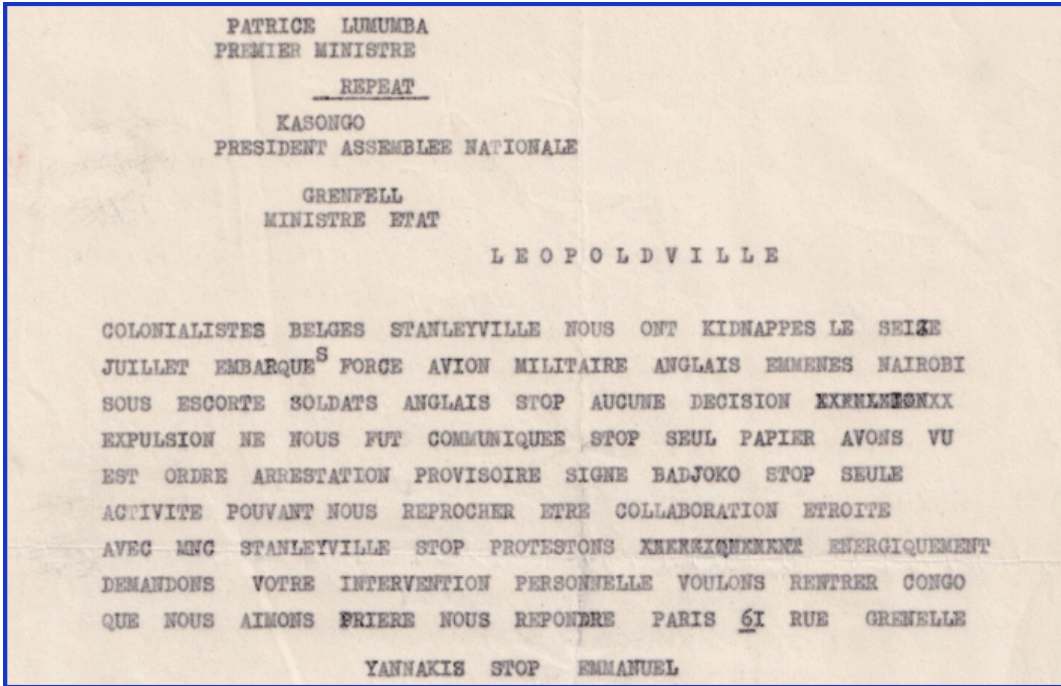


# Arghiri Emmanuel Association Newsletter #3: Emmanuel, the Congo - New Findings



The completion of a meeting in Paris between Catherine Emmanuel and Torkil Lauesen in August has brought a major milestone in the creation of an archive of the work of Arghiri Emmanuel.

Emmanuel's works are to be housed in the IISG in the Netherlands, as planned, upon the agreement of the contract. In addition, plans for a conference on Emmanuel's work are being drawn up for 2025 (more on this later).

But the major result of this meeting is the discovery of the portion of the archive held by Catherine. This part, as it was held in the Emmanuel family, is full of personal artifacts from Arghiri's life.

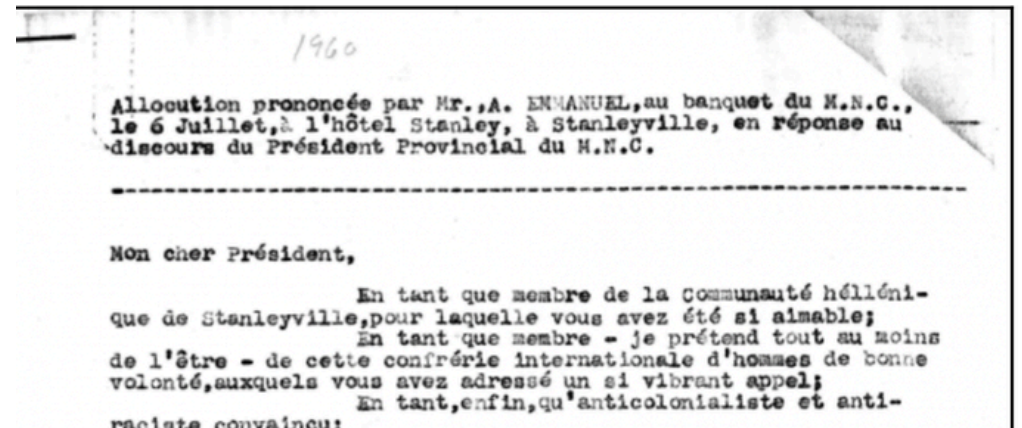
The majority of these relate to his time in the Congo, and thus are of immense interest to all friends of liberty for the Congo, Sudan, Africa and the world.

