

# The War that did not make the Headlines: Over Five Million Dead in Congo?

Behind the Numbers Redux: How Truth is Hidden, Even When it Seems to Be Told

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The International Rescue Committee in late January 2008 released a new report on the mortality in the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo. The report caught the eye of some news agencies, who quickly whipped up trite little articles as supposed expressions of horror. Over and over it has been declared “the world’s forgotten crises.” There are reasons why Darfur is in the crises of the day, the poster crises, and why Congo is hardly mentioned.<sup>[1](#)</sup>

However, the story of war and plunder in Congo is not unreported. It is a story that has been censored, manipulated, and covered up even while it is ostensibly being told. Plenty of information has been published about the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and plenty of this is flak, designed to whiteout the truth, and help keep the real story buried, and that includes the truly honest representations of war and suffering in Congo that have been published. Just because the mainstream doesn’t cover it, doesn’t mean it didn’t happen. This is the falsification of consciousness.

While the true death toll in Congo over the past series of wars—for the Congolese it is one long contiguous war—will never be known, it is far higher than the IRC figures. In the IRC’s tidy statistical equations there is no recounting the ordeal of the millions of people who have disappeared into the swamps, the tropical forests, the mass graves, torture chambers and death camps, or after crossing borders. The entire exercise in counting the dead is another way to do little to stop it. The IRC is about profits, but that is not all.

The International Rescue Committee has been described in the past as the ideal instrument of psychological warfare, and it is. This is exactly what is going on with the IRC today, and more, when the IRC—heavily subsidized by the very same profiteers—sends its body counters into Congo. But the IRC is not only the ideal instrument of psychological warfare, it is also the ideal instrument of intelligence gathering. The IRC capitalizes on their access to refugee populations, conflict areas and individual refugee encounters and interviews to gather intelligence on armed groups, leadership, resources, weapons and geographical conflicts, information that is selectively used to serve the greater interests of the IRC and its partners.

## America’s Secret Warriors

Amongst the trustees or overseers of the International Rescue Committee is Henry Kissinger, a man whose interests run very deep in Congo. Henry Kissinger is tied to Freeport

McMoRan (FXC) and FCX is all over the copper and cobalt show in Katanga. FCX director J. Stapleton Roy was Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research under Madeleine Albright, 1999-2000, during the Clinton administration invasions of Rwanda (1994) and then Congo/Zaire (1996); Roy retired to join Kissinger Associates.[2](#)

Another Kissinger Associates principal is Lawrence Eagleburger, who has past affiliations with the defense and intelligence insider Scowcroft Group, and has been a director of Halliburton Corporation since 1998. Scowcroft Group founder Brent Scowcroft served as the National Security Advisor to Presidents Gerald Ford and George H.W. Bush and, 1982-1989, he was Vice-Chairman of Kissinger Associates.

Walter Kansteiner, a National Security insider for the Clinton and G.W. Bush administrations and a “principal member” of the Scowcroft Group today, is a director of Moto Gold (operating in blood-drenched Ituri, Congo) and of the military-based “conservation” organization, the Africa Wildlife Foundation (Washington D.C.), that is backing mercenary activities in the Congo’s Virungas Mountains region under the cover of gorilla protection.

Another Kissinger Associates director is Belgium’s Viscount Etienne Davignon, one of the Congo’s most lasting and current enemies. Davignon was directly involved, 1964-1965, in the code-named “Dragon” operations that installed the “kleptocrat” Mobutu and seeded the beginning of the end for millions of Congolese people.[3,4](#) Davignon is also a close associate of Donald Rumsfeld through the bio-warfare production company Gilead Sciences.

The IRC board includes Samantha Power, the Founder of the Carr Center for Human Rights at Harvard and Pulitzer-prize winning author of *A Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide*, the book that peddles genocide inflation on the one hand (regarding Rwanda, Yugoslavia and Sudan), and genocide denial on the other (regarding Congo, Uganda and Rwanda).[5](#)

The IRC “Freedom Award” for “extraordinary contributions to the cause of refugees and human freedom” has been given to some of the genocide inflators and deniers. In 1987 it went to John C. Whitehead and in 1992 to Cyrus Vance, two men with historical ties to covert operations in Congo, for example, through their National Security Agency and CIA insider status, and two men tied to the Maurice Templesman empire behind the plunder of Congo/Zaire for decades.

