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# TIME

Monday, May. 30, 1960

## BELGIAN CONGO: Democracy with Spears

Some 2,000,000 citizens of the Belgian Congo were in the throes of their first election. Voters did not seem to think that balloting was enough. Spear-carrying Baluba tribesmen chased Lulus through the streets of Léopoldville. One angry group descended on a police post and stoned the cops. In five weeks of electioneering, 57 people were dead.

Object was to choose men to lead the new nation, three times the size of Texas, when it becomes independent next month. By decree from Brussels, the Congo's 115,000 whites are not allowed to vote, and most of the half-naked, illiterate black voters had no idea what the candidates were talking about. There were 65 parties in the field. The Abako party's crafty Joseph Kasavubu sought to split off his Lower Congo region and make it autonomous. Secession-minded Moïse Tshombe's Conakat group, 1,000 miles away in Elisabethville, was demanding the same privilege for its mineral-rich Katanga province, which produces 65% of all the Congo's income. Each was fighting Paul Bolya and his moderate National Progress Party as well as the militant group of Albert Kalonji.

The Embezzler. But the man to beat was Patrice Lumumba, 34, the tall, goateed radical from Stanleyville who last week was storming through the back country in a cream-colored convertible. Lumumba is a former postal clerk who served six months in jail for embezzling \$2,500 ("I used the money to promote the nationalist cause"), was jailed again for starting riots, but emerged in time to join last winter's independence negotiations in Brussels. His followers sell orange-colored Lumumba shirts and party cards to raise money; any black man caught in Stanleyville without his party card was apt to get a beating from Lumumba's toughs. Opposing fragmentation of the huge colony, Lumumba preaches national unity under a strong central government, but his kind of unity strikes fear in the hearts of many whites. In French, which the Belgians understand, his sleek loudspeaker-equipped cars last week made conciliatory noises about future relations with the Belgians; but in the native dialect, they poured out anti-white diatribe.

Authority Gone. Lumumba's followers promised cheering black audiences that they would get the white man's cars, houses—even womenfolk—when independence comes, and more than one Stanleyville resident

was said to have answered a knock on the door to find an African asking to be shown the house he would be given after June 30. More ominously, Lumumba men produced a blacklist of Belgians who would be "eliminated" after independence unless they left the country. Sabena's daily jets to Europe were already jammed, and 80 special flights were scheduled to handle the rush of Belgians scuttling for safety before the independence date.

With authority collapsing and district administrators leaving their posts in fear or exasperation, the Brussels government put its foot down. "We cannot allow it to be said that we gave the Congo its independence in a state of chaos," Premier Gaston Eyskens told Parliament. Secretly, he pulled a large part of Belgium's Liberation Division out of West Germany, airlifted it to Congo bases for use if further trouble occurred. Tough Walter Ganshof van der Meersch, onetime prosecutor of Nazi collaborators, was installed as Minister for General Affairs in Africa and sent to the scene with full powers to put down violence. The governors of several provinces were quietly replaced.

Lumumba's African rivals, knowing that no single candidate is likely to win a majority at the polls, hoped to block him with a post-election coalition. But he would be a hard man to handle. As a Belgian official puts it, "Lumumba is bad for the government either way. If he loses, he will wreck it; if he wins, he will swallow it."

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