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Africa: The Congo Massacre

(See Cover) The Simbas came at 7 o'clock. Grim-faced in their manes of monkey fur and feathers, they banged on the doors of the Residence Victoria with spears and gun butts, roughly hustled their white hostages out into the street. For an hour, the skies over Stanleyville had pulsed with airplane engines and apprehension. Watchers on the rooftops saw parachutes bloom and fall over the airfield to the west; gunfire ticked closer in the near distance. The Belgians had come, and help for the hostages was on its way—fast, but for many not fast enough.

The Simbas marched the 250 whites out into the broad, dawn-pale streets near the monument of the late Patrice Lumumba, the wild leftist demagogue who was the Congo's first Premier and remains its leading martyr. The marble steps below the rain-blached image were discolored with the blood of more than 100 Congolese executed in recent months: even before the rebels turned on the whites, they had brutally exterminated black opponents of their arcane revolutionary cause. At the monument, in the name of socialism and the Congolese People's Republic, the former mayor of Stanleyville had been eviscerated, his liver and kidneys eaten raw by a laughing rebel officer while the mayor slowly died.

No Scruples. The hostage column was marched into nearby Avenue Sergeant Kitele, then ordered to sit down in the street. "We didn't believe they would harm us deliberately," recalls U.S. Consul Michael P. Hoyt, who walked with one of his aides at the head of the column. "But there was always the chance of an accident. The firing kept getting closer. Then I saw one of the Simbas fire into the crowd and I saw people running. Everybody began running. I was not running properly and I fell down twice. My legs wouldn't function right. A guy ahead of me went over a wire fence. I decided it was best to keep down. I didn't hear any screams during the firing. Funny. I always thought that people being shot at screamed."

There were plenty of screams elsewhere. As the U.S. planes kept coming and stick after stick of Belgian paratroopers popped silk over the city, Radio Stanleyville shrilled its last message: "Ciyuga! Ciyuga! Kill them all! Men, women and children. Kill them all! Have no scruples!" The Simbas (Swahili for "lions") of Rebel General Nicholas Olenga did their best to carry out the order. In the Avenue Sergeant Kitele,

according to some survivors, the command to fire was given by "Major Bubu," a deaf-mute ex-boxer addicted to hemp who served as personal bodyguard to Rebel Defense Minister Gaston Soumialot. Bubu's order could not have been a scream, but in its strangled, inarticulate ferocity must have expressed precisely the blood lust of the Simbas.

Rifles and Sten guns rattling, they fired point-blank into the seated hostages. The gunners picked women and children as their first targets. Many whites flopped onto the pavement, pretending to be dead. Others did not have to pretend. One Belgian child was cut in half by a Sten-gun burst. Parents who flung themselves over their children were stitched by the wild bullets that sprayed the crowd. A woman sat openmouthed as gunfire chopped down the people on either side of her. She somehow came through unhurt.

Not so lucky was a quiet, self-effacing American medical missionary from Torrance, Calif., who for two months had been a pawn of the rebel regime in its negotiations with the U.S., Belgium and the legal Congolese government of

Premier Moise Tshombe. Periodically sentenced to death as an "American spy," periodically reprieved when things seemed to go well for the rebels, Dr.

Paul Earle Carlson, 36, caught a slew of bullets through head and back as he tried to escape the slashing gunfire.

"Carlson was not singled out," says Mike Hoyt, who saw the surgeon die.

"He arrived late at the rear of the column with two other Americans. They started running and went over a wall.

Then he started over. He just didn't make it. It made me sick. He had been through so much, and to be killed at the very end." Lost Rites. Moments after Carlson died, the Belgian paratroopers arrived, and at their approach the Simbas took to their heels. The troops secured the airport, quickly fought their way into town. Surprise, speed and Simba cowardice kept the slaughter near Lumumba Square from reaching major proportions. But across the Congo River, in Stanleyville's Rive Gauche section, the Simbas found 28 other victims. The hostages were hacked to pieces on the street. Among them were four Spanish nuns and a number of Spanish and Dutch priests. According to a witness, the priests were beaten and then their throats were cut. After similar treatment, the nuns were placed on top of them. The usual mutilations were carried out on the "sexual organs, and flesh was cut from the bodies to be eaten.

