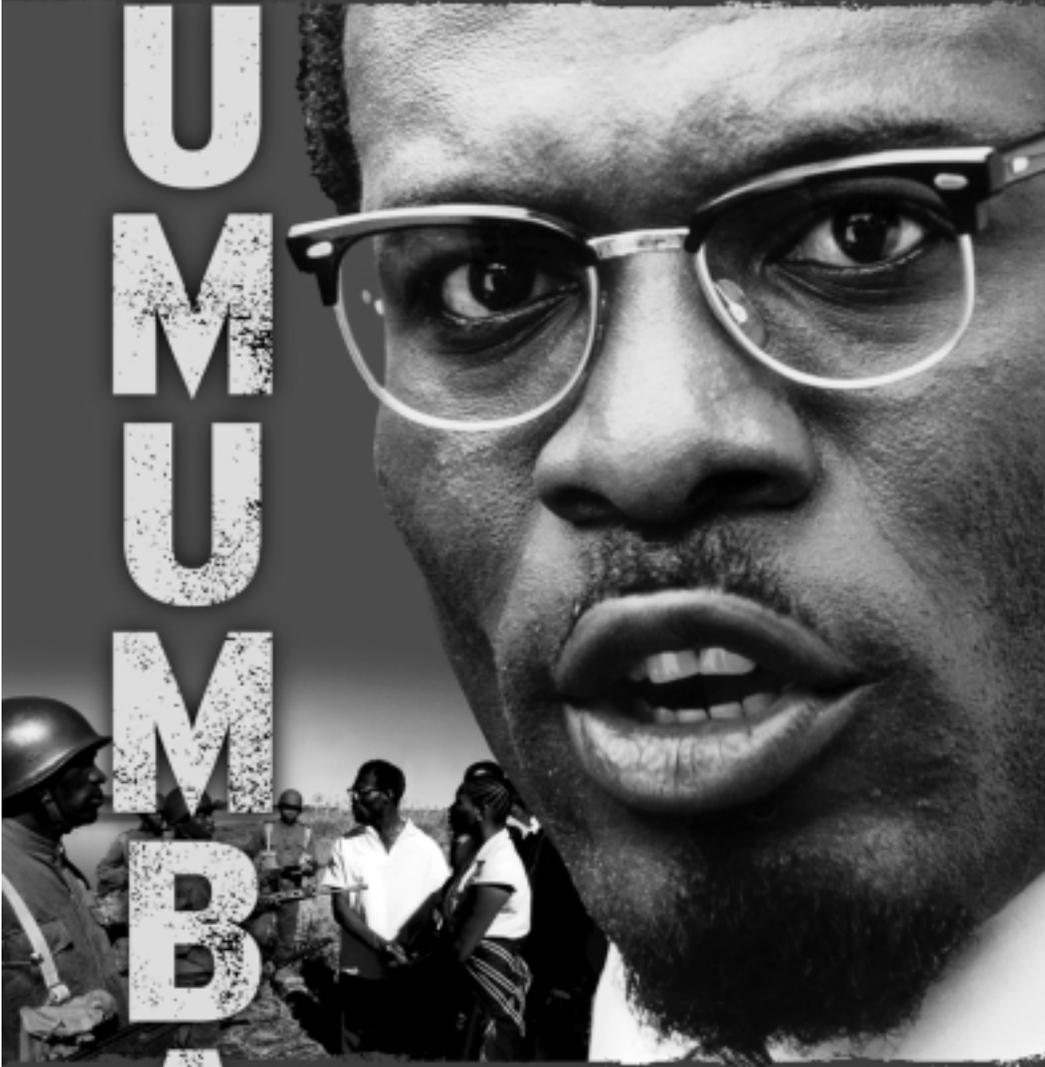


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A FILM BY RAOUL PECK

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JACQUES BIDOÛ presents

LUMUMBA

A FILM BY RAOUL PECK

Patrice Lumumba	Eriq Ebouaney
Joseph Mobutu	Alex Descas
Maurice Mpolo	Théophile Moussa Sowié
Joseph Kasa Vubu	Maka Kotto
Godefroid Munungo	Dieudonné Kabongo
Moïse Tshombe	Pascal Nzonzi
Walter J. Ganshof Van der Meersch	André Debaar
Joseph Okito	Cheik Doukouré
Thomas Kanza	Oumar Diop Makena
Pauline Lumumba	Mariam Kaba
General Emile Janssens	Rudi Delhem

Director	Raoul Peck
Screenplay	Raoul Peck
	Pascal Bonitzer
Music	Jean-Claude Petit
Executive Producer	Jacques Bidou
Production Manager	Patrick Meunier
	Marianne Dumoulin
Director of Photography	Bernard Lutic
1st Assistant Director	Jacques Cluzard
Casting	Sylvie Brocheré
Artistic Director	Denis Renault
Art Director	André Fonsny
Costumes	Charlotte David
Editor	Jacques Comets
Sound Mixer	Jean-Pierre Laforce

