

CHAPTER  
**34**

Section 3

GEOGRAPHY APPLICATION: MOVEMENT

# The Congo Gains Independence

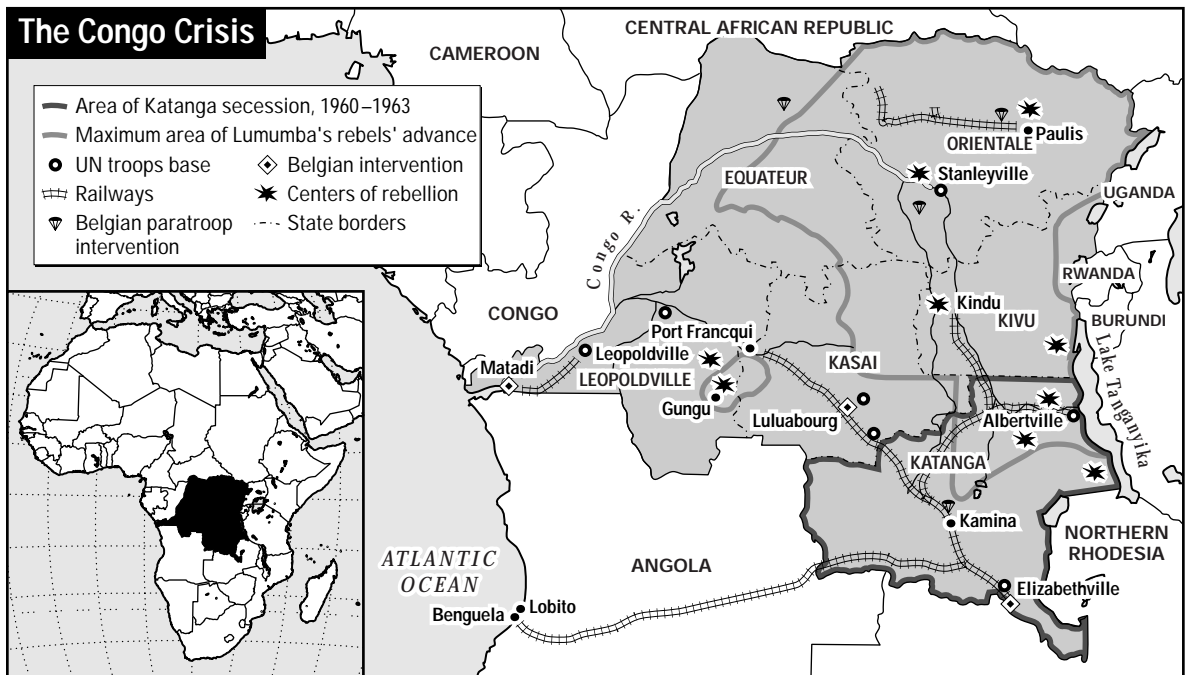
*Directions: Read the paragraphs below and study the map carefully. Then answer the questions that follow.*

In 1878, King Leopold II of Belgium formed the International Congo Association from territory in the middle of Africa. He wanted to profit from the natural resources there. Upon Leopold's death in 1909, the Belgian government inherited the territory and renamed it the Belgian Congo. Belgium continued to exploit the labor of the Congolese people through the next 45 years.

By the late 1950s, Belgian rule had created a western-educated middle class in the Congo. This educated class became nationalistic and sought the country's independence. In 1959, nationalist sentiment erupted in a revolt against the Belgian rulers. The Belgian government panicked and quickly granted independence in 1960. In the first general election in the Congo, no party gained a majority. However, a compromise was reached in which two opposing leaders, Joseph Kasavubu and Patrice Lumumba, agreed to share power.

Following this election, more revolts broke out against the Belgians, who still controlled the army. In July of 1960, the wealthy province of Katanga even broke away from the rest of the country. Belgian paratroopers went in to restore order and protect Belgian citizens.

Later in 1960, Kasavubu had gained enough power to dismiss Lumumba, who was later assassinated. As a result, Lumumba's supporters started a rival government. Civil war followed between Kasavubu and Lumumba's supporters. Kasavubu asked the United Nations to send soldiers to help. In 1961, the rival groups reached a compromise that united the country except for the Katanga province, which later re-joined the Congo in 1964. The country was torn by more internal strife until 1965, when Joseph Désiré Mobutu, an army leader, took control and formed a dictatorial government that lasted for 32 years.



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### Interpreting Text and Visuals

1. Why was King Leopold II interested in colonizing Africa? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Where is the Congo located? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. In what portion of the country were most of the areas of rebellion located? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What group sparked the movement toward independence? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. In what part of the country were the majority of the Belgian paratroopers dropped? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. In what part of the country were the majority of the United Nations bases located? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Describe the events that led to the civil war. \_\_\_\_\_

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