U.S. Congressman Donald Payne is one of those “friends of Africa” who hangs in the Andrew Young and Maurice Templesman crowd. His role as Ranking Member of the House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations in the Bush administration is one of his more stellar performances, a sad disappointment and complete betrayal to Africans and African-Americans.

In 1993 the “Freedom Award” went to Dwayne O. Andreas, the Archers Daniels Midland executive and top U.S. congressional campaign funder whose company makes sure there are starving refugees. ADM is deeply tied to Robert Dole and Andrew Young, the latter counting ADM as his many top clients at PR firm Goodworks International. Young is also deeply connected to the client regimes in Rwanda and Uganda—the chief protagonists in the Congo wars.

In 1995 the IRC’s “Freedom Award” went to Richard Holbrooke; in 1996 to Madeleine Albright; and in 2004 to General Romeo Dallaire. All three people were pivotal to the U.S.

covert operations and the subsequent massive refugee displacements and mortality in Central Africa. Holbrooke and Albright are also culpable in crimes against humanity in former Yugoslavia, Haiti, Sudan and Iraq.

Finally, the “Freedom” award was shared in 2005 by William J. Clinton and G.H.W. Bush; Clinton launched the wars in Rwanda and Congo with the background support of his predecessor; Bush’s “humanitarianism” includes massive state destabilization, terror networks, torture, *coups d’etat* and war on sovereign nations.

The International Rescue Committee is not a neutral or purely “humanitarian” organization. The IRC has a deep history of nefarious activities going far beyond relief operations. The IRC is also a huge financial operation providing scads of executives and business people with scads of income in ways that do not help to alleviate the war or suffering, but rather exacerbate it. While the IRC claims 90% of its funds “are spent on refugee programs and services,” much of this money never hits the ground in Africa, what does often barely touches the life of a refugee. Amongst the IRC’s biggest funders are HSBC bank, GE, and Goldman Sachs, all involved in Congo’s blood diamonds plunder, and Pfizer and Gilead Sciences (the Davignon-Rumsfeld company). The IRC’s involvement in Congo—a mortality study—involves deeply political but generally hidden motives. Why doesn’t the IRC focus on feeding the living instead of counting the dead?

### **The Horror, The Horror**

Beyond the simple calculus of the IRC’s highly political bias and interests, and cloaked in a smokescreen of neutrality, the mortality assessment is flawed. The IRC considers only the period of 1998 to 2007, excluding the first phase of the war, the U.S.-backed overthrow of Zaire and *coup d’etat* against Mobutu Sese Seko, 1996-1998. The IRC excludes this period for multiple reasons. (Requests to the IRC for comment were not answered.)

One of the obvious reasons is that the Pentagon was directly involved, 1996-1998, along with the private U.S. military companies Military Professional Resources Incorporated, and Kellogg, Brown and Root (Halliburton). Just as happened with the massive bloodletting in Rwanda, and premised of course from the start on the examples of selective justice at the Nazi Nuremberg trials, the international system manipulates statistics, dates, and timeframes partly to shield those agents who might otherwise be subject to some kind of future reckoning, and partly to serve the falsification of history and fabricate a false consciousness.

The IRC excludes the period 1996-1997 to shield the governments of now military President Paul Kagame, in Rwanda, and Yoweri Museveni, in Uganda, and their inner circles and extended networks of syndicated, organized crime.

In 1995 and 1996, the Rwandan Patriotic Army/Front (RPA/F) and their partners and backers, the Ugandan People’s Defense Forces (UPDF), the Pentagon, MPRI and assorted other mercenaries, laid the groundwork for their imminent war by engaging Zairian territory through significant cross-border covert and terror operations from Uganda and Rwanda. In October 1996 there were at least 1.5 million Rwandan and Burundian refugees in eastern Zaire, according to most refugee agencies. The full-scale invasion began more formally when the RPA/UPDF proxy forces shelled the refugee camps. This was in violation of international humanitarian law, and it was a pivotal event to understand, because it was a replay of the events of October 1990, whereby the RPA invaded the territory of a sovereign

government: Rwanda. Only this time it was eastern Zaire, and it involved the shelling of Hutu refugee camps.<sup>6</sup> These are egregious crimes of international law.

France reported at the time that there were 1.2 million refugees and the United States insisted there were only 700,000, and the U.S. took the disingenuous line that all the refugees went back to Rwanda. They did not.

