

[start, 00:00]

SPEAKER 3: Clap, back down a little. Ok, clap, it's filming. We're starting.

SPEAKER 2: Ok. Can you tell me what you call yourself and say you give permission to be filmed?

SPEAKER 1: My name is Jonas Mukamba Kadiata Nzeba. I'm allowing you to film me.

SPEAKER 2: Thank you very much. Now, we start with the actual interview. So, can you now repeat your name and also give the full address, street, street number, neighborhood, municipality, city, country?

SPEAKER 1: My name is Jonas Mukamba Kadiata Nzeba. I live on the Boma(ph) hilltop, number 114, Quartier Joli Parc Séduc(ph), municipality of Gayema, Kinshasa province.

SPEAKER 2: Can you add the country?

SPEAKER 1: The Democratic Republic of Congo.

SPEAKER 2: Ok, thank you. So now, talk about me [*should be: tell me about you*], when and where you were born? Who were your parents? What was your childhood like?

SPEAKER 1: I was born in Tshikapa, now Kasai, on January 4, 1931. My parents were farmers. I did my primary school at the mission called Mayounélin(ph), a Catholic mission. This is where I was baptized in 1941. That's how I added the first name Jonas to my parental surnames. This is where I also did my elementary school. I finished high school at the little seminary of Kabwe Sainte-Thérèse, 200 km from Tshikapa. I finished studying humanities there, but I was not lucky enough to be sent to the Grand Seminary for philosophy, theology and to become a priest. That's how I came down here to Léopoldville, now known as Kinshasa, the only Higher Institute for the (inaudible) was Kisantu(ph), 72 km from Kinshasa (inaudible).

It was there that I studied at Lobanu(ph) Kisantu which was run by the Jesuit missionaries, who were based at the Catholic University of Leuven. There were preparatory sections, the medical section for medical assistants, an agricultural section for agricultural assistants and the administrative and commercial section, for four years. It was in the latter that I finished my degree. After this degree, in 1955, I worked at the registry of the Libreville Court of Appeal. At the time, there were two appeal courts in that country at that time. The Libreville Court of Appeal, Lumumbashi, which ruled two provinces, Katanga Province and Kibo Province. The second Court of Appeal was the Kinshasa Court which used to control Kasai Province, Orientale Province, the Équateur Province and Léopoldville Province. And Léopoldville at that time, as a province, included the current Congo Central, Kwango, Kwilu and Mai-Ndombe, plus the city of Léopoldville.

[00:05:05]

So, it was like that before it was distributed over six provinces. In 1957, given the discrimination, having eliminated Lobanu(ph) Kisantu for (inaudible), then as the attorney general (inaudible), had said to Leuven, the governor of the provinces had said to Leuven, all the important authorities of the time were saying the Catholic University of Leuven, that's why I left, I resigned and I got by without a scholarship by going through (inaudible) it is (inaudible) in Brussels. I enrolled, I wanted to study law, but before 1960, the Congolese people could not study law, to learn everything that was science related. They wanted me to do pedagogy, psychology, but I insisted, that's why I studied literature, I did political and administrative sciences, like (inaudible) at school. It was at the end of school that you would make your choice and I chose the media as an additional course. I finished my studies in 1961. There you go, that's how the studies went. If there is anything else to ask...

SPEAKER 2: You told me that you worked at the Universal Exhibition in Brussels in 1958. Can you talk about it?

SPEAKER 1: Exactly, during my university studies, I did not have a scholarship, it was the missionary fathers in Brussels who helped me. There was the Jesuit father, the (inaudible) father, these are the fathers who helped me. So, as I was working in the media, and I love soccer, I was writing articles about Anderlecht(ph) matches for the Liège Standard and there were articles in Congo that were being paid. I also wrote articles on the (inaudible) peoples' customs, on twin children, how they were treated, why they are given this or that name, the vicissitudes(ph) of the great fashion designers, I gave lectures (inaudible). Now, when did the Brussels World Expo project come to Heysel.

