

reference to the separatist tendencies in the Lower Congo.

But it was defined quite specifically, too, in regard to Katanga in the closing stages of the Brussels conference. Two international events had occurred to provoke the Belgians. The French Government – for no reason explained at the time or since – informed the Belgian Ambassador verbally in Paris that France's preferential right to the Congo subsisted and would continue to subsist. This was a reference to an agreement harking back to the bad old days of the Berlin conference of 1884 when Leopold's International African Association promised to grant France a preferential right in the event that, owing to unforeseen circumstances, the Association should be unable to exercise its rights.

The other incident was caused by a deliberately incautious interview granted by the Prime Minister of the Central African Federation, Sir Roy Welensky, in which he said: 'A vast and rich part of Belgian Congo, that will become independent on 1 July, could throw off its old ties and join the Federation. . . .'

The Belgian Government was understandably angered by both these vulture-like attacks on the still hot carcass of the Congo. To the French, the Prime Minister replied with some heat: 'In 1884 it was possible to envisage cessions which were either gratuitous or at a heavy cost. . . . Today, territories and peoples are no longer property which may be a matter for international commerce.' To Sir Roy Welensky he was equally severe. 'First King Leopold II and then Belgium ensured Congolese unity. . . . The Belgian Government protests against suggestions which tend to demolish the work of three-quarters of a century; suggestions that are prompted by motives that are irrelevant to the good of the Congolese people. . . .' He then went on to recall Resolution 2 of the Round Table Conference laying down that 'the Congo State shall constitute on 30 June 1960 six provinces having the geographical configuration of the provinces now in existence.'

Little did the Belgian Prime Minister realize that within a few months his own Government would itself be under heavy pressure, and sorely tempted to dismember the Congo.

## Chapter 9

### SIX MONTHS TO INDEPENDENCE

*'During my visit I was struck by the splendid vitality of the native and European population, their stout faith in the future, their almost unanimous desire for a wholehearted collaboration with Belgium. I shall cherish the memory of how they touchingly manifested their attachment to the dynasty.'*

KING BAUDOUIN, January 1960

FOR the Belgians, the penultimate disaster was the complete breakdown of their relations with the Congo's most influential leaders during the six months' transition period to independence. Everything in this crucial period depended on confidence between the new rulers of the Congo and the Belgians. What went wrong is easier to describe than to explain.

The Congolese leaders had returned from Brussels elated by their victory over the Belgians, and bursting to compete for the political heritage that would come to the winner of the first national elections set for June 1960. In preparing for the elections the Belgian Administration continued to behave as if it still could (and unquestionably should) control events. The habit of paternalism died hard with them.

There was no question of rigging the elections; but there were plenty of opportunities to show favour and to help – by financial subventions and in other ways – the 'pro-Belgian' leaders. Kasavubu was, to start with, still the principal enemy. The favourites were the old familiar PNP led by Paul Bolya, and the Parti de l'Unité Nationale Africaine (PUNA) led by Jean Bolikango. The close second favourites were Lumumba's MNC and its extensive network of allies.

The great need was funds for campaigning. The task of organizing parties on a nation-wide basis, or through coalitions with other parties, required considerable sums of money. It was forthcoming in liberal quantities. The Belgians, through convenient

unofficial sources and through industrialists, supplied funds to PNP, PUNA, and to MNC. The last group obtained additional sums through the All-African People's Conference in Accra, and through the Afro-Asian Solidarity Movement in Conakry. But if the providers of funds imagined they could call the tune, they were soon to be disillusioned. Patrice Lumumba, for one, showed his independence of mind. When I saw him in Leopoldville in March 1960, he was still riding high in the favour of the Belgians; by May he was being openly denounced by officials as 'nothing better than another Hitler'. He had become the Bad African. Kasavubu was restored to the Belgians' good books; the bitter attacks of the past were forgotten, and he was praised for his moderation and integrity. But Kasavubu himself remained suspicious and unforgiving. He was acting as Minister of Finance in the interim Government when I saw him in his Leopoldville office at the end of March 1960. I had enlisted the services of a Belgian journalist to act as interpreter, but Kasavubu refused to be interviewed in his presence. His suspicions of the Belgians went deep; at the same time he retained his faith in Professor van Bilsen and in other trusty Jesuit friends.

#### FEDERALISTS v. UNITARIANS

My interview with Kasavubu, and a subsequent talk I had with Lumumba at this time, pinpointed the growing crisis between the federalists and the unitarians. 'Everybody,' Kasavubu began, 'is trying to isolate Abako. The other leaders don't seem to see the dangers in trying to isolate us. The Administration is also pushing in that direction. They imagine that it is possible to rule the country against the Abako *bloc*. This is a dangerous miscalculation. Without the struggle of the Bakongo there would have been no independence yet. No other part of the Congo has done as much for it. In forgetting all this the other leaders deceive themselves, if they imagine they can rule the country without or against the Bakongo. We can stand alone; the others cannot.'

Kasavubu firmly denied that Abako was purely a tribal party. 'That it is a national party is shown by its struggle for the independence of the whole country. We have allies in Katanga, and to some extent also in Kasai and Kivu. All over the country

there is a growing tendency in favour of our policy of federalism. People will gradually come to see that federalism is a better policy. Tribal conflicts are a result of colonialism. It was a policy of the colonialists to divide and rule, not only of the Belgians. The difference here is that people were not educated to govern themselves. People outside the Congo should know that these people will never again accept colonial rule, even if the period of decolonization should lead to tribal wars and bloodshed. In the immediate future all depends on the Belgians.'

Kasavubu was more anxious about what might happen before independence than afterwards; but he did not rule out the possibility of things going wrong. 'If things should go wrong,' he said, 'we will find ways of dealing with the situation.' I asked him: 'What if the Government of independence should reject your ideas of federalism?' His answer was: 'If it came to a clash we would try to live on our own in the Lower Congo. We would then have to start all over again trying to unite the country on a federal basis, beginning from the bottom. That is the only way unity can be achieved.'

The mood of Patrice Lumumba – harried by visitors in the Leopoldville Headquarters of the MNC as he had been in room 53 of the Cosmopolitan Hotel in Brussels – was in complete contrast to that of Joseph Kasavubu. 'I am very satisfied', he said, 'with what is happening now. There is a good spirit between the Belgians and the Congolese. We know the Congolese are not sufficiently prepared to experience sovereignty. The Belgians know it too. But I am delighted with the Belgian spirit. Now white and black can help each other to build up the country, with each playing his proper role. We must embark on the acceleration of Africanization with the Belgians in the role of technicians. The MNC was the first party to refuse to cooperate with the Administration, but in view of the changed circumstances it is also the first to cooperate with them again.' This statement by Lumumba three months before independence shows how benignly he could feel towards the Belgians when he was confident. His anxieties at that time were about the federalists. 'Our future lies in unity, but the federalists want to organize tribal feuds because they have no support on a national plane. There is no question of my being anti-Kasavubu. He is my personal

friend. We fought together against colonialism. Because we fought the colonialists there is no reason for us to establish a dictatorship as the Abako is doing in the Lower Congo, otherwise we would be doing simply what the colonialists did.' He gave many instances of the way in which the Abako were setting up a state within a state in the Lower Congo. I read over to him the notes of my talk with Kasavubu. He responded immediately. 'I suffered more for the cause of independence than he did. I went to prison. Because I say that we want cooperation with the Belgians, I am accused of being bought by the Administration. It is simply not true. The situation has obviously changed, and there is no longer any reason why we should not cooperate with the Administration in the transition period.' I pressed the point about Kasavubu's threat of separation if he did not get his way over federation. 'If Kasavubu does that, then we are in for a bad time. But he will find that we are not the Belgians. We won't be frightened by him.'