Hundreds of thousands of unarmed and innocent men, women and children were driven west, north, and south, running in fear for their lives from the allied invading forces who they knew from experience over the previous six years to be bloodthirsty killers. Many also were forced back to Rwanda where the RPA was targeting them. The RPA/UPDF forces hunted down and killed hundreds of thousands in a clear case of genocide. The names of the U.S. officials, the RPA and UPDF commanders and Congolese collaborators are all very well known to those who were on the ground or involved at the time.

One of these is long-time UNICEF executive Nigel Fisher, who is today also a member of the Advisory Council of the Diamond Development Initiative, a program run by and for the diamond industry but meant to put a reformatory face on corporations and syndicated crime networks that for decades have plundered the Congo. Fisher was the UNICEF Special Representative for Rwanda in 1994, and he led that agency's post-genocide [sic] recovery operations [sic] in the Great Lakes region of Africa (Rwanda, eastern Zaire, western Tanzania and southern Uganda) in 1994-1995. This places him squarely in the know about the massive genocidal killings and other crimes against humanity that occurred as the Rwandan military (then the Rwandan Patriotic Army) under current President Paul Kagame and the Ugandan military under President-for-life Yoweri Museveni first shelled the refugee camps and then marched across Zaire committing genocide.

So right off the bat we can add between 200,000 and 800,000 deaths to the new IRC mortality figures (and the 200,000 would be a very conservative figure).

Finally, the IRC is known for its long history of involvement in CIA and NSA activities, including shipping or transporting weapons.<sup>7</sup> According to a top United Nations investigator, the IRC moved into bases in eastern Zaire in 1996 and started shelling the refugee camps with heavy weapons. Here is the direct quote: "The IRC took over some bases near the refugee camps and started shelling the camps with heavy weapons." (Name withheld for confidentiality.)

The IRC has spent millions of dollars analyzing the "impact of conflict" in the Democratic Republic of Congo but they have said nothing of substance about the parallel economy of plunder that is enriching some of the same organizations that support their "humanitarian" programs. Their recent report is a glossy brochure offering a pornography of violence.

How stupid and blind do they think people are? How stupid and blind are we?

At the same time, the IRC has received massive "loans"—in the millions of dollars—over recent years from the U.S. taxpayer-funded Overseas Private Investment Corporation. What happens to all these OPIC funds?

In the new IRC report about mortality in Congo there is not a word about the causes of the ongoing strife or the structural factors which have made this holocaust possible, and perpetuate it.

## Things Go Better with Blood

Offering their only real reason for the high mortality rates, the IRC states:

“Recovery from conflict is a slow and protracted process. The persistent elevation of mortality more than four years after the official end of the 1998–2002 war provides further evidence that recovery from conflict can take many years, especially when superimposed on decades of political and socioeconomic decline.”

This is nonsense. When hurricane Katrina hit, it was, after a brief delay, a rapid intervention process that established a chain of U.S. military command posts across the gulf coast. Troops, helicopters, tanks, and private military armies were quickly sent in, not to rescue people, but to secure the facilities of the US military and defense contractors, shipyards, banks and the high-end economic zone. It was all very efficient, hundreds of millions of dollars of U.S. taxpayer’s money was squandered on professional killers who, fresh from Iraq and Afghanistan, did the only thing they seem to know how to do, they killed people. But the point is that the U.S. government moves mountains when it wants to, and quickly.

Recovery from conflict “is a slow and protracted process” because there is an ongoing policy of intentional depopulation in Africa. The United Nations Observers Mission in Congo (MONUC) spends about 40-45% of its billion dollar budget on airplane contracts flying around central Africa, and this goes to big business. There is never any problem shipping in weapons, and—offering a rather stark and poignant and undeniable example of the way things work and don’t—Coca Cola trucks ship coke all over the place, even in rural areas. Full stop.

Think about it.

There are no books and no bookstores in Congo for a reason. Starvation is widespread and there are food and grain shortages *because of*, and not *in spite of*, the United Nations and the IRC and the World Food Program and its ties to Robert Dole, Archers Daniels Midland, ConAgra and—a Henry Kissinger link—Continental Grain. There are shortages of health supplies and high rates of disease for a reason, and it is not because this is the “heart of darkness” or any other racist foolishness.