Filmed in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Belgium
A French/Belgian/Haitian/German co-production, 2000
In French with English subtitles
35mm • Color • Dolby Stereo SRD • 1:1.85 • 3144 meters
Running time: 115 mins

A ZEITGEIST FILMS RELEASE

247 CENTRE ST • 2ND FL • NEW YORK • NY 10013
www.zeitgeistfilm.com • mail@zeitgeistfilm.com
(212) 274-1989 • FAX (212) 274-1644

**At the Berlin Conference of 1885, Europe divided up the African continent.
The Congo became the personal property of King Leopold II of Belgium.**

**On June 30, 1960, a young self-taught nationalist, Patrice Lumumba, became, at age 36,
the first head of government of the new independent state.**

He would last two months in office.

This is a true story.

LUMUMBA

SYNOPSIS

LUMUMBA is a gripping political thriller which tells the story of the legendary African leader Patrice Emery Lumumba. Called “the politico of the bush” by journalists of his day, the brilliant and charismatic Lumumba, rose rapidly to the office of Prime Minister when Belgium conceded the Congo’s independence in June, 1960.

Lumumba’s vision of a united Africa gained him powerful enemies: the Belgian authorities, who wanted a much more paternal role in their former colony’s affairs, and the CIA, who supported Lumumba’s former friend Joseph Mobutu in order to protect U.S. business interests in Congo’s vast resources and their upper hand in the Cold War power balance. The architects behind Lumumba’s brutal death in 1961, a mere nine months after becoming the country’s first Prime Minister, recently became known and are dramatized for the first time in LUMUMBA.

LUMUMBA

BACKGROUND

The journey from the page to the screen started more than a decade ago when a producer offered director Raoul Peck a script set in an African nation. The film focused on an European who takes ‘a descent into Hell’ before being liberated and returning home. Peck made a counterproposal. He wanted to direct a film set in a country that he knew first hand and about a subject closer to him.

Peck recalls, “The Congo and the figure of Lumumba naturally came to mind, though I had no inkling this story would dredge up so many things for me. After a year of research, I rediscovered my childhood, my life in the Congo - that of my family, its place, its role.”

Peck’s fascination with Lumumba, the man and the myth began early. In 1963, two years from Lumumba’s death, Peck traveled to the Congo with his family. His father was part of the contingent of Haitian teachers recruited for the fledging nation when the majority of Belgians left.

His first attempt at exploring Lumumba’s story on film was through the documentary, “Lumumba - Death of a Prophet” which he directed in 1991. The film was awarded the Procirep Prize at the Festival du Réel in Paris and Best Documentary at the Montreal Film Festival in 1992.

For Peck the line between documentary and dramatic is an arbitrary one. One that he uses in this, his latest attempt to grapple with the Lumumba story. Peck explains, “This film is not an “adaptation,” it aims to be a true story. I want to extract the cinematic narrative from the reality by remaining as true to the facts as possible.”

However, while working on the screenplay Peck found himself having to “reduce the reality because it was so complex.” He did more than eight drafts of the scripts before arriving at the final shooting script which he wrote in collaboration with Pascal Bonitzer.

Several approaches were ventured, before deciding the best way to tell the story. “I imagined dramatizing the investigations of UN experts in Elisabethville; I imagined a young Congolese man shortly after the independence who fall in with a European woman who has come to find the body of her brother, ...There was the always the attempt to inject into this story a “white” character as a sort of intermediary. We could not ignore the inevitable realities of making a film about a black lead, and especially a French-speaking one.”

To recreate the life of Patrice Lumumba, the writers needed an incredible amount of research. They read books on their subject, books on the Congo both past and present, fiction and nonfiction. Interviews were conducted with people closely involved in the death of Lumumba. "I went so far as to have someone interview one of the two Belgians entrusted with the task of dismembering the body. They were two brothers. One apparently went mad, the other lives in Belgium."

Peck forced himself to listen to the taped interview. "I had to listen to all of it, listen to the details of sacks, saws, hatchets and whiskey. I found it impossible to cheat because this very accuracy gave me considerable leeway for interpretation and grounded my subjectivity."

Still Peck found it difficult to "find Lumumba - the man in the mass of material without making him an idealized hero or a legend and not a man caught up in a political maelstrom for he was not prepared. It took me a while to come to love and understand him, as one must love and understand a character in order to portray him."

Once they were ready to cast performers for the story of Lumumba, Peck and the producer were not necessarily seeking for actors who resembled the figures involved. According to Peck, "we didn't systematically go after "resemblances." In the case of Lumumba, we needed more than a face - an approach to the character from the inside. The magic tools of cinema provided the rest. It's not the glasses or the goatee that makes Lumumba, but rather the soul and image of an actor."