It was the Belgians who led the conference, there were more than 150 Congolese, men and women who helped, and eight students and colleagues, (inaudible) Marcel, (inaudible) Jean-Marie, Congo Justin, Lusenga(ph), etc. (inaudible) I was going to forget (inaudible) Évariste on the commercial side. We were being recruited to keep the Congolese company and supervise them. Like the press, the majority were arriving in Belgium for the first time, and in this group, there were all categories. There were leading fashion designers, there were farmers. I collaborated, we collaborated with these people at CAPA (*Centre d'accueil pour le personnel africain* [African Staff Reception Center]), the center where they lived in Brussels at the (inaudible). So during the stay while the exhibition took place, we were well paid. There you go, that's what I did. But I am forgetting one thing, there was no television at the time.

There was the Friendly Association of Congolese Sailors in Antwerp. It was a father, the priest who used to run it, and often on weekends, students, we used to go there, we were welcomed, we ate there for free, we stayed the night. There was (inaudible) Mateo(ph), who came from my family, and when it came to him, the ship arrived earlier.

[00:10:00]

The Congolese people used to stay there, a month at a time and so on. One day, as there was no television, there were posters, there was a dance contest, the Cha-cha-cha, a dance like they do in Belgium.

So, it's because in Congo, we had already danced the Cha-cha-cha. My friend, Justin Bomoko(ph) as well as Caldos Sému(ph) and I, we signed up to participate in this contest. My friends were better dancers than me, but they came across some Belgian girls.

I saw a mixed race woman in the yard, I went to speak with her, I asked her, I said: "Miss, can we participate in this contest? What nationality are you?" She told me Haitian, but I have known the Cha-cha-cha for a long time.

We were among a group of ten couples or so. There were these three Congolese, including myself, but well, as I was a better dancer, the (inaudible) who did not know, he was obviously tripping up. I was fortunate to come across a woman who knew the dance. That's why I remember (inaudible) well. I won first prize, fifty thousand Belgian francs, at the time. This is the first time I had a sum like this since I was born and as a student. After that, the tax had to be deducted, there was about 42 left, we shared it fifty fifty. I remember opening my first bank account in Flagey square at Ixelles Credit Bank, an unrivaled event. Two months later, I applied for a small loan, I bought my first car, a 2CV. These are pretty much my memories.

SPEAKER 2: Ok. At the Universal Exhibition, there were Congolese people who were exhibited. But at one point, they stopped because of Belgian reactions. Are you aware of this?

SPEAKER 1: Exactly, this is a very good question. There was a pavilion for the Congolese, the babines, as they were called. They had their lips a bit split like the Luba(ph), the Tukuba(ph) who had heads like that. It was a special pavilion, highly visible, to attract the normal people of that time. Two weeks later, the association of Black students was formed in Belgium. Well, we revolted, we did (inaudible). We broke up the rail station(ph). That's how the scene was suspended or canceled, and that's (inaudible).

SPEAKER 2: There's also a child that died there, a child that was eight months old, I believe. Are you aware of that?

SPEAKER 1: Sorry?

SPEAKER 2: There was a Congolese child who died during the Universal Exhibition. He was a boy who was eight months old and he is buried in Tervuren cemetery. Are you aware of this?

SPEAKER 1: Yes, yes, that is correct.

SPEAKER 2: Can you tell us about it, tell us more? Because in the museum, they don't have any information about it?

SPEAKER 1: Indeed, you are right, it was the climate, he was not used to the cold. These are the reasons that were given. (inaudible) was worried, we had questions, but we were made to understand that this child arrived young in a country where the climate, where the food, everything was different from where he came from. And that adults and old people could adapt. This is pretty much the explanation that was given.

[00:14:55]

SPEAKER 2: Did you also visit the museum on this occasion? The museum of Tervuren which was known as the Museum of Belgian Congo?