The significance of these and other talks I had in Leopoldville in March 1960 is in the cooperative spirit and sense of responsibility shown by Patrice Lumumba. Secondly, nobody was then taking Moise Tshombe seriously; neither the Administration, nor the Congolese leaders. He was treated by everybody as a rather pretentious fop. The real leader of federalism, and the danger to unity, was Joseph Kasavubu.

#### BELGIAN QUARRELS

It is difficult to determine precisely the grounds for Lumumba's quarrel with the Belgians in April and May 1960. Some say it had to do with financial affairs; others say it was because of Lumumba's intransigence and erratic behaviour – which is not difficult to believe. On the other side it is said that the Belgians, having found Lumumba in a cooperative mood, were angered by his refusal to take their advice. So much was happening in those critical, confusing months that it is impossible to say just what went wrong. The essential point is that Lumumba and the Belgians fell out, and the estrangement – though not yet irrevocably final – directly contributed to the disaster that was soon to follow. The Belgians recalled their High Commissioner, and put

M. Walter Ganshof van der Meersch in control as Minister for General Affairs in Africa. The Minister's reputation was that of Belgium's 'strong man'. His appointment aroused controversy in Brussels and evoked the hostility and suspicions of the Congolese leaders.

Tension was mounting inside the Congo. The *colons* were worried about their position; those who could afford it were sending their families abroad until the uncertainties passed; there was increasing anti-white feeling. The politicians were engaged in political bargaining. In many parts of the country the situation recalled the 'rotten boroughs' of England in the last century. Powerful local chiefs and 'favourite sons' controlled large blocks of votes; their support was strenuously competed for. The battle of the hustings was not yet a feature of Congo politics, although in the larger centres the *évolués* by no means voted tribally. They based their decision either on principle, or on the possible advantages of going with the winning side. But nobody could say with any certainty in this maiden election who was going to win. It was like staking a bet on a card of dark horses.

Contrary to expectation there had been relatively little inter-tribal fighting. The worst incidents continued to occur in Kasai between the Lulua and the Baluba. But nasty as these incidents always are, they were much less severe than had been predicted.

Apart from politics, the factor that should have given most cause for alarm was the financial position of the Congo and its future economic relations with Belgium. But if the Belgians were prepared to take this seriously, the Congolese attitude was that financial questions must await the outcome of the elections. Most of the political parties chose to field only their 'second elevens' at what should have been a decisive conference to settle economic questions in Brussels.

#### HARD BARGAINING

If the Belgians had shown themselves generous in their final decision to concede independence, they appeared much less so in their financial negotiations with the Congolese leaders. The voice of the *Bourse* was unmistakable.

It is a matter for argument whether the Congo's economy was,

in fact, basically sound under Belgian rule. Economists differ strongly. The size of the Public Debt, and the terms under which it was arranged, was alarming. It could be justified only if it were unmistakably clear that the capital raised was being used to develop the country's resources on a basis that allowed for balanced development. There is evidence to show that the economy was in fact lop-sided, when viewed from Leopoldville rather than from Brussels. An expensive European type of economic superstructure had been raised on a pathetically underdeveloped rural economy. It is possible to argue that this was the quickest way of getting the steam behind an expansionist economy; it is the method adopted by the Russians and the People's Republics. Marxist criticisms, therefore, would be out of place in the Belgian Congo. One would have to judge Belgian policy by the principles of economic planning formulated by underdeveloped African and Asian states after they had achieved independence. By these standards the Congo was in an unhealthy state.

The constructive feature of the economy was the increase in national revenue at the rate of 4·7 per cent per annum since 1920; between 1950 and 1958 it achieved the impressive rate of 7·6 per cent. Salaried workers had increased rapidly: 1,100,000 (about 40 per cent of the adult male population) were in paid employment. But the national income level was depressingly low; an average of less than eleven shillings per year. The rate of economic growth was not keeping up with the population growth; the population was expected to grow from 13 millions to 27 millions in thirty years. Moreover, the Congo had the unenviable reputation of being the heaviest-taxed country in Africa.

The Congo's economic growth was at the point where a vast expansion of national revenue was needed to maintain its impetus. The Belgian estimate put it at 5 per cent per annum; this called for about £63 million of public investment, plus £91 million of private capital in the five-year period from 1960 to 1965. As against this £154 millions in five years, all the Belgians had managed by way of private and public capital in the period of eight years between 1950 to 1958 was a total of £168 million; and this figure was intended to achieve a lower rate of development than the Belgian experts calculated was necessary for the Congo's future growth.

But if the long-term problems were serious, the immediate economic problems were critical. On the eve of its independence the Government was faced with large current deficits (£40 million on current account for 1960 alone). The flight of capital and the loss of international confidence, because of the events of 1959, meant the new Government would come to power with no liquid assets at all;\* a quarter of its budget was already mortgaged to its Public Debt; a portion of its future earnings was drawn upon to repay the advance borrowings in taxes and duties from the principal mining and industrial tax-payers; and, worst of all, it would have little independent control over its own Central Bank.

The Congo Central Bank had been made a prisoner of Brussels early in 1960. The story is a dismal one. Having failed to take any steps to arrest the flight of capital, the Belgians were finally forced to act when the Congo Central Bank reached the point where it could not meet its obligations. Its reserves had been allowed to run down too far. To prop it up, the Belgian National Bank agreed to guarantee its operations on two conditions. First, that its gold and dollar reserves amounting to nearly £15 million in gold and £11 million in convertible sterling should be lodged in the vaults of the National Bank in Brussels. (These assets were removed by the Belgians only after independence; hence the accusation of 'robbery'.) Secondly, that the monetary and public investment policy of the Congo should be settled between the two banks. This meant that the independent Congo would be deprived of a large measure of economic freedom of action. It is astounding that the Belgians should have imagined that such a policy could survive independence.

Belgian lack of understanding was manifested equally in other aspects of their economic dealings with the Congolese. On the one hand they generously offered to pay one-third of the salaries of all Belgian colonial servants who remained on after independence, and to provide an extensive technical aid programme. But

\* To help meet this position the Belgians had offered to subsidize the 1960 Budget by £17.5 million; it had raised a long-term loan from the International Bank of Reconstruction for £14 million, and a short-term loan in New York for £7 million. Apart from the economic unwisdom of meeting current and past deficits by long-term loans, the total amount raised in subsidies and loans amounted to less than two-thirds of the estimated 1960 Budget deficit.



these services were to be controlled by a separate department operating under the control of the Belgian Embassy. The normal practice of international aid, based on a Government-to-Government relationship, was repudiated. The civil servants and technical services within the Congo would fall under the control and supervision of the Belgian Government. Here was the last stronghold of paternalism.

None of these basic problems was reflected in the hundreds of resolutions and recommendations finally adopted by the Economic Conference held in Brussels from April to May 1960. The Congolese delegates were unsure of their powers and even less sure of their economics, a fact referred to by the Belgian Prime Minister in his opening address to the conference: 'There are doubtless some persons who fear that in a relatively short period they cannot learn enough about the manifold aspects of the situation. . . . Others may fear that Belgium will attempt to impose indirectly some hold over the future Congolese Government through economic, financial, and monetary agreements. There is also some anxiety among the Belgians. Many of our fellow-citizens have families in the Congo whose future appears uncertain. We are aware that the security of the Congo's economic sub-structure – to which the Belgian economy has made heavy sacrifices – could be endangered if fundamental mistakes were made.'

These mistakes were made; but before the enormity of the economic mistakes had been realized by the Congolese, they were overtaken by the consequences of political mistakes which destroyed any possibility of implementing the plans for a Belgo-Congo Economic Community.