Coca Cola is not a healthy beverage for malnourished and starving children with no access to dental facilities. More importantly, Coke director Donald F. McHenry is a President of the IRC Group, a Washington DC consulting firm whose connections to the International Rescue Committee are difficult to ascertain. Former Ambassador Andrew Young, Madeleine Albright, George Soros, Lawrence Eagleburger, Frank Ferrari, Donald Easum, Donald F. McHenry and Frank Carlucci all frequently surface like tentacles of the Templesman octopus and most of these are tight with the intelligence apparatus, and all have ties to the flak producing CIA ciphers the Africa-America Institute and the Corporate Council on Africa.

IRC President and Director George Rupp is also a director of the secretive and euphemistically named Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa, a right-wing Judeo-Christian front organization. Other PCHPA directors include Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, Robert Dole and David Beckman from the equally fundamentalist Christian front group Bread for the World. The Museveni government has forced 1.3 million Acholi people onto death camps in northern Uganda *and* denied them humanitarian relief.



Starvation happens not because this is Africa, or the Congo, it is because we are witnessing the most devastating example of predatory capitalism and heartless, absolute greed, combined with a spiritual crises—in the “first” world—of unprecedented proportions. The long term control of Congo’s resources is best served by eliminating as many black people as possible. The capacity to control Congo’s resources is enhanced by spreading terror, uprooting people, destroying families, sowing distrust and hatred. It is called divide and conquer and it is the oldest trick in the book of European conquest. The word that best describes the portfolio of psychological, emotional, physical, social, cultural and political effects of such campaigns of destabilization and terror is DERACINATION.

And all the while the humanitarian “misery” industry is raking in billions of dollars on programs to “help” the Congolese people, and universities create new programs and departments to train the privileged “development” work force, all to create and institutionalize dependency. This is structural violence, and it is part of a cycle of perpetuated wealth and privilege. It is managed inequality.

This is the U.S. foreign policy in action. The IRC merely institutionalizes the false framework of thinking that supports war and plunder and the entrenchment, rather than alleviation, of structural violence. Behind the psychological warfare the picture in Congo is very different, and the responsible forces are easily identified.

### **The Falsification of Consciousness**

Here’s how the system projects—and inculcates—the falsified consciousness about Africa that people in the West are blinded by.

One of the long term dictator Mobutu Sese Seko’s right-hand men was Albert-Henri Buisine, a French mercenary-pirate who worked on the *Kamanyola*, the luxury yacht where Mobutu arrived by helicopter to receive foreign backers and “VIP” cronies. While Mobutu frequently visited the White House, Brussels, Paris, Tokyo, Geneva, London—and sometimes Tel Aviv—he regularly received his cronies and patrons on his yacht in Zaire.[8](#)

Protected by Albert-Henri Buisine and Israeli mercenary Meir Meyouhas—and a slew of crack black intelligence operatives—Mobutu received his guests. Hundreds of people came and went from Zaire over the years, and these included Secretary of State Henry Kissinger; Vice-President George H.W. Bush; Ambassadors Andrew Young and Jean Kirkpatrick; and mercenary Frank Carlucci. Diamond tycoon Maurice Templesman dined often with Mobutu on the *Kamanyola*, sometimes with his lover, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, often with his Zaire-based diamond agents like Jerry Funk or James Barnes, and with De Beers agents like Nicky Oppenheimer or Nick Davenport.[9](#)

The Templesman and De Beers empires exist today in Congo in their modern forms, and many of the same agents of the Mobutu period are connected to policies or actions that perpetuate suffering and violence in Congo and Angola and South Africa today. It is important to note, also, that the Templesman blood minerals machine has heavily subsidized the campaigns of the democrats, including recent fascist manifestations, Barrack Obama and Hillary Clinton. In the final counting, Hillary Clinton has done more damage to Africa than Obama (but there is still time).

On May 11 and 12, 1990, Mobutu’s shock troops—including the Israeli-trained *Special Presidential Division* (DSP), SARM and National Gendarmerie—attacked the campus at the

University of Lumumbashi, and they killed hundreds of students, at least, while countless more were tortured and brutalized. The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency station in Lumumbashi supported the atrocities and cover-up. It sounds like a long time ago, but the players are still around. Some, like James Barnes, Maurice and Leon Templesman, and Nicky Oppenheimer, are still running big operations in Africa.

What was Albert-Henri Buisine's role in protecting the Mobutu dictatorship and perpetuating such atrocities and where is Mobutu's old mercenary bodyguard today?