By discovering Emmanuel's record of events from the Congo, we learn more about his role in the liberation struggle for that country alongside freedom fighters like Patrice Lumumba and Pierre Mulele. Excellent commentary and theoretical analysis has been provided by Congolese writer Heritier Longa in a piece published by Review of African Political Economy (ROAPE).

However, the findings from Paris give us even more materials to discuss.

An important note is that Emmanuel had many, many photographs from his life, from Sudan, Egypt, and the Congo. These are a treasure trove for those interested in seeing life in the Congo during the first phase of liberation. This is also prime material for a potential film on Emmanuel's contribution to the liberation struggles in each country.

Another essential unearthed document is a speech delivered by Emmanuel for the Mouvement National Congolais (M.N.C.)



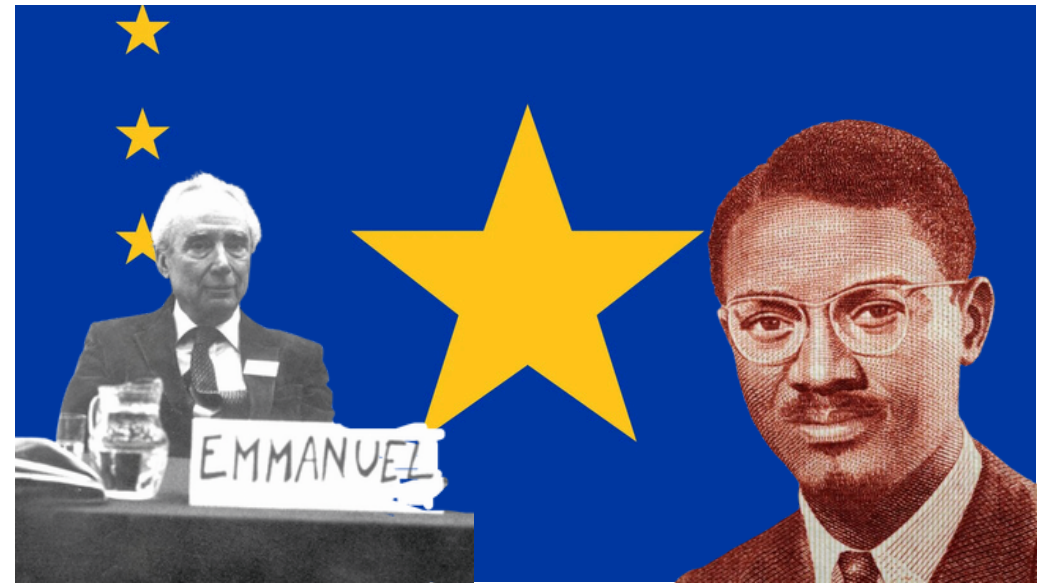
## The Speech, translated, is below:

*Speech given by Mr. A. Emmanuel, at the M.N.C. banquet, on July 6, at the Stanley Hotel, in Stanleyville, in response to the speech of the Provincial President of the M.N.C.*

*My dear president,  
As a member of the Greek community of Stanleyville, to whom you have been so kind;  
As a member - I claim at least to be one - of this international brotherhood of men of good will, to whom you have addressed such a vibrant appeal;  
As, finally, a convinced anti-colonialist and anti-racist;  
I can't tell you how touched I was by your words.  
But there is one point in your speech that particularly interested me: the distinction you make between institutions and men.  
For it has often been said that it is men who make institutions, and this, taken literally, is obviously true. But it has often been forgotten to add that institutions, once established, end up acting on men and shaping them in their image.  
Men end up being subjected to the institutions that they or others have created and being conditioned by them.  
We did not invent colonialism, but we suffered it like the others.  
So, when you made a distinction in the behavior of whites before and after June 30, I wondered if you have an accurate idea of what the condition of an anti-colonialist white person within a colonial society represents: Rejected by his own clan, and unable to enter deep into the indigenous society, where he encounters incomprehension and mistrust, he finds himself in an untenable position, at odds with the world. It is a drama of every day and every moment.  
Yes! You are right, the handshake was not as frank before June 30 as it was after; the wall of colonialism that stood between you and us, prevented our fingers from shaking.  
That's right! Our gaze was not as direct before June 30 as it was after. It was the opaque smokescreen of colonialism that troubled it.  
If you knew, you who are jubilant today for having been freed from the colonialist yoke, if you knew the joy that is ours, to have been freed from an even more terrible yoke, to have been freed from ourselves, from our complexes, from this inversion of values, in which we struggled without a way out.  
We are not responsible for colonialism, you say. That is up to you to say. But we do not consider quitting for so little.*