## Chapter 10

### LEADERS AND IDEAS

*'The blacks are still in their infancy as a people. They may never even attain manhood. . . . If they ever do attain an equality with white men, it will be the greatest human triumph in the history of the world.'*

DEMETRIUS C. BOULGER, *The Congo State* (1898)

THE independence election in June 1960, was the first test of public opinion ever made in the Congo. Its result\* was indecisive, except in one respect. The pro-Belgian parties, like PNP and PUNA, failed badly, winning between them fewer than one-sixth of the seats. Apart from Katanga, where Moïse Tshombe's CONAKAT cartel won just over half the seats to beat the BALUBAKAT into second place, the nationalists won comfortably; but among them there was no clear victory for either the militant or moderate wings. And although Patrice Lumumba's MNC emerged as the largest party, with thirty-three seats in a Parliament of 137 (later it grew to forty), their strength gave them little more than a strong bargaining position.

What type of men were these leaders who had suddenly emerged from the shadows in the wings to crowd the centre of the stage, which had been held for the best part of a century by the Belgians?

#### PATRICE LUMUMBA

The Congo's first Prime Minister, thirty-five-year-old Patrice Lumumba, typifies what was best and worst in Belgian colonial

\* The MNC won seats in each of the six provinces, but had virtually no support in Leopoldville Province itself. Their main strength lay in Lumumba's own province of Orientale; their allies won strong support in Kivu (mainly Kashamura's CERE party), in Katanga (Jason Sendwe's BALUBAKAT), and in Kasai (the Lulua Frères). The Lower Congo went solidly to Abako. Between them, Abako and PSA control twenty-five of the twenty-six seats in Leopoldville Province.

rule. He is a rake of a man, with a tiny, narrow head and a chinful of beard. His smile is light and quick and frequent; when he is angry or frustrated it disappears behind a hard, hostile, impregnable shield. His movements are sharp and wary, like those of a praying mantis. His tongue is silver and seldom still. He thinks nothing of talking for four hours at a time. But his pleasant, easy manner is deceptive; he is earnest and tough, and can be ruthless, as occasion has shown. His hero is Dr Kwame Nkrumah, and the model for his state is Ghana. 'In a young state', he believes, 'you must have strong and visible powers'.

He is a republican and a reformer. 'Our need is to democratize all our institutions. We must separate the Church from the State. We must take away all power from the traditional chiefs, and remove all privileges. We must adapt socialism to African realities. Amelioration of the conditions of life is the only true meaning independence can have.'

His outlook at first was pro-Western. 'Mistakes have been made in Africa in the past, but we are now ready to work with the powers which have been in Africa to create a powerful new bloc,' he said at the beginning of 1960. 'If this effort fails, it will be through the faults of the West.'

His resentment of authority (even of such formidable authority as the United Nations) is what one might have expected from the political heir of the Belgians' great father-figure, King Leopold II. About a great many important things Lumumba is neutral, indifferent, or indecisive, rather than rebellious. It is only when he suspects paternalism that he rebels without thought of the consequences; time and again in the gravest days of the crisis this emotion flared up with a terrifying passion. Paternalism acts on him like an allergy.

On the other hand, his reaction to the Belgian attempt to enforce Christianity on the Congolese is tepid. Having been subjected to both Catholic and Protestant mission influence, Lumumba feels indifferent to both. Yet he is neither an atheist nor anti-Christian. His parents are devout Catholics. His background was by no means wholly hostile to his future, but it put curbs on his ambitions. Submission could get him some way, but not as far as he wished to go: rebellion was more rewarding, and less wounding to his pride. Lumumba's long, lonely rise to the top taught

him never wholly to trust. This attitude is reflected in the super-suspiciousness with which he was to look beneath every UN helmet for a potential enemy. His erratic behaviour can be both irritating and disconcerting, but it has the advantage of flexibility. Lumumba's last word is always his first. He must never be judged by his impromptu utterances; these only reflect his passing emotions. He has shown himself to be inflexible only on one important issue: the need for a strong central government.

In the dangerous months after independence Lumumba faced a situation which would have tried the most experienced of statesmen. Recall for a moment the state of the Congo in June 1960, and the difficulties in which he found himself. The Government itself was an uneasy coalition. At first, the civil service was manned entirely by Belgians; later there was no civil service at all, except what was scratched together by the UN. The writ of the Government ran hazardously. Rebellion, when it came through the Force Publique, affected an area the size of Western Europe. Is it altogether surprising that in this cataclysmic situation the young, untried Prime Minister should have appeared impetuous, unreliable, hostile, irresponsible, and, at times, alarming?

Lumumba's mistakes were due partly to his mercurial personality, partly to his one fixed idea – belief in the unitary state – and partly to his inexperience. The victims of this inexperience were also its authors – the Belgians. Until he became Prime Minister, Lumumba's career offered him few opportunities. He had organized a village post office; because of his lack of interest in it he was lax and, so he says, the staff defaulted with the cash; Lumumba went to prison. Next he was given the opportunity to serve as a director of a brewery. Finally, for less than two years he forced his right to organize a political movement. None of these experiences prepared him for the job of running a highly complex country; in the past that job had been exclusively reserved for Belgians. Lumumba was never, perhaps, indispensable as Prime Minister. Nevertheless, he was the only Congolese leader with anything like a national following; a point too often overlooked. Despite his wilder utterances he succeeded in the early difficult months in maintaining, with only a few defections, the solidarity of his widely disparate coalition government. This was no small achievement.

The struggle between unitarians and federalists divides national-

ists throughout Africa. Lumumba belongs to the company of Dr Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere in Tanganyika, Tom Mboya in Kenya, and Sékou Touré; all these leaders believe that the only way of building an effective modern state free from the shackles of narrow tribal loyalties is to create a single, strong, central government. Lumumba staked his career on this firmly held belief. His analysis was logical, but it failed to take account of all the factors in the Congo situation. Tribalism, he argued, is divisive, feudal, and out-dated; the need is to create a single Congolese loyalty; this can be achieved only through nationalism; its instrument is the visibly strong central government. But faced with bitter opposition, was he wise to refuse to compromise in the early days of the life of the Republic? He argued his case at the Round Table Conference that gave the Congo its independence in January 1960. He laid it before the electorate in June 1960, and won an indecisive victory. Finally, he tried to force it on his federalist opponents when he took control of the first independent Government.

So far, the unitarians have won almost everywhere. They failed only in Nigeria. Experience may yet show that federalism is the only way to build viable societies in the larger African countries. In size and diversity of cultures and development, the Congo has much more in common with Nigeria than with Ghana. Lumumba's great political error is that he tried to cast the Congo into the tight mould of Ghana, rather than into the larger, more accommodating mould of Nigeria.

Lumumba's behaviour is not very different from that of nationalist leaders elsewhere; their attitudes are a direct reflection of their situation. When things are going well they are naturally buoyant, tolerant, and full of goodwill (see Lumumba's views at the time of the Round Table Conference and again in March 1960, in Leopoldville). Under pressure they turn inwards, behave suspiciously, criticize fiercely, and their defiance knows no reason. Lumumba can be generous, cooperative, and forgiving; and he can be bitter, destructive, and irrational. This latter mood characterized his behaviour in the months after independence.

#### JOSEPH KASAVUBU

Joseph Kasavubu, the 50-year-old first President of the Congo

Republic, had never been out of the Congo before 1959 (except to visit Brazzaville on the other side of the river from Leopoldville). By then he had already clearly formulated his ideas on independence and on federalism. He stands in the same tradition as the leaders of the Western Region of Nigeria. Without ever having read any of his writings or speeches, Kasavubu had come to the same conclusions as Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the first Prime Minister of Western Region and the present leader of the Opposition in the Nigerian Federal Parliament.

It is not entirely surprising that such similar viewpoints should arise independently in Africa; they represent a typical reaction to the challenge of welding powerful tribal states into a modern nation-state. Awolowo's path to Nigerian freedom had as its starting-point the culture and political organization of the Yoruba. He argued that the first essential for Nigerian unity was to entrench Yoruba interests in the Western Region; only afterwards was he prepared to consider a wider Nigerian Federation.