One Belgian who escaped said: "We bought our lives with beer and money.

The fathers and nuns had nothing to ransom their lives with." Of some 1,300 whites in Stanleyville, all but

60 were rescued. Of the dead, at least 29 were Belgian, one Canadian, two American—Carlson and another missionary, Phyllis Rine, 25, of Mount Vernon, Ohio.

The survivors, grey with shock and gaudy with bloodstains, hiked the mile and a half to the airport. There bullet-riddled U.S. C-130 transports—winged by rebel ground fire during the airdrop —waited to fly them to Leopoldville and safety. "It was not a happy, singing group," said Hoyt with grim understatement, "although I couldn't help feeling glad to be alive." By 10:27 a.m.

the first transports were back in Leopoldville. They were chockablock with living, dead, dying and wounded. They kept coming all day: crisp white nuns and an old priest in a black Homburg; two little girls, bloodstained, holding tightly to their dolls; a mother and daughter in pajamas and no shoes; a baby with its feet sticking out of an airline bag.

The dead were set down in front of a U.S. Air Force hangar, and Belgian Catholic priests performed the last rites.

There had been no time yet to provide coffins. U.S. Ambassador George Mc-Murtrie Godley watched two marines drape the Stars and Stripes over the body of Dr. Paul Carlson. Someone had taken a New Testament from Carlson's pocket, to be sent to his wife.

The Question. A single life, or even a hundred, may not appear to mean much in the grim reckoning of Africa.

The tribes butchered each other for centuries before the white man arrived, and in colonial days white soldiers killed countless, nameless Africans. But Dr.

Carlson's murder, along with the massacre of perhaps another hundred whites and thousands of blacks, had a special, tragic meaning.

Carlson symbolized all the white men —and there are many—who want nothing from Africa but a chance to help.

He was no saint and no deliberate martyr. He was a highly skilled physician who, out of a strong Christian faith and a sense of common humanity, had gone to the Congo to treat the sick. His death did more than prove that Black African civilization—with its elaborate trappings of half a hundred sovereignties, governments and U.N. delegations —is largely a pretense. The rebels were after all, for the most part, only a rabble of dazed, ignorant savages, used and abused by semi-sophisticated leaders.

But virtually all other black African nations, including the more advanced and moderate ones, supported the rebels without even a hint of condemnation for their bestialities. Virtually all these nations echoed the

cynical Communist line in denouncing the parachute rescue as "imperialist aggression." When this happened, the sane part of the world could only wonder whether Black Africa can be taken seriously at all, or whether, for the foreseeable future, it is beyond the reach of reason.

Naked Nuns. The U.S.-Belgian intervention was decided upon only as a last resort, when all negotiations had failed with the rebel regime of Christophe Gbenye—the bearded "President" of the Peking-backed Congo People's Republic, who packs a Colt revolver in his blue jeans and drives a Rolls-Royce.

When the more or less Communist-backed rebels first launched their attack on the government, the U.S. helped Premier Tshombe only with relatively modest sums of money and supplies.

He himself recruited white officers of various nationalities to stiffen the loyal Congolese army.

When the rebels captured Stanleyville last August, they treated the whites living there relatively well at first. But as the war began to turn against them, they grew increasingly venomous, until finally all whites were "Americans" and deserving of maltreatment or death.

The rebel regime kept announcing that 10,000 Americans were fighting alongside Tshombe. Except for an occasional refugee's horror story, little was known on the outside about the fate of the whites during that period. But last week, the grim details were filled in.

Anyone with a radio set—either transmitter or receiver—was considered a spy, calling in "Yankee" help against the cause. Sister Anne-Maria Merkens, mother superior of a mission hospital at Bondamba, 300 miles northwest of Stan, owned a tiny transistor radio. Simbas in leopardskins appeared in mid-September, accused the nuns of sending messages to the Americans, even though the radio was only capable of receiving signals. They returned a few weeks later, killed the mission's cows, stole its chickens and rice. On their next visit, they abducted schoolgirls aged 7 to 14, spent the night sniffing dope, dancing and raping. Finally, in November they "arrested" Sister Anne-Maria and another nun, forced them to strip, and locked them up in Basoko with 16 other nuns, 23 priests and three civilians.

