
The Lumumba Plot:

The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination

By Stuart A. Reid

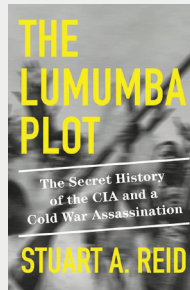
New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2023, 624 pages, ISBN: 9781524748821

Reviewed by Ensar Küçükaltan, Africa Training and Coordination Center (AKEM)

When I saw that *The Lumumba Plot: The Secret History of the CIA and a Cold War Assassination* was published, I was very pleased. The fact that a hero of African culture, who was treacherously murdered for defending his nation, is today one of the main themes of many works, politically means hope for all African nations. Heroes like Lumumba are important figures for the new generations of Africa to protect their culture and freedom.

The book is a comprehensive look at the shadowy activities and political assassinations of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) during the Cold War. When Patrice Lumumba took office as the first prime minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo (then Belgian Congo) in 1960, he was full of hopes and ideals. However, his ideals and the struggle for independence made him a targeted figure in international politics' complex and dangerous waters.

The book consists of 5 chapters. The book's first part was a fascinating portrait of Patrice Lumumba's interesting childhood years. His life story in a small village in the Congo distinguished him from his peers by his practical intelligence and poise. Patrice Lumumba was born on July 2, 1925, in the village of Onalua in the Katako-Combe region. He was born into a Tetela ethnic family and grew up speaking the Tetela language. Lumumba was



born and raised in an era of colonization, a situation that plagued him from an early age. Throughout the process, Lumumba and his increasingly nationalist and anti-colonialist rhetoric disturbed the Belgians, who found Lumumba's views too radical. Furthermore, his ideas were dangerous enough to spread like a spark and turn into a fire in an African country under strict colonial rule. Belgium had a policy of preventing such views from the very beginning. The book documents all these aspects and examines in detail the facts behind Lumumba's assassination, the role of the CIA, and how U.S. foreign policy was shaped during this critical period of the Cold War.

Stuart A. Reid, the author of this book, is an executive editor of *Foreign Affairs*. In this book, Reid meticulously covers the chronology of events based on deep research and first-hand sources. These sources include intelligence documents as well as testimonies of members of the Lumumba family. Lumumba's rise and fall are examined in the context of international relations at the time, the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the decolonization of Africa. The author does not spare any detail in describing Lumumba's internal and external challenges, his vision and political ideals, and the power dynamics at play where these ideals clashed. He narrates all these details while paying attention to historical integrity and describes

Lumumba's childhood, youth, and political periods in detail. His becoming the leader of the country, the subsequent rise of his enemies and then his loss of power, are explained with sequential arguments, preventing confusion.

Indeed, the most space reserved for Lumumba's life is his murder. *The Lumumba Plot* details how Lumumba's assassination was planned and carried out while also revealing the bigger picture. It offers an in-depth analysis of the interventions of the U.S. and other Western powers during the Cold War to protect their interests and the effects of these interventions. The book emphasizes that Lumumba's death was a turning point not only in the country's history but also in international relations and Cold War politics.

Reid tells the story of the CIA's conspiracies, planning, and assassination attempts against Lumumba, supported by secret documents and witness testimony. Chapters 3 and 4 of the book deal with the conspiracies during Lumumba's rise to and loss of power. These chapters give readers a rare glimpse into the inner workings of the U.S. government and intelligence community at the time. It also analyzes the political and social changes in the Congo and the African continent in general in the aftermath of Lumumba's assassination and considers the long-term impact of this event. Other sources had previously blamed Dwight Eisenhower for Lumumba's assassination. However, a new piece of evidence that Reid presents in his study is important in this respect. In the Eisenhower Presidential Library, he found the only written record of an August 1960 National Security Council meeting in which a State Department official wrote a "bold X" next to Lumumba's name (p. 263).

One of the interesting points in the book is the section on CIA Station Chief Larry Dav-

lin. It was Davlin who organized the protests to overshadow Lumumba's Pan-African conference. When Lumumba was under house arrest, Larry Devlin asked the CIA to send "a high-powered, foreign-made rifle with a telescopic scope and silencer," saying: "Hunting is good here when the light is right" (p. 331). Similarly, when Lumumba is captured and sent to Katanga, Devlin says: "Thanks for Patrice. If we had known he was coming, we would have baked a snake" (p. 389).

The last chapter of the book discusses the following about the return of Lumumba's teeth, the last trace of him: "Lumumba's daughter, Juliana, thought it strange that around the world, governments were still hunting aging Nazis, yet no one seemed moved to prosecute those responsible for her father's death. Adding insult to injury, the sole remaining relic of her father was moldering away in Brussels. On June 30, 2020, the 60th anniversary of Congolese independence, as Black Lives Matter protests spread to Belgium and Belgian mayors belatedly removed statues of Leopold II, she sent an open letter to Belgium's king demanding the return of her father's remains to the country he once led. "We simply want to bid him adieu," she wrote. Officials in Brussels, in search of a more dignified container than a plastic evidence bag, commissioned a local jeweler to build a custom case for Lumumba's tooth. In a ceremony at a government palace in Brussels, Belgium's federal prosecutor handed over a bright blue box the size of a Bible to Juliana Lumumba and her brothers François and Roland. Then the box was placed into a coffin carved from a dark African wood and flown to the country now known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo" (pp. 435-436).

The Lumumba Plot also examines the repercussions of historical events on the world

today. It discusses how interventions and policy decisions made during the Cold War have had a lasting impact on contemporary international relations and inter-state dynamics. The author emphasizes why understanding such historical events is important for a better grasp of contemporary world politics and international relations. I think the photographs used at the end of the book are also very useful in helping to visualize the story and set the context of that time period. From the crowded meetings to the arrest by the soldiers, the photographs allow us to witness history.

In the context of the book's very detailed narrative, it would have been useful to refer to other leaders who fought a similar struggle in different countries during the Lumumba period. In fact, many leaders with Pan-African

ideals like Lumumba went through similar processes in the same period. This would have shown the reader that the people of the region were in resistance against the neo-colonial structure. In this context, the relations of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with its neighbors, the common consciousness that different intelligence agencies tried to prevent, and the parties in the Congolese society that served imperialist aims could have been covered more widely. However, this is one of the best biographical works on Lumumba. The book will be useful for those who are interested in the struggle between African nations in the post-colonial period and those who want to maintain the neo-colonial structure, and most importantly for those who want to understand the political protests and uprisings that are taking place in many African countries today.

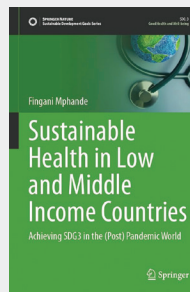
Sustainable Health in Low and Middle Income Countries: Achieving SDG3 in the (Post) Pandemic World

By Fingani Annie Mphande

Springer, 2023, 140 pages, €119.99, ISBN: 9789819942534

Reviewed by Rukiye Kaya Yetiş, Turkish National Police Academy

Sustainable Health in Low and Middle Income Countries: Achieving SDG3 in the (Post) Pandemic World by Fingani Annie Mphande was published under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2023. The book analyzes low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) with a main focus on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 3. The main concerns of the book are how to achieve SDG 3 and what kind of lessons can be drawn from the pandemic. Although the author is a molecular microbi-



ologist, the book may be a valuable source for varied professionals from healthcare workers and researchers to policymakers and students.

The book consists of 8 chapters. These chapters analyze a great variety of issues such as health literacy (HL) and mental health, all of which are related to different aspects of SDG 3. Despite the variety of issues, all chapters emphasize inequalities between high-income countries (HICs) and LMICs, along with