

The poem published below was written on January 25, this year by our late Comrade in the fight for African Freedom, Patrice Lumumba, when he was Mobutu's captive at Camp Leopold II in Leopoldville.

He sent a copy of the poem to a friend in India. A copy was later discovered in his papers at the Camp Leopold II after his death.

Dawn in the Heart of Africa

by Patrice Lumumba



PATRICE LUMUMBA

*FOR a thousand years you, Negro, suffered like a beast,
Your ashes strewn to the wind that roams the desert.
Your tyrants built the lustrous, magic temples.
To preserve your soul, preserve your suffering.
Barbaric right of first and the white right to a whip,
You had the right to die, you also could weep.
In your totem they carved endless hunger, endless bonds,
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 country where the little man
Wallows in an ant-hill and where a dollar is king,
To that damned land which they called a motherland.
There your child, your wife were ground, day and night
By frightful, merciless mill, crushing them in dreamful pain
You are 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
Homeless beggar that sinks at stranger's 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 a strength
Burst out of you for a thousand years of mystery in
Metalic voice of jazz, in uncovered outcry that thunders
Through the continent in gigantic surf.
The whole world surprised, woke up in panic to the violent
Rhythm of blood, to 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 only will now be the land, the water, mighty rivers
Poor Negro was surrendering for a thousand years.
And hard torches of the sun will shine for us again
They'll dry 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 arise from back soil,
A free and gallant Congo—the black bossom, the
back seed.*