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Pedro Monaville, *Students of the World: Global 1968 and Decolonization in the Congo*. Publisher: Duke University Press, 2022. 341 pages. ISBN 9781478022985.

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This is an inspiring and deeply textured account of the significance of Congolese student activism and its impact on a form of anti-colonial consciousness among students inside and outside the Congo. Focused primarily after World War Two in the 1960s, Monaville's book examines when the Congo rapidly transitioned to an independent nation-state. In the context of such quick change, Monaville explores a political culture of cosmopolitanism that arose among Congolese students through increased travel, mobility, and space for the debate of ideas.

Through interviews with living participants, Monaville provides insight into the types of trajectories that brought students into contact with the different intellectual currents of the period—including Marxism, pan-Africanism, and liberalism. Monaville also demonstrates what Congolese students thought of these divergent ideological tendencies. He shows the appeal of anti-colonial nationalism to the fashioning of individual and collective selves among Congolese students; and he provides evidence for its role in galvanizing student response to the political upheavals of that time—including Congo's violent decolonization, Lumumba's murder, and Mobutu's rise to power.

Monaville reaches his main story in a circular way, notably spending the beginning of his book establishing the material basis for the accelerating ties of imagination that linked groups of Congolese in the decades before decolonization together. Starting with an examination of the postal service, the culture of letter writing, and the role of Catholic seminaries in training the elite in the Belgian Congo, Monaville moves into the role of study abroad, the protests of expatriate students in Belgium, and the contestations over civility and respectability roiling the culture of the Congo's elite universities by the late 1950s. *Students of the World* shows the rapid ideological transformation of student politics. Private seminaries like Lovanium had long served only a tiny fraction of the colony's African population, mainly among the 'evolue' classes. In the 1960s, at the same time as they opened to a much larger student body, they became sites of student protest, over both local and global issues. (186)

Monaville demonstrates the differing attitudes to Lumumba among Congolese students of the time. He chronicles the ties between student organizations and the Lumumba-ist left on campus, including the radicalization of students prompted by his assassination. Monaville clearly portrays the ambiguities of this radicalization—for instance, regarding the weaponization of the struggle. In my opinion, the most interesting parts of Monaville's monograph were his analysis of the student left *after* Lumumba's assassination and during Mobutu's consolidation of power.

Here, Monaville exemplifies the importance of the student left to Mobutu's ideological legitimacy; this was at a strategic period of Mobutu's consolidation of rule (p.167). The momentous decision of Mobutu in June 1971 to enroll all Lovanium students into the military as a punishment for their oppositional rhetoric to his regime, and then to nationalize the universities, is treated as the end of an unprecedented era of worldliness and cosmopolitanism among Congolese university students (p.196).

Monaville laments this loss of “worldedness” among Congolese students of the 1960s. Yet, he also provides context that shows that this loss was the byproduct of the rapid and largely unplanned mass expansion of higher education during the 1960s. The early 1960s elitism of higher education in the Congo, as Monaville shows, encouraged a certain spirit-de-corps among students of the time, where utopian visions like ‘decolonization as pedagogy’ could incubate (p.208). Monaville is clearly aware of how nostalgia shapes his interviewees' sense of self; he attends to the ideological contradictions these memories reflect, including critiques of Lumumba's decision-making and frank admiration for Mobutu's leadership.

In my opinion, however, the book is slightly less critical of the contradictions of Congolese student activism than it should have been. Mobutu's repression of the students in 1971 might have provided an opportunity for broader reflection on utopianism and pragmatism in student thought. Student exiles no doubt continued to develop their own form of cosmopolitanism, even as the anti-colonial national project in the Congo was rendered moribund.

An epilogue linking the broader significance of Congolese student activism to the present concerns of student activists there, would also have given the narrative a compelling link to the present day. What lessons, if any, can contemporary Congolese university students learn from the struggle of the 1960s generation?

Monaville has written an account that might spark such conversations; and he triggered a discussion about a vital decade in Congolese student activism. He did this against the backdrop of some of the most consequential events in the history of decolonization in Africa.

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