SPEAKER 1: It is the CAPA, the Reception Center for Africa, the CAPA center, where all Congolese were housed. But there were days when there were no visits for visiting. But, first, as we arrived in 1957 before the exhibition began, we had, of course, it was curiosity. There were activities, museums and cities.

SPEAKER 2: So, were the relations with Belgians different in Congo than in Belgium?

SPEAKER 1: Very different. Relations with the Belgians were very, very different. Here we had the city for White people, the city for Black people. We work in offices, the business, the factories were in the cities. But, after 6 p.m., the Negroes could not be seen in town. I had my family in the community, but at 4 p.m., we had to get ready to finish at 4:30 p.m.

From 6 p.m., no Black people were seen in town, it was different for the Belgians, who had evening receptions. There were boy(ph), servants, he had a special card. If he's caught, he used that card, and with it he could stay after 6 p.m. there for work. Hence the name Muerie(ph) which (inaudible) residences like this. There's a makeshift workers' dwelling for these people, when it was too late, they would stay there. Because if it is going to continue after hours, he will be arrested. They were (inaudible) Muerie(ph) (inaudible) ...

So White men would easily be with Congolese Black without being troubled, they would even have children, but we Black men were not allowed to be with a White woman. White women, we very rarely saw them in African cities, there was one, in what we called the social center, one such White woman, who came to the social center, who showed her face in the city because there was the system of civic categories, or becoming registered. For this, the (inaudible) arrive unexpectedly, a White lady arrives at your home unexpectedly, to find out whether he's going to eat with a fork or with his hands? He can go quickly to the toilet, is there water (inaudible), is there toilet paper there? He can enter into your life, into your hospital room, while you are not there of course, has the bed been made as it should be done?

There you go, these are the things that were done, things they called ridiculous. So call the athletes, do them. It was often the young ladies who wanted to do this. To report where required? No, no. He is with us now. He speaks a little French. She is well-spoken. It's all these (inaudible) things that meant that you had a civic life card, that you were registered as such. At the office,

eating, how are you behaving here? So please, how can I detect your way of speaking. So, when you have this card or when you are registered, you may be forced to drink wine though we are prohibited from drinking wine. I call them like the Portuguese people everywhere, and also White people. They had our behavior. If you arrange to speak with a Portuguese person.

[00:20:00]

But I discovered in 1956 that the only hotel I know where it was authorized to drink wine is the Stanley Hotel(ph). At this hotel, when a (P) wakes up at 6:30 a.m., we would buy a card, to line up to have a glass of wine. I did that and I was there. So many of us did not drink wine, when we see that it is 5:30 p.m., we still have to get back to the city.

We can get used to the idea of allowing ourselves just to hang around... The next day, we would start again. So for relationships, it was like that. And then there was no White man who was a driver. All the drivers, all the servants were for White people and [were] Black people, street sweepers were Black people. When I said that I went through the city to go to Leuven, to find out why I went, I went in soccer. Everything you say, I don't come from the Sabena Léopoldville airplane, but it didn't exist. The tickets, I always got them at sixteen thousand eight hundred.

We went to play a match in Brazzaville with the Medering(ph) team that I was part of. During the match, it rained, the match was suspended. According to the regulations, it's free, it's afterwards that the game has to be played. The (inaudible) were free to visit the city, because to go to Brazzaville too, it was very complicated for permit authorizations. We took advantage of this match to go to Brazzaville. So (inaudible) asked Air France and then, I was told that tickets to go from Brazzaville to Paris cost fourteen thousand francs. From Paris to Brussels, nine hundred francs [for] a train ticket. Since I wasn't on a scholarship, I took the train. So, as he wasn't in a hurry, I calculated. Paid 16,800.

Not of this.

She lives in Paris. She went to live in Paris 14,600 for the Trans. I managed to get a friend's price discount from the room. He had decided to travel there via Brazzaville. In Brazzaville, it was for him, this school did not exist. They were waiting for me in Brussels. But I had the opportunity to go through there, no one was waiting for me there. I saw this one.

from the airplanes this one. We see little, me, me and me.