"The next day, Nov. 11, the Simbas heard two light planes overhead," Sister Anne-Maria recalled last week: "In rushed a Simba, who with a sweep of his spear brushed the table clean. Shouting accusations that we had summoned the Americans, the Simbas attacked the priests. They hammered them mercilessly with sticks and rifle butts until nearly everyone was covered with blood and bruises. Then we were marched outside, told to strip off all our clothes, and ordered to sit down." Naked, the nuns were beaten fiercely, locked up without food and clothing for 24 hours in a small room. "Again and again they promised to kill us or eat us alive or throw us into the river in sacks."

Finally the priests and nuns were taken to Stanleyville to join the rebels' other hostages. By now the leaders were trying to barter the lives of their prisoners for a ceasefire.

To the Inner Station. Negotiations started in Nairobi, under the auspices of Kenya's Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta, chairman of the Organization of African Unity's Congo Reconciliation Commission. Posturing in his orange sport shirt among the mangoes and moonflowers of Jomo's garden, the rebel "Foreign Minister," Thomas Kanza, presented his conditions: hostages would live if Tshombe's Congolese army immediately halted its drive toward the rebel capital. That was tantamount to demanding a legitimate government's surrender to the rebels.

Moreover, it was becoming increasingly clear that Gbenye's control over his savage Simbas was fraying, and that unless something was done immediately, the hostages in rebel territory would be massacred out of hand. U.S. Consul Hoyt and his four aides were under threat of death for most of their three-month captivity, at one point were told to eat slices of an American flag ("We just made like we were chewing it," said Vice Consul David Grinwis. "It was a very durable flag"). Early last week, Gbenye himself fed the fires by telling a cheering crowd: "As fetishes we will wear the hearts of Belgians and Americans; we will dress in the skins of Americans and Belgians."

On instructions from Washington, U.S. Ambassador William Attwood broke off the talks. To save the lives of the hostages, the 600 men of Belgium's crack Regiment Para-Commando, led by a stocky, balding Africa hand, Colonel Charles Laurent, 51, would have to live up to their motto: *Nee lactantia Nee Metu* (Neither Boasting nor Fearing). They did.

From Ascension Island, where they had been in readiness for a week, the paracommandos flew in 14 U.S.-piloted C-130s to Katanga's giant Ka-mina Military Base and thence toward their target. Below the gaping jump-hatches, the Congo wound broad and tawny through black-green bush; the tin and tile roofs of Stanleyville shone pink in the early light. "Stan," as it is known to both black and white, is the most African town of the Congo. The "Inner Station" of Conrad's Heart of

Darkness, it stands at the very center of the continent.

As Conrad wrote of the journey upriver to Stanleyville: "It was like traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on earth and the big trees were kings. The air was warm, thick, heavy, sluggish.

You thought yourself bewitched and cut off forever from everything you had known once—somewhere—far away—in another existence perhaps." So it must have seemed to the soldiers who last week made the voyage to the Inner Station.

Gold Reserves. The Belgian paras sustained only seven casualties in rescuing the hostages. Four hours after their arrival, the Congolese 5th Mechanized Brigade rolled into Stan, spearheaded by the tough white fighters of Major Mike Hoare, 44, a starchy South African who served behind Japanese lines in Burma under Britain's mystical guerrilla warfare expert, Orde Wingate. No mystic himself, Hoare insisted that his

300 men stay neatly shaved, refrain from drinking beer before battle, but cared not a whit what they did otherwise. Mostly South Africans and Rhodesians, they gave no quarter to any black resembling a rebel.

Some of these white soldiers lived up to the name by which they are universally known—mercenaries. They were not above searching bodies for cash or blowing a few safes in the Stanleyville banks. But a great many of them are fighting for Tshombe's government out of conviction. Certainly, the "mercenaries" are no more mercenary—and far less brutal—than the African soldiers on either side of the Congolese civil war.

Gbenye and his rebel ministers had fled Stanleyville, and with them went more than 1,500 lbs. of gold (valued at nearly \$800,000) from the Kilo-Moto Mines and more than \$6,000,000 from the vaults of the Banque du Congo. But many Simbas had stayed behind sniping at anyone who moved, and the mopping up was bloody.