Eric Ebouaney was cast as Lumumba. Peck chose Maka Kotto to portray Joseph Kasa Vubu, the indecisive and cowardly first president of the Congo. Peck was careful in his treatment of the character Joseph Mobutu. "It was out of the question to make him the typical puppet dictator, a "clever and cruel roi nègre" [black king]. He wasn't born a dictator. He made a choice and he was not alone in this decision. He's neither a monster or a pathological "baddie." " The challenge of creating Mobutu was given to actor Alex Descas.

For Peck, the story of Patrice Lumumba's brief life "is an incredible thriller with all the characters of traditional crime fiction: bandits, thieves, genuine and phony policemen, spies, femme fatales, adventurers, racist explorers, great intellectuals, journalists who stayed a week before going home to write a book... In this literary mass, it is hard not to lose track of the large cast of characters.

LUMUMBA

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Raoul Peck's first idea was to shoot the film, or certain exteriors that were especially important, in the Congo. That was impossible due to an ongoing conflict in the state. There was no way to guarantee the stability of the production. The filmmakers tried to find a "stable" country in Africa. The production shot some scenes in Zimbabwe but was forced to stop when astronomical insurance premiums became an issue. Also the cityscapes in Zimbabwe did not resemble those in central Africa. They were forced to invent everything because the colonial Africa of the 50s and 60s varied from country to country.

Mozambique was the second country that served as a location for the film. Peck recalls, "When I saw the port of Beira in Mozambique, I suddenly felt myself transported back to Léopoldville in the 60s. The city has hardly changed since the departure of the Portuguese. Streets, houses, facades - it was all there, in dilapidated condition, but as I would have dreamed it. I rewrote certain scenes with Beira in mind - the square, the hotel - like the one from which Mobutu staged his coup in the heart of Léopoldville."

To ensure the authenticity of the film, most of the events in Lumumba's life were recreated in precise detail. "Familiar scenes from photographs and newsreels have also had an emotional force for me. Their dramatic impact is intact. I wanted to record these details that stay in my mind, such as the image of an old man in a hat, carrying a little girl in his arms, who is just behind Lumumba as he steps off the Sabena plane that has brought him to Brussels. The kind of detail that interests experts and fastidious witnesses, maybe, but for me, an indicator of memory and a clue to an approach that tends to justify my bias and the way I explore images and acts and objects," explains Peck.

One of the images that has always intrigued Peck is the one which starts the film. "I find it impossible to understand how one can accept, even volunteer for the task of dismembering three bodies."

Peck is aware that the story of Patrice Lumumba may not be welcome for those who would prefer to forget the past. "I sometimes think that this film also comes 50 years too early. Today, so many people are weary of politics, of Africa, of the third world, of the struggles ... Others don't want to think or argue, all they want is to kill and destroy, to be done with it, or better yet, to forget it all."

"When I was 12, I would have liked to see a film like this one, but none existed. The experience is difficult to share. Through the complexity of this story, my sincerest wish is that we will no longer be able to say "I don't know."

LUMUMBA

BIOS

RAOUL PECK (Director)

RAOUL PECK was educated in Haiti, Zaire (Congo) and France. He studied engineering and economics at Berlin University, worked as a journalist and photographer from 1980 to 1985, and received his film degree from the Berlin Academy of Film and Television in 1988.

Since then he has directed the following films: "Haitian Corner," "Lumumba - Death of a Prophet," which was awarded the Procirep Prize, Festival du Réel and Best Documentary at the Montreal Film Festival in 1992; "The Man on the Shore," was selected for competition at the 1993 Cannes Film Festival; "Desounen - Dialogue with Death," "Haiti - Silence of the Dogs," "Chère Catherine," which was awarded a Special Prize at the 1997 Locarno Festival; and "Corps Plongés."

In 1994, Peck was awarded the Nestor Almendros Prize by the Human Rights Watch in New York and this year will receive its Lifetime Achievement Award.

Filmography

- 1988 **Haitian Corner** (98 mins)
Locarno Festival, 1998
- 1991 **Lumumba – Death of a Prophet** (Documentary, 69 mins)
Procirep Prize, Festival du Réel, Paris 1992
Best Documentary, Montreal 1992
- 1993 **The Man on the Shore** (L'Homme sur les Quais) (105 mins)
In Competition Cannes 1993
- 1994 **Desounen – Dialogue with Death** (BBC Documentary, 52 mins)
- 1994 **Haïti – Silence of the Dogs** (Arte Documentary, 52 mins)
- 1997 **Chère Catherine** (Documentary, video, 20 mins)
Special Prize – Locarno Festival 1997
- 1998 **Corps plongés** (96 mins)
- 2000 **Lumumba** (115 mins)
Directors' Fortnight Cannes 2000

ERIQ EBOUANEY [Patrice Lumumba]

ERIC EBOUANEY recently appeared in "Une famille très ordinaire," directed by Julien Amédée. Other film experience includes roles in such projects as "Louise (Take 2)," "Les Enfants du Marais," "L'Agression," "Seventh Heaven," "La Mort du Chinois," "XXL" and "When the Cat's away."