I was so scared when I passed security with the forms

I said, to go to Brussels, do you have to go to the Nord Rail Station for the North? Do you see the distance? We didn't imagine all that. I took a taxi. I was told that the taxi was around 11 o'clock, noon, 2 o'clock. So you see the peak hours, so many cars, while here in Lecombi(ph)

And then, after telling himself that he had been excused from going to the car, I held on and gestured at my neck, I said, Sir, do you want to kill me? He brought me, he took off. He told me,

But you are crazy! I said, But no, you're the one who's crazy! I thought he was going to hurt me. So many dangerous things are told when you get there.

Eventually we got to the station, he said, That's the station. I said, Can you go with me, show me where to enter and pay. Even though he didn't hear, he started that up. Thank you, sir. I stopped, but barely had I paid, barely, he's gone from [my] life and he is full of baraka. You pass in front of four fields, that of Black people sweeping the street.

[00:25:00]

He managed to do so well. He spoke to the first one. He didn't even look at me. He keeps on sweeping the street, all that. And my second one said to me, But, sir, you're wasting my time, you don't see that I'm working? I thought, maybe like that. So I saw nuns pass by. Like. I don't know the country, I want to go to Brussels. What should I be doing?

I mean, the nuns led me inside the station.

To leave, you have to pay for the ticket and since it's also possible to leave, I got it, I paid for the ticket. But in Léopoldville, in Luluabourg or Libreville at the usual market, there is only one way. I didn't know which way to take.

I went into the hall, I saw an escalator with people going up, going down. It was work time.

I saw the nun again. I asked, But to go to Brussels, what do I need to do. Come with me, the maps, the maps there. This is the way, like you see it. She went away and I fell on the escalator for the first time in my life, because in Kinshasa there were no escalators.

I looked at the people going up, when the escalator got to the end, my shoe was stuck, and I fell down on it. They were screaming at me behind, sir, you're stopping all this, put yourself in my place, I was panicking. Someone picked me up. Then I stood up with my suitcase.

In the meantime, I didn't know the train was gone. So I'm asking people... but you're going to Brussels in English it's written (inaudible)

I... like that finally, a girl downstairs helped me, I took the train to Brussels, and from Brussels... So, there was my (inaudible) friend who had gone before me in advance.

There was still a budget anyhow

He was in contact who was to welcome me to Brussels. I spent nights at the station with the train. A bit of a coincidence?

which is going directly to Liège. So there was an obvious parity. I also decided to take a little trip to London before going to Liège

the train yard [very loud noise] and that of the Marseilles coast towards.

[large inaudible section]

He said, No, no, this is where you will read this article. And that's how it is. It's this way. We will not say

We were no more than 500 students. But at (inaudible) it is more than 2000, 5000. I saw a guy with his student cap. I spoke to

[large inaudible section]

Finally, it is good that for her to be fully integrated into the university, since [at the] university, everyone knew each other. I literally (inaudible). After 12 pm, we started to feel tired. Initially, I ordered a coffee. Finally, I asked the bartender, Did (inaudible)? He said, Take a taxi. I looked for the taxi.

[00:30:00]

He asks me the address, I said no, I'm going to the Jesuit fathers. He said, there are three houses of Jesuits, which one? I said, Let's go to the main, the main similarity. You asked me. There are still studies here anyhow. Imagine the reasoning. He took me to the main house. He went up, we rang the bell. (inaudible)

took out my suitcase. Could this perhaps be the best of. From 8 p.m., people sleep

But it ends badly tonight, like. Yeah, sometimes it goes until 7 p.m. Come tomorrow morning. I don't know where to go, to go where? (inaudible)

I put my suitcase in a corner, I leaned on it. At five o'clock he said to me, Now the priests are going out, there are some who are going to work, others who are going to say Mass.

He finds me and tells me, But Jonas, what are you doing here? How did you come here? My father, I'm tired, tell me if my friend (inaudible)

And then he called a taxi... bring a car here, a taxi.