As troops entered the rebel headquarters near Lumumba Square, a black hand was spotted reaching from a closet to the door. A Belgian opened up with his automatic rifle. In the headquarters alone, 25 rebels—mostly unarmed, minor political types—were sprayed with rifle fire as they hid under beds, beneath the kitchen table, and in wardrobes, which toppled like tipped coffins as their occupants died. Outside, Tshombe's tough Katangese gendarmes hunted down Simbas.

Black residents of Stanleyville took to wearing white headbands to show their allegiance to the Leopoldville government, but that did not always work, and many a headband was soon stained red.

While a ghostly Stanleyville was gradually secured by the government troops, hundreds of white hostages still remained in rebel hands elsewhere. Two days after the Stanleyville drop, the Belgian paras jumped again, this time at Paulis, northeast of Stanleyville, where 270 whites were being kept prisoners.

Simba Scrimshaw. When they arrived, the paras found 20 hostages murdered with a deliberate savagery reminiscent of the Nazi death camps. A group of Simbas had burst into a Dominican mission where 71 Belgians and an American missionary, Joseph Tucker, 49, had been held for three weeks.

The rebels, drunk and high on hemp, chose their victims for the night. Jean de Gotte, Belgian honorary consul in Paulis, watched in horror: "The first dozen were bound, hands and feet tied together behind their backs—trussed like chickens. They were taken outside and dumped on the sidewalk. Five white fathers were stripped of their cassocks and their beards were cut off. Mr. Tucker was first. They hit him across the face with a beer bottle and blinded him. Then they beat him slowly, down the spine, with rifle butts and sticks. Every time he squirmed they hit him. It took him 45 minutes to die.

Some of them died more quickly." The next night, seven more Belgians were killed. The priests' bodies were left on the mission steps; others were dumped into a crocodile-infested river.

In Paulis, the rebels were equally savage with their fellow Africans. The pro-Tshombe provincial president

had been executed as an example to the town's 30,000 inhabitants. The Simbas first cut out his tongue, next lopped off his ears, feet and hands. Then they began a slow scrimshaw from the bottom up. It took him 15 minutes to die.

One survivor estimated that 4,000 Congolese were killed in Paulis—mostly the town's "intellectuals" (clerks, teachers, civil servants). "They started by killing anyone who was well-dressed," said a 27-year-old railway employee who got out alive. "In this country, the well-dressed are well-educated." As the paras tried to get the survivors out of Paulis, the Simbas followed them back to the rutted dirt airstrip where the C-130 waited. A rearguard held them off while the first planes took off, then scrambled for the last plane, which waited with its engines whining impatiently. They took off in a hail of mercifully inaccurate rebel fire. Aboard one of the planes flew Mrs. Angeline Tucker and her three children. She had not seen her husband die. After that, to the disgust of U.S. and Belgian officials on the scene, the paratroopers were withdrawn, presumably in deference to "world opinion," even though an estimated 1,100 whites were still in rebel-held territory.

The Road to Wasolo. Against the background of Stanleyville and Paulis, the quick machine-gun death of Paul Carlson appears merciful. But against the deeper background of his life, particularly his two years of service as a surgeon in a high, hot corner of Africa, where medicine was as rare as a morning frost, it appears cruel and incredibly wasteful.

Wasolo, where "Doctor Paul" maintained his medical mission, is a sudden clearing on the turn of a jungle road 800 miles northeast of Leopoldville and a million miles from nowhere. In Lingala, the lingua franca of the region, the place is aptly called "The End of the World." The Africans have beaten down the sobi grass around their huts in fear of snakes; beyond rises a wall of impenetrable rain forest. The hospital compound dominates a low hill. The house itself is red brick, and in the rainy season its roof pours drinking water into barrels standing beneath the eaves. In the dry season, Lois Carlson, 36, and her two children, Wayne, 9, and Lynette, 7, would take the truck to a stream half a mile away to fetch water. At the edge of Wasolo is a leper colony whose inmates produce the best cotton in Ubangi Province. They pick the bolls clean with their teeth.