Well, Mobutu's French mercenary bodyguard Albert-Henri Buisine surfaced in October, 2007, in a Harper's magazine article by Bryan Mealer, a journalist who formerly freelanced with the Associated Press and The Independent (London). Buisine is no longer a private military agent serving the terror apparatus of a Cold War dictator; he is the loquacious captain of a barge pressing 2600 tons of cargo up the Congo River (for his private shipping company and substantial personal profit). One hundred years after Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* we have a white American AP journalist retelling his unfathomable voyage up the Congo.

And there's the nostalgic Captain, a reluctant French mercenary-terrorist-turned-pilot-profiteer, who for 16 years, against his will, Mealer tells us, served Mobutu reluctantly. "He was chained to Mobutu's shadow at all times, even living four straight years aboard the lavish presidential yacht, the Kamanyola, as it drifted aimlessly down the Congo River."

Drifted aimlessly? Chained to Mobutu's shadow? Hardly. This is fiction. There are deep cultural stereotypes and subliminal fault lines at work here that have been inculcated through decades of propaganda about Congo/Zaire. There is nothing but dross in Mealer's account, no mention of the brutalities suffered by Congolese people, the strike-breaking and student massacres, or the rented crowds chanting "Mobutu! Mobutu" and the empty slogans of Mobutu's *Movement Populaire de la Revolution* party. There is no mention of the hated *Special Presidential Division* terror apparatus, the illegal arrests and detention without trial, the tortures at underground dungeons like the "OAU-2" or the "corridor of death" in Kinshasa. It is all rendered nostalgic, and the plunderers of the past are painted as unwitting victims who missed their lot in life. The story casts the standard dispersions of pathos on the white exploiters, and this works to displace the attention from their past and often current criminality.

"Buisine now led the simple life of a river rat," Mealer tells us, "making his run six or seven times a year," pointing out "whirlpools roiling in the deep spots, crocodiles camouflaged in the mud, or, along a wooded island, a tree whose leaves cured hemorrhoids." [10](#)

Harper's never mentions the agents of repression in such places, because the American public is all too happy with the vainglorious version of the beleaguered white hero challenging the savagery in the heart of darkness. How many stories about Congo involve a River and a Great White Hero challenging the savagery and darkness of the forest? Harper's tells us nothing about Congo: it is the usual racist nonsense meant to displace the truth. The story is "good" reading, but it is fiction, a mirror reflecting our whiteness back to us. The author even claims that the natives communicate by drums so that villages along the river know the boat is coming before Buisine and the heroic white journalist arrive upstream. This is the falsification of American consciousness.

To cap the Harper's silly whitewash, the photographer that traveled up river with Mealer is based in Kigali, Rwanda, and everyone in the region knows that you cannot work in and out

of Rwanda today and still be telling the truth. Finally, Harper's publisher John R. MacArthur is described by his magazine company as a "tireless advocate for human rights."

And that is why we have more than 10 million dead in Congo since 1996, and millions more in Uganda and Rwanda. These nightmare numbers are the products of the Bush-Clinton-Bush administrations, a contiguous unfolding of fascism in America.

I traveled on this river more than once: in 2007 I also swam two-thirds of the way across it (at Lukutu, where I hit an island and turned back); I also swam across the tributary Lomami (2007) and Lopori (2006) rivers. The Harper's production mirrors the obliviousness of white men in Congo and the even greater obliviousness of white editors, and it is all to satisfy the voracious obliviousness of increasingly stupefied readers.

Been there, done that. Now it is time for us all to grow up.

### **Plantation Slavery in the Heartland**

At the height of the supposed disintegration of Zaire—mid-1980's through the mid-1990's—the Blattner family was rapidly expanding their operations and consolidating power. The previous and already vast empire in Zaire was established by James Blattner as the Group Agro Pastoral (GAP), and this was later divided up amongst sons David and Elwyn (Daniel's role in Congo is uncertain), who scooped up plantation after plantation, concession after concession, becoming involved in transportation, shipping, aviation, telecommunications, agriculture, logging and construction. Elwyn Blattner's father-in-law, Shimon Razin, also runs a company, Safgaz, in Congo, when he is not in Tel Aviv, and the Blattners send their children to elite colleges in Europe. In 2003, Elwyn Blattner was President of the *Communaute Israelite de Kinshasa*.[11](#)