He takes me to my friend (inaudible) My friend goes down. Jonas, you have just come without warning me,

He went up to his room... I said, Let me rest...

I told the story, I signed up. There you go. I forgot a detail...

That's it, that's where students also learn dances. And we're doing it too.
a place for twist and Cha cha cha. ... a little money ... There you go.

SPEAKER 2: Did you hear... because you stayed in Belgium until 1961, if I understand correctly?
So you heard the news of the January 4 riots when you were in Belgium?

SPEAKER 1: Seases?

SPEAKER 2: The riots of January 4, 1959?

SPEAKER 3: The riots that took place on January 4.

SPEAKER 1: On January 4th, I followed that in Brussels. But as I was a press contact, who had done the press here in Libreville (Ph) as he did there. That, I followed. On January 4, it was a soccer game at the Stadium, it was called Autoi(ph), which is today I believe (inaudible) before falling. It was (inaudible) that made this stadium

The game was played with the team (inaudible), a single team with (inaudible); at the time, there were three or four antagonistic teams also with (inaudible).
(inaudible) was playing ... there were fights, the fact of being beaten by that team.

But this time, it was supportive guys, always supportive. They went out.
Not very happy, How does this always happen around here and it brings you back...

If the opinion of the people. He did it. I am almost.

[00:34:20 through 00:35:20; loud noise, inaudible]

That coincided with the police, the police, the hunters. And there you go, there is just the protest. Coincidence sets in because of centralists. That's why. It started too, perhaps because of the police. Most police officers.

What about the police? The most advanced laws of the. [sic] the figures according to the commissioner on this idea.

So these people jumping out of stadiums and there was a lot of easy grabbing, since the next star. This is how these men of [sic] arrive. It wasn't about doing politics, it was a coincidence. And those who are fascinated by (inaudible), who found what was easy because they appreciated the thing, they mixed in like the flock. This is what was happening.

SPEAKER 2: And after Kasa-Vubu?

SPEAKER 1: A little later, four five left-wing leaders were arrested. And as people protested to release them, to send them away with amnesia. They lived towards.

SPEAKER 2: Because you want to know how that is?

SPEAKER 1: Maybe it will be...

SPEAKER 2: And on this occasion, with Kasa-Vubu or with the other Congolese students, are you talking about independence so easily with France?

SPEAKER 1: Not because there were professors of the J.F.K. Vanbilsen(ph) who had spoken about emancipation. In 30 years, he says, You Belgians, the French colony, people came with their feet prepared.

SPEAKER 2: Are you part of it?

SPEAKER 1: Sékou Touré. You have a French woman in the Parliament in Paris. She says she is prepared to come by the United States for participations. 1955, Clarissa, when she was talking about this, there was the African Manifesto of Consciousness. And to listen via catechumens.

In Berlin, as a new step, the procedure is done and the path is Joseph Kabila. (inaudible) which was supposedly made manifest. That, get outta here. They said, Yes, we want the campaign, we are what you want us to be now. We need a partition with the Belgians. Let's be together, let's be in restaurants and more separation between the town and the city like that, because it's a lot. (inaudible) took a stand and said no.

[00:40:00]

SPEAKER 1: They disagree, not with your pool nor with the protesters. We want independence. So the word independence was spoken by people in his 1956 class. So we replied to him, When you talk to yourself, since that's how it is, you are already developed. But if you go to someone, you go to Luiza(ph), you go to whoever can also from there, it's not like that. What did you say? No. For autonomy to be gradually given. The province in Kinshasa is already awake, they have autonomy bit by bit, as we are the last, it does not depend on everyone ...

So, to answer your question, you don't have the right because (inaudible) to make independence. Moreover, there were municipal elections and so here is a question about an event that I skipped here, which opened my eyes to the (inaudible). During the Exhibition, people from all over the world came, Russians, Americans and it was there that the idea of emancipation was instilled in the Congolese people. But you are colonized, your politicians know all that.

[end, 41:25]