

... He played an important role during my first days in Raleigh. And Dr. Konde, with whom I studied at St. Augustine's College, was my translator and my guardian angel.”

Antoine Diantete, who came from the city of Sundi-Lutete, arrived in Raleigh on 8 April 1971. And five months later on 4 September 1971, Victor Mayenge arrived to find a community of ten people in Raleigh: Esaïe Mulongo (1968), Joseph Konde (1969), Simon Nzuzi (1970), Noé Nswadi Nsayi (Mulongo’s older brother who lived in Chapel Hill for school but was still present in Raleigh), Joël Mbumba, Niofi Guillaume, Antoine Diantete, Boniface Bakongo, Nathalie Mwanza Konde and Jérémie Kazadi. Beside the first three people, all came in 1971.

Reminiscing, Mayenge said wistfully, “Esaïe Mulongo helped me submit my paperwork to Shaw University, where I was admitted to the pre-medical-biology program while I was still in Zaire (1). An issue acutely arose at the American Embassy about how I was funding my studies when I applied for an entry visa. I then reach out to my father in law, Esaïe Kuyena, who was a senator in Republic of Zaire government at the time. His speech to the Consul was more than spectacular. He explained with conviction the Congolese traditions that speak to the whole family supporting any child that wants to study at a high level. Senator Kuyena concluded, “I vouch for his financial situation because all his monetary needs will be seen by me personally.” A few hours later I was in possession of my visa to the United States of America.”

According to Dr. Nzuzi, Joël Mbumba arrived in 1972 with Celine Lubuku and many others. The following year saw the arrival of several Zairians including Jean-Marie Nzati, Paku Palory Nzau and Manzodulua Tiya. In the space of eight years from 1968 to 1975, Raleigh received an impressive number of Zairian immigrants, ninety-five to be exact, including women and children, so that records can already speak of a Zairian immigrant community. A complete list can be found in the appendix, history file 3.

From this list of first comers, some have since returned to the Congo (Esaïe Mulongo Nsayi, Dr. Joseph Konde, Joël Mbumba), others are dead (Nathalis Mwanza, Zacharie Nziuki, Joseph Ndelo, Joël Mabika, Joseph Tatu Buatu). For the rest, many still live in Raleigh or Charlotte, North Carolina (one of the valid reasons that justify the close affinities of the two communities). Others settled in other cities and communities such as Atlanta, Georgia....

What is important to know is the fact that COZAR will become, years later, as "**COCOM-NC/Raleigh**" The full history can be found in the book written by Salomon Valaka. It will be posted on this website.

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(1) Zaire: In 1971, the name of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was changed to Republic of Zaire, due to political change and new leadership that took place in 1965 I will refer to the Congolese people of the time as Zairians

**Written by Salomon Valaka**  
**The full history is related in the book by Salomon Valaka**