Kasavubu's starting-point was the Bakongo tribe of the Lower Congo. Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, they had formed part of a powerful kingdom, but their fortunes had declined long before the tribe was divided by colonial boundaries between the French Congo, Portuguese Angola, and the Belgian Congo. When Kasavubu first dreamed of reuniting the three parts of the Bakongo, and of recreating his ancient Kingdom, there was not the slightest possibility of the Congo's independence. He believed it would be easier to work for a separate Lower Congo. This was the origin of his policy of separatism, which was converted into federalism when the prospect of Congo independence opened up in 1959, largely through his own efforts. But he never entirely gave up his separatist ideas. His policies alternated unpredictably between a Bakongo Kingdom outside the Congo Republic, and one within a federal Congo state.

Joseph Kasavubu's passionate Bakongo patriotism might perhaps be his way of compensating for not being pure Bakongo himself. His grandfather was a Chinese labourer who had worked on the Congo railway construction; his mother was Bakongo. His mixed ancestry shows in his squat, mongoloid face. He is suspicious, unforthcoming, serious. The lighter side of his personality shows only when he is in the company of trusted friends. He was

trained by the Roman Catholics and remains close to the Church. But he is at the same time close to the Bakongo's tribal religionists, the Kibanguists. One of his closest political advisors is Professor A. J. J. van Bilsen, a Belgian liberal and staunch Catholic. He is a Thomist. As a student, the young Kasavubu read classics and philosophy. He was thirty before he finished his studies. The next sixteen years found him working conscientiously in the Treasury Department by day, and engaging in *évolué* society affairs by night, until in 1957 he was elected mayor of Dendale, one of the townships of Leopoldville. He was highly regarded by the Belgians as one of the 'trusties' in the rising *élite* of Congolese. He allowed himself to be 'immatriculated' into the Congo's upper strata, a step refused by many of the political leaders.

Kasavubu is essentially conservative and middle-class. He plods where Lumumba leaps; he ponders where Lumumba rushes into speech. But he is as tough and stubborn as Lumumba. This obduracy and an unrelenting suspicion of the Belgians are the only features the first President and Prime Minister have in common. They formed an indispensable team at the birth of the new Republic. But their alliance was one of expediency; their attitudes are diametrically opposed to each other.

#### MOISE TSHOMBE

The 'villain' of the Congo drama was always the odd man out among the rising generation of Congolese leaders. Tshombe, the forty-two-year-old leader of CONAKAT (Confederation of the Association of Tribes of Katanga) was never part of the nationalist movement. In the days of colonialism he stuck close to the Belgians, and had he been as good a businessman as his father (who left him a string of businesses) he would have prospered. But he lost his patrimony and went bankrupt three times. However, he never stayed down for long. Like many unsuccessful businessmen he became a leading figure in the politics of commerce: he was President of the African Chamber of Commerce Association.

Tshombe has the bounce of an indiarubber ball, and the facility to leap on any likely-looking bandwagon. His attempt to seize power in Katanga was an act partly of reckless opportunism, partly of conviction. Had it not been for the active support and flattery

of certain Belgian financial circles and *colons* in Katanga, he would never have risked such a daring *coup*. Nevertheless, it is too easy to dismiss Tshombe simply as a stooge of the Belgians. He is certainly an opportunist. At the Brussels conference in January 1960, when the Congo was granted its independence, he expressed himself completely satisfied with the draft constitution, although it did not envisage federation. After the independence elections he negotiated with Patrice Lumumba terms for entering a coalition government without specifying any conditions for a federal constitution. Those negotiations broke down only after Tshombe's impossibly high demands for seats in the Cabinet were turned down. He then raised the banner of Katanga's independence. In the year before independence he had outdone the Belgians in his denunciations of Kasavubu; in the independence elections he formed an electoral alliance with him.

He has consistently used the Belgians for his own purposes; that these purposes happened, at times, to suit the interests of certain Belgians was a coincidence. Tshombe was not always well regarded by the Belgians. At the Brussels Round Table Conference the Government treated him coldly because of his intrigues with financial circles of whom they disapproved. At the first sign of Tshombe's plan to tear Katanga away from the Congo, it was the Belgians who publicly slapped him down. It was only after the revolt of the Force Publique that he won Belgian approval. But his great bid to win Belgian recognition for an independent state of Katanga failed.

Despite his opportunism, his foppish elegance, and his suave manner, Tshombe is not a politician of straw; the mistake made by his opponents was to treat him as one. He is related to the royal family of the Lunda tribe, which is powerful in Katanga and across the border in Northern Rhodesia; his wife is the daughter of the Paramount Chief. He received a good education at American Methodist schools, and he is a formidable tactician. Like Senator McCarthy, he is not afraid to use the smear campaign on his opponents; at one time or another he has accused all his opponents of being Russian agents. It is a line that goes over well in certain Belgian, American, and British circles. But it cuts little ice in the Congo.

Tshombe has been accused of wanting to link Katanga with the



Central African Federation; this is untrue. Some of his Belgian advisers sounded out this idea with Sir Roy Welensky, but it was promptly repudiated by him. African nationalist leaders in Northern Rhodesia have viewed his pretensions with considerable sympathy. At one time he had the support of the militant United National Independence Party.

Tshombe is the perfect example of the type of *évolué* Belgian paternalist policy was designed to produce. Had all the *évolués* been Tshombes, the Belgians would have had no difficulty in carrying through their policy of creating, in time, a Belgo-Congolese Community. The tragedy from their point of view was that Tshombe is not typical.

#### JASON SENDWE

CONAKAT'S principal opponent is the BALUBAKAT cartel composed of three tribally-based parties, representing minority tribes. It is associated with Lumumba's MNC. The leader of the cartel is a 43-year-old Baluba, Jason Sendwe. Like Tshombe, he is a Methodist product. He wanted to be a doctor, but as there were no facilities for medical training in the Congo he could do no better than become a medical assistant. His frustration found an outlet in nationalist politics. He is one of the outstanding young leaders, and is thought of as a possible future Prime Minister.

#### JEAN BOLIKANGO

At fifty-one the leader of PUNA (the Parti Unité Nationale Africaine) stands out as the Congo's prematurely elder statesman. He is a tall, broad, proud, and handsome man; a fervent Catholic and the leader of the Bangala found in Equatoria and in Leopoldville, whose tribal association forms one of the twenty-five moderate parties grouped together in PUNA. To his own people Bolikango is known as the Sage, and sometimes as the Moses. Most of his life was spent in teaching, and many of today's politicians were his students. He is the only Congolese who rose to a senior post in the Administration – Assistant Commissioner-General of Information in the Congo. Later he repudiated the role he played in *Inforcongo* by an unexpectedly sharp denunciation of Belgian

propaganda at the Brussels conference. Still he did not forfeit Belgian confidence.

The main political influence in his life has been the Senegalese poet-politician, Léopold Senghor. But he also finds it possible to admire the conservative President of the Ivory Coast, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, for his 'wisdom and calmness'.

His later arrest by Lumumba was as ironic as it was ineffective; at one time he nearly secured the Presidency with the help of Lumumba. On the question of the constitution he at first stood much closer to Lumumba than to Kasavubu.

#### PAUL BOLYA

Bolikango stands well to the right of Lumumba and Kasavubu, and Bolya stands to the right of Bolikango. He is the leader of PNP (Parti National du Progrès), a coalition of twenty-seven tribal and territorial associations, mainly concentrated in Equator and in Leopoldville. This was the movement on which the Belgians had staked their hopes. Its moderate conservatism and pro-Belgian sympathies were well suited to the policies of Brussels. But PNP was hopelessly defeated in the independence elections, principally because of its pro-Belgian label. Its opponents transcribe PNP as Parti des Nègres Payés.