ALEX DESCAS [Joseph Mobutu]

ALEX DESCAS recently starred in "Trouble Everyday," directed by Claire Denis. He previously appeared in Denis' "Nenette and Boni," "I Can't Sleep" and "No Fear, No Die." Descas has also worked with director Olivier Assayas in "Late August, Early September," and "Irma Vep." Other film credits include "Le Dernier Harem," "Le Serpent a mangé la Grenouille," "The House," "Saraka Bo," "Clubbed to death," "Le Grand Blanc de Lambarene," "The Heart's Cry," "The Absence," "A Child of the South," "Furie Rock," "Y'a Bon les Blancs," "Taxi Boy" and "I Hate Actors."

LUMUMBA

HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY

- 1885** At the Berlin Conference, the Congo becomes the personal property of King Leopold II of Belgium.
- 1906** The Congo is annexed by Belgium
- 1925** July 2, Patrice Lumumba is born in Onalua (eastern Kasai)
- 1954** Patrice Lumumba becomes a postal clerk in Stanleyville (now Kisangani)
- 1955** King Baudouin visits the Congo and launches the idea of a "Belgo-Congolese community."
- 1956** Joseph Iléo's "African conscience" manifesto.
Lumumba is arrested for misappropriation of post office funds
Independence of Morocco, Tunisia and the Sudan.
- 1957** Lumumba works for Polar Beer in Leopoldville
- 1958** Lumumba represents his party, the Congolese National Movement (MNC), at the Pan-African Conference in Accra.
In March, Ghana becomes the first European colony in black Africa to gain independence. Guinea follows in October.
- 1959**
- January** Rioting in Leopoldville.
King Baudouin commits to "leading the Congolese peoples to independence."
- October** Unrest in Stanleyville.
Lumumba is arrested.
- Dec.** Martial law declared in South Kasai to end ethnic clashes.
A coalition of Congolese parties calls for the convening of a round table in Brussels.
- 1960** *Between January and April, Cameroon, Togo and Mali gain independence.*
- Jan-Feb** Round table in Brussels.
Lumumba participates in the name of the MNC.
Independence is set for June 30.
- May** The MNC-Lumumba wins the elections.
- June** Lumumba named prime minister and defense minister.
Joseph Kasa Vubu elected president.
- 30 June** Independence proclaimed in the presence of King Baudouin.
- 4 July** First mutinies against Lumumba and General Janssens, commander of the Force Publique.

- 7 July** First evacuations of whites.
- 9 July** Mutinies spread.
Lumumba and Kasa Vubu begin a pacification tour.
- 10 July** Mutiny in Elisabethville.
Intervention of Belgian troops.
- 11 July** Secession of Moïse Tschombe's Katanga province
Tchad, Congo-Brazzaville, Senegal, Gabon, Somalia, Benin, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, and Ubangui Shari (Central African Republic) all gain independence around this time.
- 12 July** Katangan authorities prevent Lumumba and Kasa Vubu from landing in Elisabethville.
- 14 July** Lumumba appeals to the United Nations and the Soviet Union and breaks off diplomatic relations with Belgium. The Security Council decides to send UN troops.
- 9 Aug** The mining province of South Kasai secedes.
- 13 Aug** UN-Katanga accord restricting the role of UN troops.
- 14 Aug** Lumumba enjoins the UN to put down the secession.
- 16 Aug** Lumumba orders the Congolese National Army to reconquer the seceding territories.
- 27 Aug** Joseph Mobutu's ANC occupies the capital of South Kasai and massacres villagers, then stages a mutiny.
- 5 Sept.** Kasa Vubu dismisses Lumumba, who in turn questions his legitimacy, then obtains the support of Parliament.
- 13 Sept.** Parliament suspended upon orders of Kasa Vubu.
- 14 Sept.** Mobutu neutralizes Lumumba and sets up a college of commissioners in place of a government.
- 10 Oct.** The ANC tries to arrest Lumumba. He takes refuge in his residence under the protection of UN troops.
- 27 Nov.** Lumumba escapes to join his partisans in Stanleyville.
- 2 Dec.** Lumumba is arrested in Kasai and brought back to Leopoldville.
He is transferred to the military camp of Thysville in the Lower Congo.
- 25 Dec.** The Lumumbists in Stanleyville proclaim the "free republic of the Congo."

- 1961** January 17, Lumumba, Mpolo and Okito are transferred to Elisabethville (Katanga).
They are executed the same evening.

- 2001** January 15, Congo President Laurent Kabila assassinated.
His son, Joseph Kabila is the current president.

LUMUMBA

THE CONGO: A BRIEF HISTORY

The Congo has been shaped by diverse and complex forces: its precolonial past, colonial rule and the changes that followed in the wake of independence.