*If we do not feel responsible for the specific crimes of colonialism, we certainly feel responsible for its aberration. This monstrous aberration of our Western civilization of the last three centuries, which has wasted so many ideals and so much good will.  
How ridiculous I feel when I hear my co-religionists reproach you for your tribal struggles of yesteryear; We white people, who have just emerged from a war among our own tribes, a war that claimed twenty million victims, a war during which we sent through the gas chambers and crematory ovens six million human beings, whose only crime was to belong to a tribe other than us, a war during which, in a single instant, with a single gesture of the hand, with the push of a single button, we wiped off the map two cities of one hundred thousand people each; a war in the face of which your tribal struggles seem like child's play.  
How stupid I feel; when I see my brothers of race boasting of having once liquidated the slavery of the Arabs among you;  
We whites, who, during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, shipped fifteen million slaves across the Atlantic.  
These are white and blond slave traders, in front of whom the small traffickers of Zanzibar seem like choirboys.  
No! You may say that we are not responsible; I will not sleep peacefully until colonialism is erased not only from the earth, from all lands, but also from the thoughts and memories of men.  
This is why we are answering your call.  
The path you have chosen is the right one: Drive out colonialism as an institution, be understanding of men. Punish, if necessary, the great exploits of the colonialists, forget the small deeds and gestures of the whites under the old regime, these small miscellaneous facts which constituted the inseparable corollary of a lifestyle imposed by colonialism.  
In this way, you can count on us.  
Long live the MNC of the Eastern Province. Long live the Republic of Congo.*

Shortly thereafter, on 16 July 1960, an arrest order was issued for Emmanuel's deportation. It is likely that his public endorsement of Lumumba contributed to this order. On the same day, Emmanuel was abducted and deported to Nairobi. Simultaneously, the Belgian government declared him a threat to public safety. These actions underscore the limited control Lumumba exercised over state institutions at the time.



The second document in this sequence is a telegram from Emmanuel to Lumumba, informing him of his arrest and deportation. However, this telegram never reached its intended recipient. Emmanuel subsequently followed up with a letter to Lumumba, dated 21 July 1960, which appears to be included in the Congo portfolio.

# Telegram:

Patrice Lumumba Prime Minister

Repeat -----

Kasongo

President of the National Assembly Grenfell

Minister of State

TELEGRAM -----

LEOPOLDVILLE

STANLEYVILLE BELGIAN COLONIALISTS KIDNAPPED

US ON JULY 16TH TAKEN AWAY BY FORCE ON

ENGLISH MILITARY PLANE TAKEN TO NAIROBI

UNDER ESCORT ENGLISH SOLDIERS STOP NO

DECISION ON EXPULSION WAS COMMUNICATED TO

US STOP THE ONLY PAPER WE HAVE SEEN IS AN

ORDER FOR PROVISIONAL ARREST SIGNED BY

BADJOKO STOP THE ONLY ACTIVITY THEY ARE ABLE

TO ACCUSE US OF IS CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH

MNC STANLEYVILLE STOP WE ENERGETICALLY ASK

FOR YOUR PERSONAL INTERVENTION WE WANT TO

RETURN TO THE CONGO THAT WE LOVE PRAY

ANSWER US PARIS 61 RUE GRENELLE

YANNAKIS STOP EMMANUEL

# Response:

Leopoldville, November 12, 1960- No 2611/CAB/PM

Gentlemen Georges YANNAKIS and ARGHIRI Emmanuel

14, rue Stanislas Résidence Montparnasse PARIS (6°)

(France)

Your registered letter dated July 21, 1960, reached me only today. I do not understand this long delay.-

I deeply regret your departure from Stanleyville, a departure provoked by the intrigues of the Belgian colonialists.-

I know your loyalty to our people and I deplore the humiliating measures to which you have been subjected.-

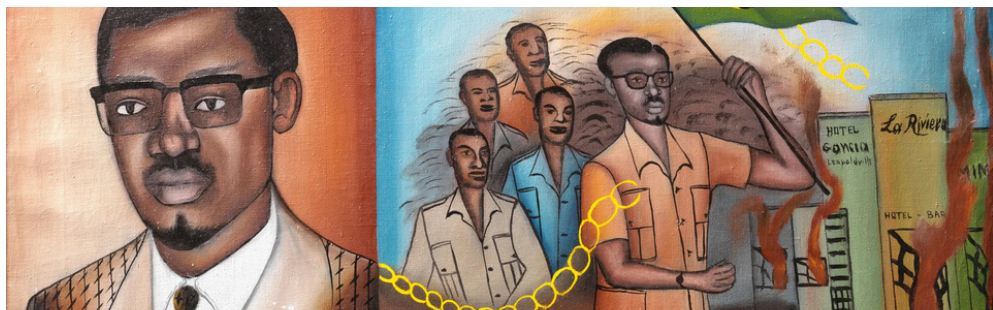
I mark my words that you shall return to Stanleyville where you will only have friends.-

I will do everything in my power to ensure that you live in Congo in good conditions.-

I am looking forward to seeing you again, please accept, Gentlemen, the assurance of my distinguished consideration.-

P. E. LUMUMBA, Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo

Tragically, Lumumba was executed on 17 January 1961.