The Blattner empire today is perpetuating massive suffering in the interior, with slavery and all the abominations of paramilitary fiefdoms occurring on the Blattner plantations.[12](#) None of this has been reported, but for those who wonder how the mortality rate in the interior of the Congo could be so high—a sudden flash of awakening with the release of the January 2008 International Rescue Committee statistics—the answer lies in the capitalist enterprises of the Elwyn Blattners, the Maurice Templesmans, the Etienne Davignons and Nicky Oppenheimers, and the IRC itself. The Blattners frequently travel back and forth from Congo to the United States, Belgium, Tel Aviv and South Africa. On August 2, 2007, for example, David Blattner and family attended a lavish Bar Mitzvah of friends in Israel held at the Sheraton Hotel in Tel Aviv. On the same day, the second of August, 2007, at least 1500 people died in the Congo.

What is the IRC's relationship to the plantation slave-drivers and how did the IRC statistically figure the higher mortality rates on plantations run by the Blattner or George Forrest Groups in rural Congo?

### **It Takes a Village**

By the late 1990s, the guarding of the diamond concessions in Zaire had ceased to operate under a single chain of command and had become increasingly militarized by thugs of all stripes. Atrocities mounted during the heaviest war years, but violence continues in these areas today.

Katanga has repeatedly been described as the province of "forgotten strife." In the past



decade alone, millions of people have been dispossessed of their livelihoods, their land, their futures and their lives, and the mining in Katanga and Mbuji-Mayi has been going on since the end of the Leopold era.

Entire villages have been sacked and burned by militias and in some almost every woman has been raped during military campaigns of the past few years.<sup>13</sup> More than 5000 children have lived on the streets in the center of Mbuji-Mayi town in the past few years—yet another generation of Congolese leaders lost—and recent systematic massacres of street children have occurred at the hands of militias, political groups and security forces.<sup>14</sup>

How does the IRC mortality study factor in the deaths of street children murdered in Mbuji Mayi?

After a century of exploitation and slavery, we find the DRC's huge state diamond firm, MIBA, consistently withholding payment of salaries to starving Congolese laborers and middle managers for months at a time. April and May 2007 saw strikes and protests leading to the Kabila government's arbitrary arrest, detention and torture of trade union organizers like Leon Ngoy Bululu; police have also shot protestors.<sup>15</sup> So-called 'illegal' diamond workers—disenfranchised local Congolese people forced into "criminal" activities to survive—were summarily executed on MIBA concessions in Mbuji-Mayi. The BBC, in August 2006 reported that MIBA security guards were sniping unemployed diamond miners.<sup>16</sup> Of course, the BBC never gives us the deeper story, it is only for expedience and some interest somewhere that they are saying anything revealing at all.

Katanga is the Democratic Republic of Congo's southernmost province, and it is the world's richest mining metropolis, with the poorest people in the world. Part of the vast copper belt that stretches across northern Zambia and southern Congo, Katanga is home to unprecedented human misery. The Zambian copperbelt concessions over the border involve many of the same companies and interests mentioned above.<sup>17</sup> But hundreds of billions of dollars are involved in these mining projects and they have no problems moving heavy equipment into the most rural areas, building runways, and shipping the product out.

IMMEDIATE AND RADICAL—GOING TO THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM—INTERVENTIONS TO AID THE PEOPLE AND MITIGATE SUFFERING IN THESE AREAS COULD BE ACHIEVED IF THE CORPORATIONS WORKING THERE WERE HELD TO ACCOUNT.

But as long as people in the West gobble up the corporate do-nothing nonsense peddled by the IRC, CARE, Save the Children, Newsweek, the New York Times, the BBC and the International Crises Group, it is, indeed, hopeless.

Workers and communities in and around these mines suffer due to state orchestrated repression, chemical mining processes and toxic runoff, tuberculosis, immune disorders, racial discrimination and slavery. There are all the standard treatable maladies (typhoid, malaria, tetanus, polio, malnutrition) as well. However, such stories are off the agenda for the North American, European, Japanese, Australian and Israeli media corporations providing the mainstay of English language indoctrination meant to instill racial superiority and a vast ignorance and obliviousness that leaves westerns populations shaking their heads and wringing their hands and clicking their tongues, while all the while wondering "what is to be done?" It does not cross people's minds that their own hands are dirty, that their own consciousness has been falsified, that change is possible.