It was here that Carlson chose to make his life. Born in Culver City, Calif., the son of a Swedish-immigrant machinist, he had been raised in an atmosphere of religion: the Evangelical Covenant Church of America, an offshoot of Lutheranism. Two years of service as a seaman in the U.S. Navy (1946-48) provided him with the G.I. bill and eventually his medical degree. At North Park College in Chicago he dated blonde, pert Lois Lindblom, whom he married in 1950. Then came Stanford and a degree in anthropology, followed by George Washington University med school. Lois worked as a nurse during Carlson's medical studies, looked forward to a cozy, housewifely career in California. But then Paul went to the Congo in 1961 for a six-month tour with the Protestant Relief Agency. What he saw there changed, and ultimately ended, his life.

Back in California, Carlson could not forget the urgent medical needs of the Congo. As he told one colleague

over lunch: "If you could only see, you wouldn't be able to swallow your sandwich." He remained in private practice nonetheless; he owned a \$12,000 home near Redondo Beach, was earning \$12,000 a year. But it palled, and finally he told a radiologist friend: "I'm going back. I can't stand doing hernias and hemorrhoids any more." Some Exotica. Signing on as medical missionaries for \$3,230 a year, the Carlsons arrived at Wasolo in October 1963—and were promptly greeted by several cases of hernia and hemorrhoids.

But somehow it was different in an 80-bed hospital serving 100,000 potential patients, particularly since the chief surgeon also had to patch broken tie rods on his truck-cam-ambulance with vines, build cookhouses, make house calls on a motor bike, and still handle at least one major operation a day.

As Carlson wrote to friends back home, there was some exotica as well: "The teen-age boy with hemoglobin of only 20% who looks as if he had been blown up with the helium gas used for balloons at the circus—only the skin of his leiTs is like old, dried, peeling leather"; the African whose homemade poo-poo gun had exploded and taken half his face with it; the difficult obstetrical cases, as for instance the pregnant patient who had to be operated on for a ruptured uterus. "The lady had come about 75 miles in trucks. When she got here, she had no blood pressure and a pulse of 180. We thank God that she is slowly on the way to recovery. And she paid the \$1.75 that covered the surgery." Permeating Carlson's letters, and scored in his thin voice on the tape-recorded messages he sent, were a delighted wonder at the oddness of the Congo and a conscious attempt to sound matter-of-fact. He found it strange to be awakened by "the night sentry in tattered pants with a long spear" and asked to aid a child with meningitis. It was oddly lyrical to be "trudging single file through the forest on the little path" to the leper colony, singing Christmas carols. There was something more immediate about his surgery when the sun set in the middle of an operation and the sutures had to be made by flashlight. Throughout his letters, the phrase persisted: "But so life goes." For the family, the life was a far remove from Redondo Beach barbecues. The diet was bananas, papayas and pineapples; goats, chickens and an occasional antelope. Though missionaries from the Evangelical Covenant network occasionally visited back and forth, amusement was usually family style: games of Scrabble, hymn singing, reading. The kids raised cats and dogs; Wayne built a monkey cage. It was hardly the usual Schweitzer-at-Lambarene scene. Even when the rebels showed up, it was far from dramatic.

A month after the rebels took Stanleyville, two scruffy Simbas in a purloined truck captured the area. The rebels were underestimated by the whites who chose to remain—missionaries, officials, technicians, businessmen, employees of the Belgian-owned Societe Generate, which controls most of the Congo's business enterprises and is still making money.

Some Europeans played into rebel hands—for instance, the Belgian owner of a sugar mill who felt it was better to deal with the people in power than lose his sugar crop: from neighboring Burundi he continued to bring in supplies and gasoline, which the rebels regularly confiscated, thus gaining enough fuel to attack Albertville.

The rebels reassured the owner by formally signing for everything—they delight in mixing barbarism with

bureaucracy—but before long, they held all the sugar workers as hostages and were manufacturing cannon in the mill workshops.

Foreign embassies had ordered all missionaries out of the north. Carlson took his family and his white nurse across the Ubangi River to the safety of the Central African Republic. But he himself returned to the hospital last September. He felt he could not desert his patients, and up to that time the rebels had not bothered doctors.

Carlson was arrested two weeks later because he owned a radio, because he was an American, and because the hard-pressed rebel regime wanted hostages. Along with the other American prisoners, Carlson became a pawn in the rebels' game to buy victory that did not end until the joint U.S.-Belgium paratroop action.

