
PATRICE EMERY LUMUMBA*



**Patrice Lumumba (1925-1961) was elected the first prime minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Assassinated by Belgian colonialists and the CIA in 1961. Lumumba was a founder member of the Movement National Congolais (MNC), which led the Congo to independence. Patrice Lumumba is the symbol of aspirations of an entire continent, and he continues to serve as an inspiration to contemporary Congolese and African politicians.*

Lumumba, P. E. (2024). Dawn in the Heart of Africa. Retrieved January 10, 2024 from <https://www.pambazuka.org/governance/dawn-heart-africa>

Dawn in the Heart of Africa

For a thousand years, you, African, suffered like beast,
Your ashes strewn to the wind that roams the desert.
Your tyrants built the lustrous, magic temples
To preserve your soul, reserve your suffering.
Barbaric right of fist and the white right to a whip,
You had the right to die, you also could weep.
On your totem they carved endless hunger, endless bonds,
And even in the cover of the woods a ghastly cruel death
Was watching, snaky, crawling to you
Like branches from the holes and heads of trees
Embraced your body and your ailing soul.
Then they put a treacherous big viper on your chest:
On your neck they laid the yoke of fire-water,
They took your sweet wife for glitter of cheap pearls,
Your incredible riches that nobody could measure.
From your hut, the tom-toms sounded into dark of night
Carrying cruel laments up mighty black rivers
About abused girls, streams of tears and blood,
About ships that sailed to countries where the little man
Wallows in an ant hill and the dollar is king,
To that damned land which they called a motherland.
There your child, your wife were ground, day and night
In a frightful, merciless mill, crushing them in dreadful pain.

POEM

You are a man like others. They preach you to believe
That good white God will reconcile all men at last.
By fire you grieved and sang the moaning songs
Of a homeless beggar that sinks at strangers' doors.
And when a craze possessed you
And your blood boiled through the night
You danced, you moaned, obsessed by father's passion.
Like fury of a storm to lyrics of a manly tune
From a thousand years of misery a strength burst out of you
In metallic voice of jazz, in uncovered outcry
That thunders through the continent like gigantic surf.
The whole world surprised, wakes up in panic
To the violent rhythm of blood, to the violent rhythm of jazz,
The white man turning pallid over this new song
That carries torch of purple through the dark of night.
The dawn is here, my brother! Dawn! Look in our faces,
A new morning breaks in our old Africa.
Ours alone will now be the land, the water, mighty rivers
Poor African surrendered for a thousand years.
Hard torches of the sun will shine for us again
They'll dry the tears in eyes and spittle on your face.
The moment when you break the chains, the heavy fetters,
The evil cruel times will go never to come again.
A free and gallant Congo will rise from black soil,
A free and gallant Congo-black blossom from black seed!

