese intellectuals who worked on reviving local traditions. See Hunt, "Rewriting the Soul."

74 Kalixte Mukendi Wa Nsanga, personal interview, recorded, Nouakchott, May 20, 2016.

75 See Dhimiter Mandro, "Relacion takimi me Kalikst Mudendi," August 11, 1965, Foreign Affairs collection, 14/15/612, GDA.

76 Manjpara, "Third World Humanities."

77 See Mudimbe, *Invention of Africa*; Fraiture and Orrells, *Mudimbe Reader*; Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Congo*; and Buakasa, *L'impensé du discours*. See also Mudimbe, *Les corps glorieux*, 147–53; and Mobe, "Intellectualités estudiantines."

78 Another relevant literality in the Congolese context lay in the fact that educated Congolese were often referred to as "the lettered" in colonial parlance. See, for instance, Hunt, "Camouflaged Polygamy."

79 Mbembe, *Sortir de la grande nuit*, 68.

80 Foucault, *Dits et écrits*, 417.

81 On the foundations of these two traditions, see discussions of W. E. B. Du Bois's *The World and Africa* (1946) and Darryl Forde's *African Worlds* (1954) in Cooper, *Africa in the World*, 1–10; and Mudimbe, *Invention of Africa*, 135–86.

82 Bayart, "Africa in the World," 218, 234.

83 See, for instance, Bostoen and Brinkman, *Kongo Kingdom* on the longue durée of cosmopolitan dispositions in west central Africa.

84 Amin, *Le développement*.

85 Hountondji, *Struggle for Meaning*, 140.

86 Hountondji, *Struggle for Meaning*, 141.

87 Prestholdt, *Icons of Dissent*, 40.

88 On the use of the Habermasian notion of the public sphere in a mid-twentieth century African context, see Hunter, *Political Thought*, 21–30. See also Calhoun, "Public Sphere."

89 See Fraiture, *Mudimbe*, 83–89.

90 On mediation and appropriation, see Krings, *African Appropriations*, 1–27.

91 Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*, 1–3.
92 On intersubjectivity, see Jackson, *Lifeworlds*, 5–6.
93 See Malkki, "Citizens of Humanity."
94 See Karagiannis and Wagner, "Globalization or World-Making?"
95 On archival dispersion and the writing of African postcolonial histories, see Allman, "Phantoms of the Archive"; and White, "Hodgepodge Historiography."
96 See Hountondji, *Struggle for Meaning*; and Verdery, *Political Lives*, 24.
97 Mazrui, *Political Values*, 1–20. See also Abiola, "In Praise of Alienation."
98 Cited in Findlay, *Caring for the Soul*, 15–50. See also Bernard, "Le monde comme problème."

Interlude I. Postal Musings

1 See MacGaffey, "Zamenga of Zaire"; Ngoma-Binda, *Zamenga Batukezanga*; and Hunt, "Tintin."
2 And letters were also often involved in connecting reading and listening publics to newspapers and radio stations, helping to cross the line between the production and consumption of information and cultural content in print and radio communications. See, for instance, Moorman, *Powerful Frequencies*, 89–92; and Newell, *Power to Name*, 59–60.
3 Zamenga, *La carte postale*. By the mid-1970s, novels about sub-Saharan students in France had already become a subgenre in African francophone literature, but *La carte postale* was one of the first literary works by a Congolese writer on the experience of studying in the former metropole. Despite its title, the book was not an epistolary novel. Zamenga adopted this genre in several other of his books in a self-proclaimed act of filiation with Montesquieu's *Persian Letters*. Djungu-Simba, "Ce sorcier de Zamenga," 10.

One. Distance Learning and the Production of Politics

1 De Quincey, *English Mail-Coach*. De Quincey was not unknown in the Belgian colony. Pierre Ryckmans, the governor general from 1934 to 1946, was an avid reader of his works. See Vanderlinden, *Pierre Ryckmans*, 227. The text's first French translation was published in a literary journal from Lyon in 1943.
2 "A Black who quotes Montesquieu had better be watched. Please understand me: watched in the sense that he is starting something" (Fanon, *Peau noire*, 52). Echoing Fanon, a Belgian colonial legal scholar in 1952 argued that thinking about political participation in the Congo was premature because "Bantus are still far from having read and understood Montesquieu" ("Procès-verbal de la reunion extraordinaire du CEPSI," *Bulletin du Centre d'étude des problèmes sociaux indigènes* 18–19 [1952]: 163).