Remember Pearl Harbor. That action was completely understood in the West as humanitarian and, if anything, more cautiously carried out than necessary. The NATO Council formally backed it. In the "nonaligned" and Communist worlds, though, a well-organized propaganda effort made it sound as if the Americans and Belgians, not the savage Simbas, had committed the atrocities of Stanleyville. Whatever Belgium's guilt in the past, whatever the U.S.'s mistakes, it was a dizzying and infuriating perversion of the reality.

Moscow, obviously eager to show that it is just as anticolonialist as Peking, mouthed the usual phrases about "imperialist intervention" and permitted African students to riot at the U.S. embassy. But the Russian response was mild compared to the Khrushchevian blasts of 1960 (when Lumumba was deposed) and 1962 (when the U.N. went into Katanga). For all their relative softening toward the West, the satellites kept pace, with embassy riots in Prague and Sofia.

Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta, who has more than passing acquaintance with African savagery from his country's

Mau Mau days, may have felt somewhat embarrassed at his failure to bring about a "peaceful" solution to the hostage problem; though he condemned foreign intervention, he also called for continued "efforts at reconciliation" between the rebels and the Tshombe government. Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, a moderate who himself called for white help earlier this year when his army mutinied, ludicrously deplored the paratroop drop as "reminiscent of Pearl Harbor"—but then, he has Communist problems of his own at home.

In Cairo, some 200 African and Egyptian students descended on the U.S. embassy and burned down the adjacent, \$250,000 John F. Kennedy Memorial Library. Ahmed ben Bella, shaky ruler of a bankrupt Algeria, many of whose people survive only because of U.S. food gifts, pledged "arms and volunteers" to the Congo rebels. So did Red China.


No Can Do. Despite the fact that Rebel Boss Gbenye and his henchmen have been driven from their capital,

the fight will go on for some time. In their rapid push to save white lives, the Congolese army left big rebel pockets behind. Many pessimists talk of a "Hundred Years War." How can the rebellion be crushed? The remedy, as Tshombe sees it, is a patient formula—denounced as neo-colonial by his enemies—in which white men will hold as many key jobs as possible for as long as it takes to mold an effective army and an efficient administration. His refusal to "Africanize" at all cost is part of the reason why he is beyond the pale of his peers in other African nations. And yet a sizable number of whites have stayed on in such places as Nigeria and Ghana, where they are welcomed but not overly publicized.

Tshombe knows how to maintain his popularity at home—and he does it in a way no other African leader would dare. He talks about the dignity his people have lost through laziness and the common response, "Pas moyen, patron [No can do, boss]." He gives them hell.

In Stanleyville, just before the rebels took it, he told a crowd: "You tell me you don't have enough to eat. But I see you drinking beer at 9 o'clock in the morning. First work, then drink your beer." Africans respect a winner, and so Tshombe banked on his firm stand against the rebels in Stanleyville. If he succeeds, the Congo could become a watershed in the history of emerging Africa. For five years, African politicians have indiscriminately whiplashed the Western world while glorifying themselves with such airy phrases as "African personality" and "African socialism." Tshombe—that rarest of Africans who seems to have no complexes about being black—recognizes the brutal side of the African personality, and the phony side of African socialism. He is willing to accept people from the outside—whether mercenaries, technicians or missionaries—to give the Congo a measure of stability. Canny and unscrupulous, candid and pragmatic, he just might do it—although the odds are overwhelmingly against him.

The blacks of Stanleyville and Paulis are not likely soon to forget the heavy tread of the mercenaries. And it will take the whites even longer to forget or forgive the enormities committed by the Simbas. A great many of the Belgians and other whites who lived and worked in the Congo now shudder at the thought of returning. And yet, others—a surprisingly high number—have already said that after a while, they will go back, if asked. In all likelihood, they will not go in the spirit of a Paul Carlson, who once said, "In this century, more people have died for their witness for Christ than died in the early centuries, which we think of as the days of martyrs." They will be in the Congo for more mundane reasons. But if there is ever to be a normal, sane relationship between Black Africa and the white world, they will have to be there, and they will have to be accepted. For so life goes.

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