## Lies, Lies, Those Slippery (Petroleum) Lies

German diplomat Albrecht Conze is the deputy political director of the United Nations Observers Mission in Congo (MONUC). In an article in the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, after the first round of elections in August 2006, Conze “predicted” the inevitable return of white patronage in Congo. “It is like being the Congo’s foster parents,” Conze said, suggesting that such patronage is a blessing, rather than the curse that it is to the people of Congo. Conze continued to misrepresent the Western plunder in Congo by saying, for example, that the U.S. government’s interest in rebuilding Congo is limited. After all, he said, the deeply Catholic country “contains neither oil nor terrorists.” [18](#)

The above statement is consistent with the perpetual lies by powerful interests who benefit by always downplaying or hiding Congo’s (Africa) wealth.

The first petroleum refinery in the Congo—owned by *Societe Congolaise Italienne de Raffinage* (SOCIR), a joint venture between the Congolese government and *Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi*, Italy’s state-owned petroleum company—commenced production near the mouth of the Congo River in 1967. Under a five year contract signed in 1967, the crude for the refinery was supplied by Shell, Mobil, Petrofina and Texaco.[19](#) Petroleum exploration occurred heavily off the Atlantic coast after 1968; production began in 1976 involving Chevron, Mobil, Unocal, Royal/Dutch Shell, Agip, TotalFinaElf, Teikoku Oil and the Japan National Oil Company. Recent onshore exploitation near the refinery involves Total, Pan Ocean Energy (UK) and Addax Petroleum (Canada).

The heartland of the Congo also has petroleum, and this is part of the reason for the unfathomable terrorism involving Western enterprises and agents and the concomitant rates of mortality in the interior. Petroleum reserves were discovered (but left dormant) by Chevron in the Equateur rainforest in the late 1970’s.[20](#) By 1997 this vast concession—known as *Cuvette Centrale* for the former petit province—was held by Trillion Resources Ltd., established in Vancouver in 1987.[21](#) The company is involved in exploration throughout Africa in association with Canadian mining companies such as Nickelodeon Minerals Inc., Oliver Gold Corporation and Skeena Resources Ltd. In DRC its activities have also involved mining in Katanga with DRC parastatal *Gecamines*. There is no doubt that Trillion and Chevron interests supported certain factions in Congo’s wars.

In Eastern DRC, petroleum under Lake Albert is being tapped on the Ugandan side by Canada’s Heritage Oil & Gas, Tullow Oil and Hardman Resources, supported by the organized crime syndicates involved with the Uganda “government,” which is itself another syndicated crime ring run by the Ugandan military, General James Kazini, and Museveni’s half-brother Salim Saleh. Further south near Goma and Bukavu, Lake Kivu is targeted by U.S. companies, working through the current dictatorship in Rwanda, for its massive methane reserves.

“This is an oil country,” the new Congo’s newly created Oil Minister Lambert Mende was quoted by Reuters to say, “not because of our current small production, but because there is major potential... Quite modestly, we expect nothing less than three billion barrels of reserves, and it’s certainly more than that.” Reuters in July 2007 confirmed that onshore reserves remain untapped and largely unexplored in Equateur province in the north as well as under Lake Albert and Lake Tanganyika along the eastern border.[22](#)

As always, the exploiters try to minimize the awareness of the resources they are targeting.

Contrary to the statement by MONUC's German diplomat Albrecht Conze—as the Congolese, Rwandan and Ugandan people know all too well—the “terrorists” are all over Central Africa, even if some of them have never visited the country.

Conze's behavior epitomizes white supremacy masked by “humanitarianism” and “peacekeeping” in Africa. The “peacekeeping” operations of MONUC, like the “humanitarian” or misery industry, are merely well-cloaked disguises for more predatory capitalism with the added insidiousness of a supposed and self-righteous “higher moral purpose” that allows the exploiters in the West to celebrate our “goodness” and our “humanity” and to claim that our hands are clean and, of course, that we care. But this is big business and nothing else. To question such things are themselves written off as complete heresy, and that is why MONUC does not take any notice of such writings as this one: good journalists produce tripe for Harper's, they don't point the finger at modern day conquistadors and attach blame to the names of U.N. officials, corporate executives, or high society philanthropists and diamond tycoons.