Before its transformation into a colonial state, societies in the Congo had already been subjected to major disruptions. Competition for the kingships of the various tribes often led to civil strife, and with the introduction of the slave trade, internal problems became more evident. By the 18th century, most Congolese societies had all undergone a period of internal fragmentation, exacerbated by attacks from outside forces eager to control the trade in slaves and ivory.

As a result, the region was too weak to resist an invasion ignited by Belgium's King Leopold II. Belgian rule in what became known as the Congo Free State (1885-1908) is associated with the cruelty used in an effort to extract the maximum output of labor and natural resources from the land. In 1908, the Belgian parliament finally voted in favor of annexation in response to widespread international criticism. The period left a legacy of anti-Western sentiment on which subsequent generations of nationalists were able to exploit.

Belgian rule of the colony was extremely unreceptive to political reform. The Africans were treated as childlike creatures who needed to be taught Western moral principles. This approach ruled out all initiatives designed to foster political experience and responsibility.

In the wake of the two world wars; constitutional reforms that were introduced in nearby French-speaking territories; and the rise of a class of Westernized Africans (*évolués*); the time became right for social change. A climate of social unrest, and the development of nationalist sentiment and activity was evident. In 1956, a political manifesto calling for immediate independence was published by a group of Bakongo *évolués* affiliated to the Alliance des Bakongo (ABAKO).

Under Joseph Kasavubu, ABAKO became a major source of unrest, which quickly spread through the colony. Political parties mushroomed almost overnight in each province. The Congolese National Movement (Mouvement National Congolais; MNC) was the most powerful. With the arrival of Patrice Lumumba in Leopoldville in 1958, the party began its militant phase. The process of decolonization reached a critical phase on Jan. 4, 1959, when anti-European rioting resulted in the death of many Africans at the hands of the security forces. On Jan. 13, the Belgians formally recognized independence as the ultimate goal of its policies. Six months later on June 30, the Congo gained independence. Joseph Kasavubu is elected president. Patrice Lumumba was named prime minister and defence minister.

LUMUMBA

HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHIES

[Edited from Encyclopedia Britannica
with additional paragraph in italics from filmmaker Raoul Peck]

PATRICE EMERY LUMUMBA

b. July 2, 1925, Onalua, Belgian Congo [now Congo (Kinshasa)]

d. January 1961, Katanga province

African nationalist leader, the first prime minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (June-September 1960). Forced out of office during a political crisis, he was assassinated a short time later.

Lumumba was born in the village of Onalua in Kasai province, Belgian Congo. He was a member of the small Batetela tribe, a fact that was to become significant in his later political life. His two principal rivals, Moïse Tshombé, who led the breakaway of the Katanga province, and Joseph Kasavubu, who later became the nation's president, both came from large, powerful tribes from which they derived their major support, giving their political movements a regional character. In contrast, Lumumba's movement emphasized its all-Congolese nature.

After attending a Protestant mission school, Lumumba went to work in Kindu-Port-Empain, where he became active in the club of the évolués (educated Africans). He began to write essays and poems for Congolese journals. Lumumba next moved to Léopoldville (now Kinshasa) to become a postal clerk and went on to become an accountant in the post office in Stanleyville (now Kisangani). There he continued to contribute to the Congolese press.

In 1955 Lumumba became regional president of a purely Congolese trade union of government employees that was not affiliated, as were other unions, to either of the two Belgian trade-union federations (socialist and Roman Catholic). He also became active in the Belgian Liberal Party in the Congo. Although conservative in many ways, the party was not linked to either of the trade-union federations, which were hostile to it. In 1956 Lumumba was invited with others to make a study tour of Belgium under the auspices of the Minister of Colonies. On his return he was arrested on a charge of embezzlement from the post office. He was convicted and condemned one year later, after various reductions of sentence, to 12 months' imprisonment and a fine.

When Lumumba got out of prison, he grew even more active in politics. In October 1958 he founded the Congolese National Movement (Mouvement National Congolais; MNC), the first nationwide Congolese political party. In December he attended the first All-African People's Conference in Accra, Ghana, where he met nationalists from across the African continent and was made a member of the permanent organization set up by the conference. His outlook and terminology, inspired by pan-African goals, now took on the tenor of militant nationalism.

In 1959 the Belgian government announced a program intended to lead in five years to independence, starting with local elections in December 1959. The nationalists regarded this program as a scheme to install puppets before independence and announced a boycott of the elections. The Belgian authorities responded with repression. On October 30 there was a clash in Stanleyville that resulted in 30 deaths. Lumumba was imprisoned on a charge of inciting to riot.