Bolya has a strikingly unusual face, like a Bayaka mask; it is a surprise when it becomes animated. He has ability and intelligence. His main influence lies with the Mongo tribe. He is a unitarian, but not harshly so. 'There is no reason,' he believes, 'why each tribe should not remain what it is, yet agree to cooperate on a national level. Our aim should be to blend unitarianism with federalism.' His attitude to his own people is one of paternalism; he therefore understood, and never rebelled against, the Belgians.

#### ANICET KASHAMURA

The thirty-three-year-old Minister of Information is a politician of an entirely different hue. He is a militant socialist. His party, CEREAF (Centre de Regroupement Africain), is strongly established in Kivu, an unusually traditionalist province. It is all the more

surprising, therefore, to find that the ideas of its principal spokesman were moulded by Aneurin Bevan's *In Place of Fear*, and by the writings of the French socialist, Jules Moch. They won him away from the influence of the White Fathers.

His aim is to build socialism in the Congo. 'The Africans are natural socialists.' He once made a brief excursion into Eastern Europe. 'There is good as well as bad in the little I saw; the same as in the West. We Africans will not throw away anything simply for the sake of doing so. We will be guided by our own African past, and take whatever is useful to us from both the West and the East.'

Kashamura worked as a book-keeper and a journalist, and was sent to prison for sedition. He believes that socialism can only come gradually to a country like the Congo. 'We still need the industrial *cadres*, and we need to form effective labour organizations. Nationalization must come slowly so as not to frighten away capital.' The Congo's constitution, he believes, should be neither unitary nor federalist. It should provide for a strong central government, but with wide autonomy for the provinces.

#### ALPHONSE NGUVULU

The thirty-eight-year-old leader of the PP (Parti du Peuple), a small but sophisticated party of townsmen, stands well to the left even of Kashamura. He is a student of Marxism which, like Sékou Touré, he believes is capable of being adapted to Africa's special conditions. The Belgians regard him and his party as avowedly communist; but this judgement may be premature.

Nguvulu received his political training in the Belgian General Federation of Labour, in which he was a prominent office-holder. Originally a unitarian party, the PP now tends to support the federalists. But it has little influence, although its propaganda is vigorous and militant.

#### ANTOINE GIZENGA AND CLEOPHAS KAMITATOE

Although Gizenga and Kamitatie lead the PSA (Parti Solidaire Africain), which controls the populous Kwango and Kwilo regions of Leopoldville, they are bitter rivals. PSA originated

as a federalist party in alliance with the Abako; it now stands for a compromise between a strong centralized state and federalism.

Gizenga came to be regarded as Lumumba's chief deputy in the Cabinet, although their policies are by no means similar. After attending a seminary he spent some time on the staff of the Catholic mission in Leopoldville. He went to Eastern Europe in the middle of 1959, returning shortly before independence with pronounced communist views. But although he gave the impression of being a doctrinaire communist, in private he spoke with the accents of the African Marxism of Sékou Touré rather than that of Moscow.

Cléophas Kamitaoe, the chairman of the Leopoldville Provincial Assembly, is anything but a Marxist. He is a small, well-built, solemn-faced nationalist, who got his training as a commune secretary in the Belgian Administration.

#### ALBERT KALONJI

Once Lumumba's chief lieutenant, this thirty-one-year-old accountant and former agricultural instructor is now one of his principal opponents. He leads the breakaway wing of the MNC in the Kasai Province, where he speaks for the Baluba tribe. His quarrel with his former leader was over the high degree of centralization in the MNC. But there is now a doctrinal difference as well: Kalonji believes in federalism. He is an earnest Catholic and a leader of exceptional integrity. But the bitterness of the internecine feud drove him to extremes. His attempt to form the separate Diamond State of Kasai was short-lived.

#### JOSEPH ILEO

The thirty-eight-year-old President of the Senate also belongs to the breakaway MNC, but is at the same time a member of Abako. He is a sturdy individualist, utterly unafraid of speaking his mind. Ileo was educated in philosophy and sociology, and became the editor of *Conscience Africaine*, a Catholic paper which became the first vehicle for open nationalist propaganda in 1956. His attempt to form a rival Government to Lumumba's failed.

## THOMAS KANZA AND JUSTIN BOMBOKA

These two young leaders – Kanza leads the Congo delegation at the UN, and Bomboka was the first Foreign Minister – are latter-day products of Belgian policy; they were among the few Congolese who were allowed to continue their studies abroad after the Second World War.

Thomas is the son of Daniel Kanza, formerly Kasavubu's chief lieutenant. With his father and brothers he leads the Abako splinter movement, which broke with Kasavubu at the Brussels conference in January 1960. After taking an economics degree in Belgium, Kanza spent a year at Harvard University in the United States. Subsequently, he worked with the European Community in Brussels.

Bomboka, too, was allowed to take a degree at a Belgian University. Although he held the post of Foreign Minister, his mellow attitudes found little favour with Lumumba in the stormy days after the revolt of the Force Publique. At considerable danger to himself, Bomboka toured Leopoldville saving Belgians from being ill-treated by the mob. He subsequently joined with Ileo in his abortive attempt to form a rival Government, and still later he went with Colonel Mobutu when the army commander set up his Administration of University Students.

## Chapter 11

### THE DISASTER

*'The individual feelings of vengeance and of grievance are progressively increased; daily the dissatisfaction rises . . .'*

Report of Belgian Parliamentary Commission in April 1959, speaking of Black reactions to treatment by Whites

*'Acts against human dignity, humiliations, and outrages against the profoundest values of mankind and the civilized concept of personal integrity have been the rule, as if the word had gone round that both men and women should be humiliated to the greatest possible extent . . .'*

M. MERCHERS, Minister of Justice in Belgium, 28 July 1960, reporting on Black treatment of Whites

THE disaster when it finally came, came swiftly and from an unexpected quarter. The Congo's hope for a peaceful transition to independence lasted less than a week. On 8 July the Force Publique mutinied in Leopoldville; within three days the rot had spread throughout the Force. But the trouble had already started on 4 July, the day after the independence festivities ended. In ten crucial days the Belgians lost the greater part of their seventy years' work in the Congo, and the Congolese stood in danger of seeing their freedom torn from their hands. The country was by no means leaderless; but the leaders were at cross-purposes, and powerless. Even the mobs had no real power; their rebelliousness and lust were vindictive and effervescent. They behaved like automata. The pressure of their passion spent, they lapsed into insensate bullying and truculence, and waited sullenly for 'the punishment that never came'.

## RIVALS FOR POWER

Seen at this distance it is possible to reconstruct the events that led to the immolation of the Congo's freedom. This chapter opens on 17 June, the day the Congo's first elected parliament met in Leopoldville. Its immediate task was to elect an heir to the Belgian ruler. It took seven days to demonstrate that there were claimants but no proper heir. The heir apparent, Patrice Lumumba, used every wile to make his claim stick. He negotiated with patience and skill to knit together first one coalition then another; but each came unravelled in the hands of parliament. He made a deal with the pro-Belgian parties, accepting Jean Bolikango as President. When this failed he opened negotiations with Moïse Tshombe; but the Katanga leader's terms proved to be too high. In the midst of these tortuous negotiations the Belgian Minister, Walter Ganshof van Meersch, made a surprising decision. Without waiting for Lumumba to complete his task of trying to form a Government, he invited Joseph Kasavubu – the only Congolese leader who had refused to negotiate with Lumumba – to take over this responsibility. It was this action that broke the last tenuous link between Lumumba and the Belgians. When Kasavubu's efforts also failed, the two rivals were persuaded by leaders of the African states, including Dr Nkrumah, to patch up their quarrel temporarily. They agreed to share power, with Lumumba as Prime Minister and Kasavubu as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

It was on this inauspicious note that the Congo celebrated its independence from 30 June to 3 July. The King of the Belgians was there to give his blessing to the new African States, and to recall the beneficence of King Leopold II. Lumumba, still smarting from his treatment at the hands of the last Belgian Governor-General, was pointedly offensive to the royal guest. 'We are no longer your monkeys,' he shouted.\* The Force Publique was on hand to deal in its usual clobbering manner with the surging crowds. Nobody then suspected they would be the *deus ex machina* in the final disaster.

