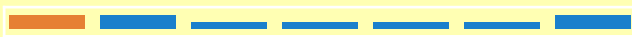


# Coltan and Blood

Jaromil

Transmediale, January 2009, Berlin

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# The Coltan

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Coltan is an abbreviation for **Columbite-Tantalite**. A mineral with the unique ability when refined to reduce corrosion and increase heat resistance.



**Figure 1.1**

The mineral is valuable for technology industries, its demand exploded in the past 10 years. It is used to produce **cell phones, dvd-players, laptop computers and games<sup>1</sup>** as well in **jet engines, ballistic missiles and nuclear reactors**.

**80% World's known reserves are in Congo (DRC)**, mostly in the Eastern provinces of **Kivus and Orientale**, extracted from the ore in a process similar to that of the Californian gold miners of the 1800s.

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<sup>1</sup>the Play Station 2 production was halted in December 2000 because of coltan shortage



# The Blood

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The war in Eastern Congo is mainly driven by economic factors: an outside consumer market hungry for **laptops and telephones** for which Congo delivers the raw materials.



**Figure 2.1**

The conflict has resulted in estimated **4 million deaths**, **2 million displaced** and **340.000 refugees** in neighbouring countries.

**30% of East Congolese school children** are reported to be working in the coltan mines under inhuman conditions.

This crisis is the worst contemporary humanitarian crisis in the World provoked by Western post-colonialist economies.



# The Invasion

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In 1998 leaders of Rwanda and Uganda, military trained and equipped by foreign countries, invaded the mineral-rich areas of Congo (DRC).



Figure 3.1

The invaders installed colonial-style governments supported in arms and training by Western allies, together with a \$5 million Citibank loan. Invasion of DRC allowed corporations as **American Mineral Fields** (AMF) to illegally mine. San Francisco based engineering firm **Bechtel Inc.** established ties, drawing up an inventory of mineral resources and providing the industry with refined supplies.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Project Censored, 2003 Top 25 stories, "American Companies Exploit the Congo", Philip Beard, Arinze Anoruo, Chris Salvano.



# The Business

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As of today the mineral exploitation is known to involve U.S. based **Cabot Corp.** and **OM Group**; Germany's **HC Starck** and Chinese corporation **Nigncxia**.<sup>3</sup>



Figure 4.1

Payback to Congolese militias is mostly in arms, from dealers as **Simax**, **Lockheed Martin**, **Halliburton**, **Northrop Grumman**, **GE**, **Boeing** and **Raytheon**. Their action is covert under the face of “humanitarian” organizations as **CARE** (funded by Lockheed Martin) and **International Rescue Committee**.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Dollars and Sense, July/August 2001, "The Business of War in the Democratic Republic Of Congo: Who benefits?", by Dena Montague and Frieda Berrigan

<sup>4</sup>CovertAction Quarterly, Summer 2000, "U. S. Military and Corporate Recolonization of the Congo", by Ellen Ray



# Our Plan

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Most international media still portrays the war in East Congo as an ethnic conflict, marginalizing efforts made by local communities to find a solution.



**Figure 5.1**

The indigenous Congolese organization **Yole!Africa** calls everyone to **stop using laptops, phones or I-pods on day July 2** to tell the World that many people, most unknowingly, are responsible for this ongoing catastrophe every time they buy a new laptop, phone or I-pod.

The hacker's network **dyne.org** calls **high-tech industries to free products from DRM, Trusted Computing and any other restriction** so that everyone in the World is able to appropriate the use of these technologies and build local businesses.

Yole!Afrika is co-producing a documentary about mobile phones and blood directed by Frank Polsen, out this year.



# Salaam/Shalom/Shanthi/Dorood/Peace

This documentation was made possible thanks to the efforts of [Yole!Africa](#)<sup>5</sup> (Democratic Republic of Congo), [Baobab Connections](#)<sup>6</sup> (Amsterdam), [Project Censored](#)<sup>7</sup> (USA), the [dyne.org hackers](#)<sup>8</sup> and a spontaneous human alliance against organized crime, military abuse and corporate exploitation.

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Pictures taken by photographer [Riccardo Gangale](#)<sup>9</sup>

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The “Coltan and Blood” slides are available on the Internet on [Jaromil’s Journal](#)<sup>10</sup> website, feel free to spread and re-use!

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Thanks, a thousand flowers will blossom!

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<sup>5</sup>[www.alkebu.org](http://www.alkebu.org)

<sup>6</sup><http://www.baobabconnections.org>

<sup>7</sup><http://www.projectcensored.com>

<sup>8</sup><http://dyne.org>

<sup>9</sup><http://www.riccardogangale.com>

<sup>10</sup><http://jaromil.dyne.org/journal>