Emmanuel's engagement with Congo's economic and political development continued, as evidenced by his paper, Arghiri Emmanuel's 1961 Analysis of the Congo Crisis, written on 27 July 1961. This paper offers a detailed analysis of the Congo's economy at the time of independence, the role of European settlers, and provides recommendations for the Free Republic of Congo, led by Antoine Gizenga after Lumumba's death. In 1962, Emmanuel began his studies in political economy in Paris. However, he maintained his interest in Africa and continued his efforts to return to Congo. One such attempt is documented in a letter from Emmanuel to President Mobutu, dated 23 November 1967, in which he requested permission to return to Congo. Emmanuel did eventually manage to return on several occasions, as suggested by his letter to Immanuel Wallerstein, dated 13 June 1972.

Torkil Laesen, 17th of September 2024

Documents were translated by Daniel Williams

## Two new articles on Arghiri Emmanuel in Review of African Political Economy

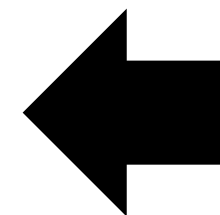


Home > Long Read

Long Read

Arghiri Emmanuel, the Free Republic of Congo, and socialism – not capitalism – first

Click on the screenshot here to read the article



Home > Long Read

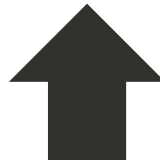
Long Read

Arghiri Emmanuel, the law of unequal exchange, and the failures of liberation in the DR Congo

# Video of Emmanuel



Click the still to watch:



In this short clip from a newscast, Emmanuel discusses his book “Appropriate or Underdeveloped Technology?”

## Possible Conference on Emmanuel, with the theme: The Political Economy of Imperialism and the Contributions of Arghiri Emmanuel

Celebrating the establishment of the Emmanuel Archive at the International Institute of Social History (IISG) in Amsterdam, the conference aims to expand research and activism on the significance of unequal exchange in the global economy, the significance of technology in development and strategies of resistance to challenge systemic inequality and poverty. Arghiri Emmanuel (1911-2001) was one of the leading theoreticians of the political economy of imperialism from the mid-60s and up through the 70s, accompanying the wave of national liberation struggle against imperialism.

Emmanuel put forward the theory of “unequal exchange,” which was the economic backbone of the theory. The concept and especially its political implications were widely discussed among academics as well as political activists at the time.

When Emmanuel passed away in 2001, the world was very different. It was at the height of neoliberal globalization. The national liberation struggle had not managed to continue into an economic liberation from the grip of imperialism. Instead, transnational capital had outsourced industrial production to the Global South, taking advantage of the low wage level of hundreds of millions of new proletarians, making the concept of “Unequal Exchange” more relevant than ever. However, at the time, the discourse of “imperialism” not to speak of “anti-imperialism,” was considered something “retro” from the 70s. Few were interested in the legacy of Emmanuel and his archive and papers, which were stored in the cellar of his friend and collaborator Claudio Jedlicki.

Twenty years past, and the world has changed again. Continued disarticulation of supply chains in the intervening period have even further enhanced the importance of unequal exchange as the principal mechanism of imperialist exploitation in the intervening period. Neoliberal globalization is in crisis, China had become the factory of the world, and the U.S has turned to military geopolitical struggle to uphold its hegemony. Today we see a new wave of resistance in the Global South against the dominance of the center. Imperialism has returned as a theme of interest, and so is the ideas of Emmanuel, reflected in many new book and articles.

In 2021, a group of people interested in the work of Emmanuel, found out about Emmanuel’s papers stored in twenty boxes in a cellar in Paris, and decided to find a secure home for the archive in the future. We finally succeeded in 2024, when IISG accepted to take in Emmanuel’s papers. We have founded the Emmanuel association dedicated to make Emmanuel’s work accessible to the public and spread the knowledge of his work.

In that effort we propose to hold a conference in 2025 under the theme: The Political Economy of Imperialism and the legacy of Arghiri Emmanuel, at the IISG.

The intention of the conference is to present:

- New biographical knowledge on the life story of Emmanuel, based on new research. For example, his years in Belgian Congo (1936-42 and 1946-59), or his participation in the Greek resistance during Second World War
- Papers that deal with the significance of his ideas for the 21st century, for example: unequal exchange, imperialism, settler colonialism, international solidarity, the contradiction of capitalism, development and technology or the role of the state.

**We are open to feedback and support for the conference planning effort.**