The new Government was shaky from the outset. Almost all

\* 'You monkey' is a term of abuse often used by Belgians. The Congolese felt it a particularly hateful insult.

the parties were represented in the Government, including the pro-Belgian PNP and PUNA, and even a representative of CONAKAT. It was a coalition of rivals, and their rivalry was sharp and principled. They represented opposite views on a wide range of political ideas – the most important, of course, being their attitude to unitarianism or federalism. They agreed to work together because they wished to see the Belgians removed from the saddle of power, and because they feared the country might disintegrate even before it was fully launched on its way to nationhood. Their first task was to work out a constitution, with parliament as a Constituent Assembly.

On 3 July the distinguished visitors packed their bags, leaving the Congo to settle down to its more solemn affairs. Only Dr Ralph Bunche, the United Nations representative, lingered on to see how things would work out. It was just as well he did. The first whiff of trouble came on 4 July; but at the time nobody appears to have paid much attention. At Camp Hardy (near Thysville, between Leopoldville and the sea), members of the Force Publique, armed with long knives, menaced their Belgian officers. 'We are the masters now,' they said. They broke open the armoury and helped themselves to ammunition. The next day was one of critical anxiety, with the Europeans crowded together on a hill in the officers' quarter. Three Belgians, badly beaten, were carried in from outside. It was not until the following day – 6 July – that the position was relieved by a Congolese delegation, later reinforced by President Kasavubu and Premier Lumumba, who came to reason with the troops. They quickly retrieved the position. The Belgian officers considered the trouble ended; for the next three days they carried on as usual. No special precautions appear to have been taken despite their bad fright. Not even the refusal of the Congolese to present themselves for duty from 7 to 10 July struck them as ominous at the time. This attitude is hard to understand in the light of subsequent complaints made by the Belgians and their wives from Camp Hardy. Referring to events from 4 to 10 July, a civilian in Thysville complained he was badly beaten by troops, and brought to the camp; another claimed he and his family had been held prisoners for two days, and that they had been threatened with violence. A Belgian officer, describing the situation in Camp Hardy on 5 July, says that 'the officers were



virtually prisoners, and two of them were beaten with sticks and stoned'. Nevertheless, they carried on 'normally' (to quote the official Belgian report on atrocities) until the storm broke in their camp on 11 July.

Meanwhile, there had been incidents in other parts of the country. A Belgian woman claims that on the night of 5 July she was raped sixteen times by Congolese soldiers in her home at Kisantu. On 6 July Belgian civilians were attacked at Inkisi; six women claim they were all victims of unsuccessful rapes; three Belgians were arrested and 'forced to flatten out rolls of barbed wire with our naked feet'. Lower down the Congo, at Banza-Boma, two women claim they were raped by soldiers on 5 and 6 July. A Swiss citizen was arrested by police at Matadi, and severely beaten. 'That's what independence is!' he was told. On 8 July four women and a girl were raped in Matadi by police and soldiers, while several men were arrested. In the Bakongo country there was an unusual feature: white women were forced to cut grass barefoot in the savannah, the only apparent purpose being to humiliate them by forcing them to work as African women worked.

Still there was no official protest, nor any sign of precautions. On 7 July Mr Lumumba was entertained by foreign journalists at the Zoo at Leopoldville; none of the correspondents, Belgian or otherwise, questioned his statement that, despite predictions, no cases of theft or rape had occurred. Lumumba spoke confidently, although trouble was already brewing in the capital. On the previous day, 6 July, members of the Force Publique had tried to force their way into parliament. One of the rebels told a newspaper correspondent that the revolt was not aimed at the Whites but 'at the Belgian officers and some of our rulers'. The trouble had started in the Leopold II Camp, where soldiers met on the night of 5 July to discuss their grievances. They expressed strong resentment against Lumumba's decision to appoint Belgians to national defence posts. The officers who tried to break up the meeting were disobeyed and disarmed. Lumumba at first showed no sympathy with the delegation sent by the men of the Force to discuss their grievances with him on 6 July. He told them firmly that he intended to stand by his appointment of Belgian officers. Dissident elements in the Force reacted more strongly on 7 July

when a ministerial car was stoned. Then the Cabinet took a more serious view of what was happening. They decided to break the tension by agreeing to the removal of the Belgian commander of the Force Publique, Lieutenant-General Émile Janssens, and his staff. They also agreed that all Congolese non-commissioned officers should be promoted one rank. But their proposal failed to achieve its purpose.

On 8 July the Force Publique took to mob violence in the capital; policemen led the violence in Matadi; the soldiers broke loose in Sanda in the Lower Congo. Alarmed at the extent and dangers of the violence – with tens of thousands of Belgians fleeing in all directions and reports telling of many thousands held up and threatened in places all over the country – the Belgians decided to fly paratroops to lend protection to their compatriots.

On 9 July the troops mutinied in Kongoloa camp in Katanga; on the same day they overwhelmed and disarmed Belgian officers in the General Gilliard Camp in Luluabourg, the capital of Kasai. On 11 July the Belgian paratroops occupied Leopoldville and dispersed to all parts of the country. Their arrival was the signal for the rebellion to flare up everywhere. The simmering discontent in Camp Hardy at Thysville erupted; the same happened in the Belgian military base at Matadi, and in Stanleyville, the capital of Occidentale. This was also the day Moise Tshombe chose to proclaim the independence of Katanga. His decision, coinciding with the influx of the Belgian Army, broke the camel's back. It was difficult to avoid the impression that the Congo was being taken over by the Belgians and their allies. From then on the tide of violence rose sharply, and the situation deteriorated swiftly. Grievances fastened on rumours, rumours fed suspicions, and suspicions fanned the forces of mutiny and rebellion. The Conference of Independent African States was quick to act. On the initiative of Dr Nkrumah, Lumumba was persuaded to call in the United Nations. The decision was taken on 12 July. From that moment the story took a different turn.

The mutiny changed everything; it destroyed what was hopeful in the situation; it killed cooperation between the Belgians and the Congolese; it splintered the brittle alliances of the Coalition Government; it opened the way for foreign intervention; and it wrecked internal security. Those trained to uphold law and

order were themselves the leaders of lawlessness and disorder.

Here was the final irony: the instrument, fashioned by the Belgians at the outset of their occupation of the Congo to establish and maintain their rule, turned in their hands to destroy them. Nobody had foreseen this possibility. On the eve of the mutiny, the Commander of the Force Publique, General Janssens, attended an American July the Fourth party in Leopoldville. Laughing and joking, he met questions about the security position in the Congo with easy confidence: 'The Force Publique? It is my creation. It is absolutely loyal. I have made my dispositions'.\* Three days later he was dismissed; a few days more and the Force Publique had become the rogue elephant of the Congo.

#### THE FORCE PUBLIQUE

The Force Publique was created by Governor-General Camille Janssen and Baron van Eetvelde in July 1891. Their plan, approved and passed into law by King Leopold II, was to raise twelve companies of Congolese soldiers under the command of 120 European officers. The force was composed of volunteers and levies. Conscription was justified by Baron van Eetvelde in a report he submitted in 1897: 'The State has set itself the task of creating a purely national army, with the view of lightening the budget of the considerable charges which weighed upon it through having to recruit abroad. . . . It considers, moreover, the period of military service as a salutary school for the native, where he will learn respect for authority and the obligations of duty.'