The MNC decided to shift tactics, entered the elections, and won a sweeping victory in Stanleyville (90 percent of the votes). In January 1960 the Belgian government convened a Round Table Conference in Brussels of all Congolese parties to discuss political change, but the MNC refused to participate without Lumumba. Lumumba was thereupon released from prison and flown to Brussels. The conference agreed on a date for independence, June 30, with national elections in May. Although

there was a multiplicity of parties, the MNC came out far ahead in the elections, and Lumumba emerged as the leading nationalist politician of the Congo. Maneuvers to prevent his assumption of authority failed, and he was asked to form the first government, which he succeeded in doing on June 23, 1960.

A few days after independence, some units of the army rebelled, largely because of objections to their Belgian commander. In the confusion, the mineral-rich province of Katanga proclaimed secession. Belgium sent in troops, ostensibly to protect Belgian nationals in the disorder. But the Belgian troops landed principally in Katanga, where they sustained the secessionist regime of Moïse Tshombe.

The Congo appealed to the United Nations to expel the Belgians and help them restore internal order. As prime minister, Lumumba did what little he could to redress the situation. His army was an uncertain instrument of power, his civilian administration untrained and untried; the United Nations forces (whose presence he had requested) were condescending and assertive, and the political alliances underlying his regime very shaky. The Belgian troops did not evacuate, and the Katanga secession continued.

Since the United Nations forces refused to help suppress the Katangese revolt, Lumumba appealed to the Soviet Union for planes to assist in transporting his troops to Katanga. He asked the independent African states to meet in Léopoldville in August to unite their efforts behind him. His moves alarmed many, particularly the Western powers and the supporters of President Kasavubu, who pursued a moderate course in the coalition government and favoured some local autonomy in the provinces.

On September 5 President Kasavubu dismissed Lumumba. The legalities of the move were immediately contested by Lumumba. There were thus two groups now claiming to be the legal central government. On September 14 power was seized by the Congolese army leader Colonel Joseph Mobutu (president of Zaire as Mobutu Sese Seko), who later reached a working agreement with Kasavubu. In October the General Assembly of the United Nations recognized the credentials of Kasavubu's government. The independent African states split sharply over the issue.

In November Lumumba sought to travel from Leopoldville, where the United Nations had provided him with provisory protection, to Stanleyville, where his supporters had control. With the active complicity of foreign intelligence sources, Joseph Mobutu sent his soldiers after Lumumba. He was caught after several days of pursuit and spent three months in prison, while his adversaries were trying in vain to consolidate their power. Finally, aware that an imprisoned Lumumba was more dangerous than a dead Prime Minister, he was delivered on January 17, 1961, to the Katanga secessionist regime, where he was executed the same night of his arrival, along with his comrades Mpolo and Okito. His death caused a national scandal throughout the world, and, retrospectively, Mobutu proclaimed him a "national hero."

The reasons that Lumumba provoked such intense emotion are not immediately evident. His viewpoint was not exceptional. He was for a unitary Congo and against division of the country along tribal or regional lines. Like many other African leaders, he supported pan-Africanism and the liberation of colonial territories. He proclaimed his regime one of "positive neutralism," which he defined as a return to African values and rejection of any imported ideology, including that of the Soviet Union.

Lumumba was, however, a man of strong character who intended to pursue his policies, regardless of the enemies he made within his country or abroad. The Congo, furthermore, was a key area in terms of the geopolitics of Africa, and because of its wealth, its size, and its contiguity to white-dominated southern Africa, Lumumba's opponents had reason to fear the consequences of a radical or radicalized Congo regime. Moreover, in the context of the Cold War, the Soviet Union's support for Lumumba appeared at the time as a threat to many in the West.

MOBUTU SESE SEKO

Also called **MOBUTU SESE SEKO KOKO NGBENDU WA ZA BANGA**.

Original name **JOSEPH (DÉSIRÉ) MOBUTU**.

b. Oct. 14, 1930, Lisala, Belgian Congo [now Democratic Republic of the Congo]

d. Sept. 7, 1997, Rabat, Morocco

President of Zaire (now Congo [Kinshasa]), who seized power in a 1965 coup and ruled (dictatorially until 1991) for some 32 years before being ousted by a rebellion in 1997.

Mobutu was educated in missionary schools and began his career in 1949 in the Belgian Congolese army, the Force Publique, rising from a clerk to a sergeant major, the highest rank then open to Africans. While still in the army, Mobutu contributed articles to newspapers in Léopoldville (now Kinshasa). After his discharge in 1956 he became a reporter for the daily *L'Avenir* ("The Future") and later editor of the weekly *Actualités Africaines*.

Through his press contacts Mobutu met the Congolese nationalist leader Patrice Lumumba, whose Congolese National Movement (Mouvement National Congolais; MNC) he joined soon after its founding in 1958. In 1960 Mobutu represented Lumumba at the Brussels Round Table Conference on the Congo's independence until the release of Lumumba, who had been jailed for his nationalist activities in the Congo. During the conference, Mobutu supported Lumumba's proposals (which were adopted) for a strongly centralized state for the independent Congo.