MONUC officials say nothing of substance about mining in Congo, which proceeds in parallel with the bloodletting, arms trading and extortion. For example, Anvil Mining has been involved in massacres in DRC.[23](#) Anvil directors include former U.S. Ambassador Kenneth Brown, who served at U.S. embassies in Brussels, Kinshasa, Congo-Brazzaville and South Africa. Brown was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Africa (1987-1989) under George Schultz and George H.W. Bush and then Director of Central African Affairs (1980-1981). Meanwhile, the former top internal intelligence and security chief of the United Nations Observer's Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) has been worked for Anvil mining in Katanga since 2006.[24](#)

With top MONUC security officials taking high paying jobs with companies involved in the atrocities, one begins to see the nature of an organized, armed, free-for-all for Congo's resources.

This journalist reported in July 2007 that MONUC officials were accepting kickbacks from warlord Jean-Pierre Bemba, and there is evidence of MONUC collusion with other individuals capitalizing on war and plunder in Congo.[25](#) In December 2007, it was reported that a special task force for the United Nations “uncovered a pervasive pattern of corruption and mismanagement involving hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts for fuel, food, construction and other materials used by U.N. peacekeeping operations.” [26](#)

But this is the tip of the iceberg and the United Nations actions are weak and, often enough, meaningless. Finally, the MONUC mission in Congo institutionalizes the inequality and suffering endured by Congolese people by maintaining double standards about labor and employment packages provided to MONUC employees who live in the host country: In August 2007 a major “stop work” strike was undertaken by Congolese nationals in the MONUC system due to the entrenched and continued injustices served on Congolese people working for the mission, in comparison with the more comprehensive employment packages provided to expatriate foreigners. The strike was almost entirely unreported by the MONUC public information offices. The international press—in keeping with their role as gatekeepers of suffering in Congo—investigated nothing and, in the end, they only parroted the official line.[27](#)

## **Unmanned Aerospace Vehicles**

The United Nations and European Union Forces (EUFOR) involved in Congo are there to secure corporate resources and insure profits through military domination. Yet the cover story is hammered into the Western “news” consuming consciousness as a “humanitarian” or a “peacekeeping” mission.

Advanced technologies like Israel Aircraft Industries/Belgian Hunter UAVs (Unmanned Aerospace Vehicles) intelligence platforms are now used by Belgian defense forces in flying operations over Congo.<sup>28</sup> Two UAVs have crashed in Kinshasa, killing one Congolese person and wounding 10 others, and the Israeli-Belgian fleet has deployed three more UAVs. Belgian Defense command indicates that the UAVs are to “collect information on road traffic and crowd activities.”<sup>29</sup> But the statement is a euphemism for maintaining the status quo of suffering, starvation, torture and dispossession in Congo, while further enhancing foreign military domination and expansion.

Three cheers for the rogue Congolese soldier with the battered Kalashnikov AK-47 whose single shot at one of the EUFOR’s robotic UAVs flying overhead (at 1200 feet) penetrated the wing joint, pierced a structural weak point and caused the wing to crumble and the UAV to crash. Of course, the poor man has disappeared into the dungeons of hell in Kinshasa, and he will go down in history as a criminal, rather than a hero whose expression of frustration and misery manifested in shooting down a \$10 million dollar Israeli weapon with a pop gun.

The Belgian military described the man as a “lone gunmen with a known criminal record.”<sup>30</sup> But the hubris of this statement defies articulation when we remember the known criminal records of the white men involved in devastating Congo, then Zaire, and now Congo, since the arrival of Henry Morton Stanley and his blood-rubber and hand-chopping-off enterprises in the 1870’s.

Where is the international rescue committee?

As of January 2008 there are consistent reports of starvation in Kinshasa, and reports of arbitrary arrest and illegal detention of men, women and children at security facilities, including underground torture centers, and this is certainly true all over the country. As of December 2007, those arrested as a “security threat” and held incommunicado in these Kinshasa dungeons include: Mimi Mboyi (19) and child (jailed >18 months); Angele (17) and child (jailed >24 months); Mianda Kadogo (19) and child (jailed >11 months); Nicolette Mukungu (20) and child (jailed >20 months); Bokungu (21); Olga (20) and child (jailed >13 months); Edjoka (29). The main security facilities in Kinshasa are Camp Tshiatshi, the Central Prison at Makala, Camp Kokolo, and the underground dungeon known as “corridor of death.”<sup>31</sup>

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