The Batetela contingent of the Forces saw their duty in a different light. When their chief, Gongo Lutete, was executed they mutinied in 1895. They killed several Belgian officers, and their revolt was finally crushed with heavy losses. Two years later the Batetela in Baron Dhani's column, advancing towards the Nile to head off the Dervishes, again mutinied: Ten Belgian officers were killed. The mutineers took a French priest, the Rev. Achte, prisoner. When they threatened to kill him he cried out in the local dialect: 'I am a man of God; leave me alone.' This created a diversion in his favour. Some of the mutineers defended him.

\* Frank Barber gives this account in *Africa South In Exile*, Vol. 5, No. 1.

Two chiefs addressed him: 'We have killed the Belgians, who called us animals and who killed our chiefs and our brothers as we kill goats. Why should we not kill you?' The priest replied he was not a Belgian; he had never injured the Blacks, he was their true friend. Some of the women began to take his part. At last the principal chief declared: 'I forbid you to kill this white man. Let the man who wishes to kill him take a gun and send a bullet through him. Here he is seated at my side.' Despite this fortunate deliverance the Rev. Achte subsequently described the mutineers as 'indeed terrible savages, eaters of dogs, and some tribes among them also of human flesh . . . they have no discipline, no idea of respect for their chiefs'.\*

The Force Publique was used to enforce King Leopold's System. Paid an average wage of just over £3 a year, the troops were allowed to live off the land. The Congo Reform Association repeatedly complained of their brutal methods. 'Wherever its operations have ranged native livestock has almost totally disappeared; native preventive measures against the spread of venereal disease have been impossible of application. From far and wide – especially perhaps from Kasai – women have been raided in enormous numbers to satisfy its lusts. . . . It is admitted in one official document that "a veritable slave-trade in women" was carried out by them. It was due to the nature of the tasks assigned to this so-called Force Publique under its European officers that the Italian Government finally withdrew its sanction for Italian officers – whose indignant protests were ventilated in the Italian military journals and in the Italian Chamber by Signor Santini – to take service in the Congo.'†

These strictures on the Force Publique largely fell away after the Belgian Parliament assumed control for the affairs of the Congo. But the original concept of Janssen and Baron van Eetvelde remained until the mutiny in 1960: it was still a native army, almost entirely illiterate, poorly paid, and officered entirely by Europeans. It was developed as a dual purpose Force: to defend the frontiers against foreign attack, and to maintain internal security. The Force fought well in two world wars. But in 1944 the non-commissioned officers and troops in Luluabourg mutinied

\* Boulger, D. C. *The Congo State*.

† Morel, E. D. *The Future of the Congo*.

and killed a number of Belgian officers. It never flinched, however, when commanded to act against the nationalist movements in the Leopoldville riots and in Stanleyville in 1959. Its strength at independence was 1,006 European officers and 23,000 men. It suffered from two basic weaknesses: the bulk of the men were illiterate, often drawn from the most backward parts of the country, and there was no opportunity for the small *cadre* of educated and trained men to become officers. Before independence several attempts were made to persuade the Commander of the Force to announce plans for Africanizing the army; the result was the selection of a *cadre* of young men to be trained as future officers in Belgium. But up to independence the colour line was rigidly maintained. It was finally broken down with the frightening carelessness of a mindless Frankenstein.

#### THE PATTERN OF VIOLENCE

Violence in the Congo was of two kinds: the anti-European demonstrations, and the more savage attacks on dissident tribesmen in Kasai, Katanga, and elsewhere. The main sufferers were the Baluba; their special position is discussed in a later chapter.

The evidence produced by the Belgians in their White Paper on atrocities, on 28 July 1960, makes it possible to form some idea of the nature of the violence. Although the Belgians have never given official figures, the estimate of European fatalities is perhaps a score. Raping of women was often accompanied by acts intended to humiliate them. Ill-treatment of men was usually calculated to degrade them. Priests and nuns were singled out in many cases for special insults. The perpetrators of violence were almost entirely soldiers and police; civilians seldom took the initiative in the attacks. In many instances it required the intervention of a single disciplined African non-commissioned officer or a loyal servant to protect Europeans. Those singled out for special acts of revenge were the Flemings, who formed the largest section of the *petits colons*; their behaviour had been specially criticized by the Belgian Parliamentary Commission in their 1959 report.

Despite equivocations Mr Lumumba admitted at a United Nations Press conference that Belgians had been 'molested'.

Although it is necessary to treat atrocity stories with reserve, it is plain nonsense to pretend the Belgians were not cruelly treated in the mutiny. Reputable foreign correspondents' accounts of what they saw provide sufficient evidence to suggest that some terrible things occurred. It was in the very nature of the situation that the tragedy, once it happened, should be accompanied by vengeful behaviour. But the extent of the atrocities should be kept in perspective; out of a total of 80,000 Belgians in the Congo at independence perhaps one per cent complained of actual ill-treatment.

Until the Congolese establish their own version of what happened, the Belgian White Paper is the only detailed account of the atrocities available. I have selected several passages from the Belgian account to present an impression of the pattern of violence, and to raise some questions.

The Europeans at Sonankulu were thrown into Thysville prison. They were humiliated, stripped naked, people spat in their faces; they were beaten and ridiculed.

At Luluabourg, 1,500 Europeans barricaded themselves into the Immokasai Building where they were besieged . . . the siege, with rifle and intermittent machine-gun fire, was maintained until the arrival of the paratroops on the following evening, July 10. Some of those besieged were wounded. . . . Families which did not find safety in the Immokasai Building were often the victims of serious outrages. . . . A European civilian was shot down. . . . Two families, each with several children, were molested and beaten. . . . Mrs Z. was raped at gunpoint in her home by two policemen. Both families were then taken to the military camp . . . the soldiers told the crowd standing by that their prisoners had shot at them. The crowd went mad. The two mothers were stripped of their clothing, molested, and beaten. They were then locked into the prison. In the presence of her children, a soldier lifted Mrs Z's skirts and pretended to insert a hand grenade in her vagina. The husbands were beaten. . . . Mrs Y. was taken out of her house and raped in the road before the eyes of her three children and her husband, who had previously been beaten. Other women, including an old lady were stripped of their clothing, molested, and publicly humiliated.

The total established casualties in this account of what happened in Luluabourg are two women raped, several molested, one man shot, and two families maltreated.

Boende was the terminus of the odyssey of many civil servants. The

Congolese set up road barriers at the suggestion of the Force Publique. . . . As soon as they were stopped on the road, the whites were searched . . . the men were stripped to the waist, their shoes were removed, and they were roped together. The women and children were separated from the men. . . . All were severely beaten with gun butts, fists and kicks; they were spat at and insulted by the soldiers, policemen, and natives. The latter appeared to be urged on by the soldiers. Finally, the soldiers were obliged to protect their prisoners from the native civilians who demanded that the men should be put to torture and the women handed over for their enjoyment. The natives had thus grouped some forty white men, as many women, and at least eight children. Women prisoners were raped in public, often standing up with a child in their arms, surrounded by soldiers, policemen, and civilians, all of whom entered the cells. . . . At dawn a party of missionaries from Djolu arrived, also under arrest. Three of them were nuns, their robes in rags, their coifs torn off, all of them ill-treated. . . . Men suffering from bullet-wounds were also brought in, a lieutenant . . . and a civil servant. A doctor was at first refused permission to care for the lieutenant. Later permission was granted, but as soon as the wound was bandaged, a Congolese soldier wrenched it off again and broke the man's head open above the eyebrow.