At the Congo's attainment of independence on June 30, 1960, the coalition government of President Joseph Kasavubu and Premier Lumumba appointed Mobutu secretary of state for national defense. Eight days later the Congo's Force Publique mutinied against its Belgian officers. As one of the few officers with any control over the army (gained by liberally dispensing commissions and back pay to the mutineers), Mobutu was in a position to influence the developing power struggle between Kasavubu and Lumumba.

Mobutu covertly supported Kasavubu's attempt to dismiss Lumumba. When Lumumba rallied his forces to oust Kasavubu in September 1960, Mobutu seized control of the government and announced that he was "neutralizing" all politicians. In February 1961, however, Mobutu turned over the government to Kasavubu, who made Mobutu commander in chief of the armed forces. Many believe that Mobutu bore some responsibility for the death of Lumumba, who was arrested by Mobutu's troops and flown to Katanga, where he was killed.

As commander in chief Mobutu reorganized the army. In 1965, after a power struggle had developed between President Kasavubu and his premier, Moïse Tshombe, Mobutu removed Kasavubu in a coup and assumed the presidency. Two years later Mobutu put down an uprising led by white mercenaries attached to the Congolese army. His efforts to revive the Congo's economy included such measures as nationalizing the Katanga copper mines and encouraging foreign investment. Agricultural revitalization lagged, however, and consequently, the need for food imports increased.

Mobutu attempted to soften the military nature of his regime by filling government posts with civilians. He sought to build popular support through his Popular Movement of the Revolution (Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution; MPR), which until 1990 was the country's only legal party. Opposition to his rule came from numerous Congolese exiles, tribal groups that had played decisive roles in previous governments, small farmers who gained no share in the attempted economic revival, and some university students. He also faced a continuing threat of attacks on Shaba region (now Katanga province) by Katangese rebels based in Angola.

As president, Mobutu moved to Africanize names in the nation. The name of the country was changed in October 1971 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo [Kinshasa]) to the Republic of Zaire (the country reverted to its earlier name in 1997). In January 1972, he changed his own name from Joseph-Désiré Mobutu to Mobutu Sese Seko Koko Ngbendu Wa Za Banga ("The all-powerful warrior who, because of his endurance and inflexible will to win, will go from conquest to conquest, leaving fire in his wake").

In 1977 Mobutu had to ask for French military intervention in order to repel an invasion of Zaire by Angolan-backed Katangese. He was reelected to the presidency in one-man contests in 1970 and 1977. Over the years Mobutu proved adept at maintaining his rule in the face of internal rebellions and attempted coups, but his regime had little success in establishing the conditions needed for economic growth and development. Endemic governmental corruption, mismanagement, and neglect led to the decline of the country's infrastructure, while Mobutu himself amassed one of the largest personal fortunes in the world.

With the end of the Cold War in the 1990s, Mobutu lost much of the Western financial support that had been provided in return for his intervention in the affairs of Zaire's neighbours. Marginalized by the multiparty system and ill, Mobutu finally relinquished control of the government in May 1997 to the rebel leader Laurent Kabila, whose forces had begun seizing power seven months earlier. Mobutu died in exile a short time later.

JOSEPH KASAVUBU

b. 1910?, Tshela, Belgian Congo [now Congo (Kinshasa)]

d. March 24, 1969

Boma statesman and first president of the independent Congo republic from 1960 to 1965, who shortly after independence in 1960 ousted the Congo's first premier, Patrice Lumumba, after the breakdown of order in the country.

Educated by Roman Catholic missionaries, Kasavubu became a lay teacher. In 1942 he entered the civil service; he attained the rank of chief clerk, the highest position open to Congolese under the Belgian colonial administration.

An early leader in the Congo's independence movement, Kasavubu during the late 1940s held important offices in Congolese cultural societies and alumni associations that were actually political organizations operating in defiance of Belgian authorities. As a member of the powerful Bakongo (or Kongo), one of the largest tribal groups in the country, Kasavubu in the 1950s sought an independent Congo with a federal structure that would ensure a certain measure of Bakongo autonomy.

Kasavubu became president (1955) of Abako (Alliance des Ba-Kongo), the powerful cultural-political association of the Bakongo. In 1957 Abako candidates swept the first municipal elections permitted by Belgian authorities in Léopoldville (now Kinshasa), and Kasavubu was elected mayor of the Dendale district.

In the Congo's first national elections in 1960, Lumumba's party outpolled Kasavubu's Abako and its allies, but neither side could form a parliamentary coalition. As a compromise measure, Kasavubu and Lumumba formed an uneasy partnership with the former as president and the latter as premier.

