

## Abstract

Between 1963 and 1968, Pierre Mulele, previously Minister of National Education in the first post-colonial government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, led a rebellion in Kwilu province against the Congolese government. Strongly opposed to the new form of colonialism expressed in the “Belgo-Congolese dream,” Mulele took up arms to change the order of things. This thesis is about the suffering caused by this rebellion, the reproduction of this suffering across time, and its inscription in the imaginary of the survivors and, indirectly, the Congolese state and various political regimes in power in Kinshasa from the 1960s to the present. It is the overall question of the “imaginaries of suffering” that drives the analysis: suffering as what people experienced in the concrete conditions of existence during the rebellion; suffering experienced by the body during the rebellion; suffering as what the “body” remembers because it carries visible marks, recognizable by the self and others; and suffering as what leaves marks in the minds of the suffering subjects. The thesis is also about power, its meaning, and the complex interplay of forces between power, memory, and suffering. It draws on evidence from archival materials, oral testimonies, and debates from philosophy, history, anthropology, literary studies, and medical humanities published over the last thirty years by scholars from Europe, Asia, the Americas and Africa.

**Keywords:** Mulele, rebellion, suffering, imagination, reproduction, body, power, memory, Congo, Zaire.