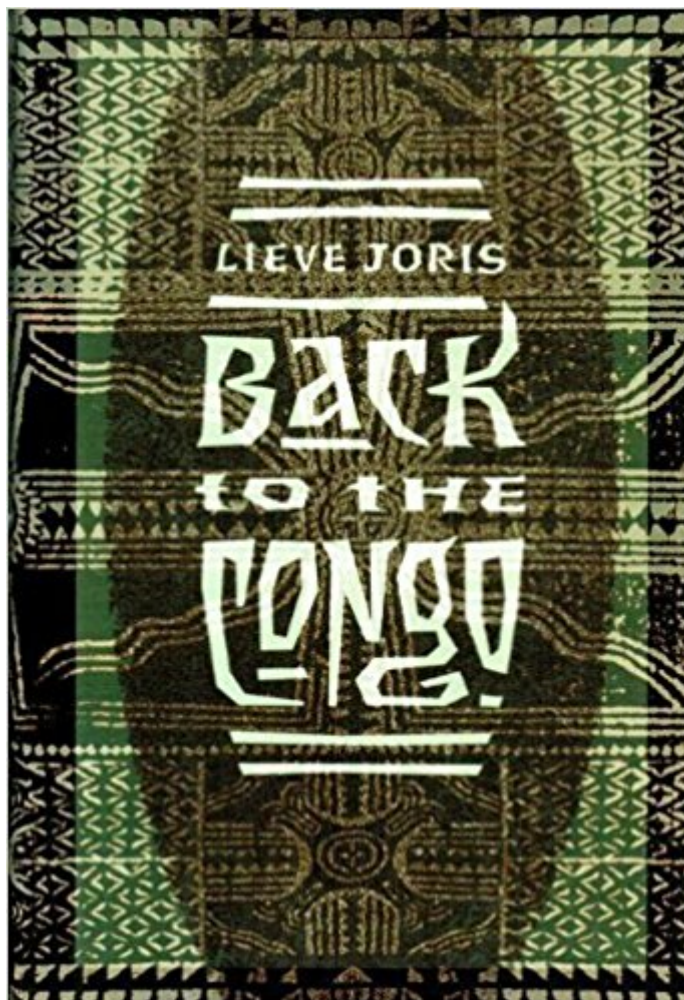


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# Back To The Congo



## Synopsis

The niece of a missionary in Africa recounts her travels in the Belgian Congo, capturing the remnants of Zaire's colonial past, the mission station where her uncle worked, the white expatriate community, and the realities of modern Zaire.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"I didn't come here to find fault with Mobutu's regime, or to justify it. I wanted to explore life behind the newspaper headlines," explains this adventurous Flemish journalist, indignant and frightened when she is taken into custody with a photographer friend by Zairean police merely for plying a camera and talking with the locals. A childhood vision of the country, evoked by the tales of her missionary uncle, led to Joris's desire to see the Congo. She finds guides and friends amongst those who remember her uncle, and also through her own gregarious and empathetic nature. She gets deep into the country through bush, forest, villages and cities, dances all night in a local dive, takes a boat up the river, encounters pygmies, befriends depressed European-educated intellectuals and cynical bureaucrats, sleeps in native hotels, and observes the unresolved struggles of a country on the far peripheries of the Western world whose intrusion has left its superficial imprint on traditional ways without a synthesis. Not the country her uncle described, the Congo--both people and land-- becomes palpable in Joris's engaging and disturbing report.

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When she was a child, Joris's missionary uncle traveled to the Belgian Congo and returned bearing

gifts and telling wonderful stories. As an adult, Joris traveled to contemporary Zaire in order to see what her uncle had seen. She found a persistent memory of colonization and of the "other," finally making the colonial past and its consequences the main motifs of her book. The boat to Zaire, the urban areas and Kinshasa, the "bush" and interior--all are described in a clear personal voice, with a journey on the Zaire river to the town of Kisangani the high point of her adventure. The people she met, rather than any view of nature, motivates her writing. Because this travel book has a particular vision--it is especially concerned with the Belgian version of Africa--it will appeal to a select audience.- Gene Shaw, Elmwood Park Lib., Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Here's another book by that almost MK (missionary kid--Lieve Joris' uncle was a Catholic missionary). To those who have lived in Congo, it will bring back many, many memories. She was on a quest to see where her uncle had worked. The ship taking her to Congo was full of Belgian colonials who had a rather prejudiced view of Congo and its people, which she took with a grain of salt. Her visit to her uncle's mission station in Lower Congo was detailed, but a bit lacking in the warmth of hospitality that we know could have been there. Did you ever ride a motorcycle or a taxi in Kinshasa's "city"? I did, and maybe you regret that you didn't, and now you can have the experience safely and vicariously. So many familiar scenes here. The book was first published in Flemish in 1987, but one has the impression that her voyage was earlier in the Mobutu era. A flight to Gbodolite, Mobutu's town, introduces us to that spot in its heyday, and a particular baron of the regime, living in style. You will be regaled by the adventures and misadventures on this long riverboat voyage by Joris. She warms more and more to Congo as the book progresses. Kisangani the declining city gets a not very complimentary introduction, and she accurately takes the pulse of Lubumbashi and Kolwezi by traveling with a young Congolese man. Her final encounter with the security police of Kisangani and then Kinshasa ends the book on an unfortunately realistic sour note. But you will find it worthwhile to relive a voyage to Congo with Lieve Joris.

This book is about the first journey of Lieve Joris to Africa. And in my opinion you can feel/read between the lines that she is travelling like this the first time. Though I had some problems getting through the first 70 pages, I became to like to book/story very much. After those first 70 pages and having overcome the cruiseship and the typical people, the real adventure unravels. Lieve Joris gave me a view of Africa that I will never experience. First of all Zaire is now the Republic of Congo. Secondly I would not dare to travel like she does, therefore this book is a dedicated window to Africa for me. I like the way Joris writes, somehow like a journalist getting into her subject. Not like a

novelist at all. This book was my hypertextlink to Conrads 'Heart of Darkness', for Joris travels the same river into dark Africa.

An excellent book about Africa. Very well written even though a translation from the Dutch.

Hi All,As I am working in the middle of the jungle, (Kindu) DRC I was honoured to accomodate Lieve for 14 days in my house overthere.Great lady.So once back home I started reading her book BACK TO CONGO? PLEASANT READING AS i TOOK ONLY 3 DAYS TO FINISH IT;Next one will be dance of the leopard.....Lieve, Good luck for the future and keep on writing.....Always welcome to Kindu and thanks again for the pan-cakes

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