Shortly after independence, Congo was racked by an army mutiny, Belgian military intervention to protect the remaining Belgian residents, and the secession of the province of Katanga under Moïse Tshombe. United Nations aid proved ineffective in restoring order in the country, and there were reports that Premier Lumumba had accepted offers of Soviet military aid to prop up the faltering central government. With the backing of the army under Colonel Joseph Mobutu (later Mobutu Sese Seko), Kasavubu dismissed Lumumba and appointed a new government. Kasavubu then tacitly supported Mobutu's first coup in late 1960 and later engineered the accession of Tshombe to the premiership in 1964. Kasavubu's role in Congolese politics effectively ended, however, with Mobutu's second, and final overthrow of the government in 1965. Kasavubu then retired to his farm at Boma on the lower Congo River.

MOISE-KAPENDA TSHOMBE

b. Nov. 10, 1919, Musumba, Belgian Congo [now Congo (Kinshasa)]

d. June 29, 1969, Algiers, Algeria

Politician, president of the secessionist African state of Katanga, and premier of the united Congo Republic (now Congo [Kinshasa]) who took advantage of an armed mutiny to announce the secession of mineral-rich Katanga province in July 1960. With covert military and technical assistance from Belgium and the aid of a white mercenary force, Tshombe maintained his independent Republic of Katanga for three years in the face of combined United Nations and Congolese efforts to end the secession of the province. Often accused of being a pawn of foreign commercial interests, Tshombe was an adroit politician, who used his foreign supporters to help him achieve his personal ambitions in the Congo.

Tshombe came from a wealthy family and at his father's death inherited sizable business holdings. After the businesses began to fail, however, Tshombe turned to politics. From 1951 to 1953 he was one of the few Congolese to serve on the Katanga Provincial Council. In 1959 he became president of Conakat (Confédération des Associations Tribales du Katanga), a political party that was supported by Tshombe's tribal group, the powerful Lunda, and by the Belgian mining monopoly Union Minière du Haut Katanga, which controlled the province's rich copper mines. At a conference called by the Belgian home government in 1960 to discuss independence for the Congo, Tshombe presented Conakat's proposals for an independent Congo made up of a loose confederation of semiautonomous provinces. Tshombe's proposals, as well as those of other federationists such as Joseph Kasavubu, were rejected in favour of Patrice Lumumba's plan for a strongly centralized republic. Conakat won only 8 of 137 seats in the Congolese Parliament in the first national elections of May 1960, but Tshombe's party and its allies won a majority in Katanga's Provincial Assembly, and Tshombe became president of the province. Although he appeared to accept Lumumba's national government, with the mutiny of the Force Publique (militia) two weeks after independence, Tshombe declared Katanga independent.

After the ouster of Congolese Premier Lumumba by President Kasavubu and the army in September 1960, Tshombe opened negotiations with Kasavubu toward a possible end to Katanga secession but later abandoned the talks. He may have been implicated in the subsequent death of Lumumba. Tshombe failed to win diplomatic recognition for his state, and after the United Nations intervened with force in Katanga in January 1963 and defeated his troops, Tshombe fled to Spain. Recalled from exile in 1964 by President Kasavubu to assume the post of premier to quell a rebellion in the eastern Congo, Tshombe was dismissed in 1965, ostensibly for using white mercenaries against the rebels, though it is also contended that he was attempting to oust Kasavubu. Tshombe returned to Spain. In 1967, when there were rumours that he planned to return to the Congo, Tshombe was kidnapped and taken to Algeria. Algerian officials refused the demands of Congolese President Joseph Mobutu (later Mobutu Sese Seko) for Tshombe's extradition to stand trial for treason. Tshombe remained under house arrest near Algiers, where he died of a heart attack.

KATANGA

formerly (1972-97) SHABA

Historical region in southeastern Congo (Kinshasa), bordering Lake Tanganyika to the east, Zambia to the south, and Angola to the west. It is coextensive with modern Katanga province. The name Shaba, the region's name during the Zairean period, comes from the Swahili word for copper, and the region's mines yield most of Congo's copper, cobalt, uranium, zinc, cadmium, silver, germanium, coal, gold, iron, manganese, and tin. The local people were utilizing those minerals before the arrival of Europeans in the 19th century. Economic development since 1900 has brought about a complex of mining and industrial towns and transportation and communications networks, which makes the region the most highly industrialized in Congo outside of Kinshasa, the national capital. Agriculture (cotton, tobacco, corn [maize], and vegetables), livestock herding, and poultry raising are also significant. The major towns of the region include Lubumbashi, Likasi, and Kolwezi. Upemba and Kundelungu national parks are in Katanga.

Katanga was under Belgian colonial administration from 1885 and was the scene of much strife following independence. In 1960, led by a local politician, Moïse Tshombe, and supported by foreign mining interests, Katanga seceded from the newly independent Congo and entered into a period of political confusion and bloodshed involving Congolese, Belgian, and United Nations forces. After the fighting ended in 1963, the region gradually became reintegrated into the republic, and some rebel leaders took refuge in Angola. In 1977 they unsuccessfully invaded Zaire (as Congo was then called) from Angola, and unrest continued into the late 20th century.

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LUMUMBA

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