The only account in the White Paper that lends itself to analysis is that of the events that occurred in Camp Hardy where, despite the first abortive mutiny, the Belgian officers appear to have been taken by surprise when the troops disarmed them on July 11. According to the official version:

The victims' accounts of the raping resemble a scene from Dante's *Inferno*. The natives attacked all the women, including those obviously pregnant or ill and those who had recently given birth to children. To achieve their aims, the natives used physical violence, the menace of their weapons, and, in innumerable cases, they threatened to kill the children if the mother did not yield. . . . Of the twenty-nine white women already questioned, nineteen – or two-thirds of them – acknowledge that they had been raped. . . . (One) lady states that to her knowledge nine-tenths of the white women at Camp Hardy underwent the same treatment (that is, they were physically raped).

A week after the 'Inferno' at Camp Hardy, George Clay of the *Observer* arrived there with the UN Force. This is his account:

What began as a mutiny seems to have turned into a leaderless and nervous reaction to the threat of Belgian counter-measures. This view

was confirmed by a young Belgian officer, Lieutenant E. Schoonbroodt, who elected to remain at Camp Hardy when the other officers left. He, a Belgian non-commissioned officer, and a doctor and his wife are the only whites still in Camp Hardy. Schoonbroodt contradicted stories of wives of white officers in camp having been raped. He said some gangs of young recruits had run amok in Thysville itself and had raped women and assaulted men there. But when the Congolese NCOs heard of this they did their best to get these troops back under control. The majority of soldiers at Camp Hardy had not got out of hand. Schoonbroodt has remained in camp as 'technical assistant' to the newly-appointed Congolese officers. None of the houses of Belgian officers in the camp had been damaged or looted. Against this appearance of normality, however, must be set the complaints of Congolese civil servants to Colonel Ben Omar (the UN commander) that some Congolese soldiers were still looting in the town – the shops of Congolese businessmen in some instances.

These two accounts, though complementary in some respects, nevertheless present widely different pictures of what happened. The fact that four Belgians, including one woman, voluntarily chose to stay on through the 'Inferno' suggests a different picture from the official version. Equally puzzling is Lieutenant Schoonbroodt's statement that none of the officers' wives had been raped in the Camp itself; a startlingly different version from that suggesting that nine-tenths of the women had been raped. I draw no conclusions from these two versions: neither can be accepted at its face-value.

#### REASONS FOR THE MUTINY

What is the proper explanation for the revolt of the Force Publique? We are asked to believe two totally different versions about its origins. On the Belgian side there are those who fix responsibility on Lumumba, while on his side the blame is fixed on the Belgians. Can it be that neither was to blame; that the blame is to be found in the total situation that emerged from the tangled past of the Congo?

Why should Lumumba have wished the Force Publique to revolt within days of his own decision to enforce their discipline under Belgian officers? Had he suddenly become afraid of a plot whereby the Force was to be used to kill him and to re-establish



Belgian control? The evidence for this charge is extremely thin. On the first day of the revolt in Leopoldville, the rebels were denouncing Lumumba and demanding the dismissal of their Belgian officers. When he and Kasavubu undertook their mission of pacification, the rebels did not at once rally to their side. They remained fractious and undisciplined.

The charges against the Belgians are equally insubstantial. The Force was the last 'effective' instrument in their hands. Why surrender it? If they had inspired the revolt, how account for the fact that it was immediately turned against themselves? The suggestion is that when the attempt was made to instigate the Force against Lumumba, the Congolese reacted in resentment. But they did not rally to the defence of the Lumumba Government; they put their terms to it, and remained discontented even after their case had been conceded.

The difficulty one faces in trying to understand what happened is that the pattern of revolt was by no means consistent. It had no single head, no obvious goal. The only consistency was the widespread demand for the replacement of their Belgian officers. This might be accounted for on grounds of self-interest. But the final impression is that there was no real loyalty between the men and their officers; not perhaps a surprising discovery in a 'colour bar' army. The members of the Force had cause for dissatisfaction. They were badly paid, extremely hard-worked, and without status. Their Belgian officers had told them: 'Independence is not for you.' It is not surprising that they should have decided to 'organize' a piece of independence cake for themselves: everywhere Blacks were replacing Whites, why not in the army? But after their claims had been conceded, discipline broke and vengeance followed.

The mutiny was comparatively restricted up to the time the Belgian paratroops arrived. There is not the least doubt that their intervention caused the mutiny to take the turn it did. Paratroops of whatever nationality are never gentle; their behaviour in the Congo was no exception. One of their first acts was to arrest the newly-appointed commander of the Force Publique. In places like Matadi they wantonly destroyed areas of the town after all the Belgians had been evacuated.

It is not easy to criticize the Belgian action in committing their

paratroops in the Congo to protect their civilians. Would any nation – European or African – have refused to come to the aid of their compatriots caught up in a dangerous insurrection? That the Belgian motives were misunderstood is not surprising; that the whole enterprise led to greater disaster, and the virtual expulsion of the Belgians from the Congo, is part of the dismal tragedy.

#### M. TSHOMBE'S KATANGA

The Katanga story is not a tidy one in which one can hope to discover a deep-seated, cunning plot and a simple-minded stooge chosen to lend it verisimilitude. If M. Tshombe was the villain, his role was that of an independent-minded African leader with purposes of his own. It must not be supposed that Tshombe was without a large measure of African support. Criticisms of his role arise from his willingness to rely on doubtful methods and elements to pursue his broad federalist aims. It was this choice of methods and aims that set him apart from the rest of the Congolese federalist leaders.

Tshombe's decision to declare Katanga independent at the height of the mutiny, and to make himself head of the Republic, helped finally to bring the Congo to its knees. Why did he do it? There was always at the back of his mind the idea of creating a special relationship for Katanga with the rest of the Congo. It must have seemed to him on 11 July that the Congo was disintegrating, and that this would be a good moment to try and isolate and insulate Katanga. He had previously made 'noises' in the direction of independence, but, as has been shown in earlier chapters, the Belgians always opposed this aim. *Now they supported him.* They may even have encouraged him; but the initiative was his own. It is easy to see how in that dark hour with all their hopes and plans crumbling, their people fleeing in all directions, and their large investments threatened, the Belgians were tempted to grasp at the last straw offered by Tshombe's gamble. They put Belgian troops at his disposal, and a Belgian took control of the Katanga Army. They ordered civil servants and *colons*, who had fled to neighbouring Northern Rhodesia for security, to return to Katanga under penalty of economic sanc-

tions. They sent high-ranking ambassadors to establish liaison between the Katanga Government and their own. They warned the United Nations to keep their troops out of Katanga, and they began to lobby the Western countries to recognize Katanga's independence. Their diplomatic feelers met with little response; only France was not entirely negative. And despite Tshombe's insistence and his subsequent bitter complaints, the Belgian Government itself withheld such recognition.

It is important to get the record straight on this question of recognition because it came to be widely believed that the Western countries were willing to support Katanga's independence. The African States, uneasily suspicious still of Western policies in Africa, seem to believe this myth. But the facts are otherwise. Neither the United States, nor Britain, nor any of the other Western Powers (except France) was willing even to consider recognizing Tshombe's Katanga. Pressure by three former 'Suez rebel' MPs in Britain met with a completely cold reception. Belgium found herself virtually isolated within the West; this position angered the Belgians so deeply that for a time they behaved like a freshly wounded bull. Their threat to abandon NATO shows their unreasoning anger against their allies.

For a time Tshombe's Katanga looked like an oasis in the Congo; its Government was united; its administration worked; its mining and industrial enterprises continued normally. There was law and order in the capital and, so far as one could tell, throughout the province as well. The only shadow that fell over this idyllic picture was when Tshombe summoned his Provincial Government. The BALUBAKAT leaders stalked from the shadows, denounced Tshombe's 'fantasy government', and returned to their strongholds in the 'bush' pursued by the barbed attacks of Tshombe. Although the Assembly was not summoned again, its one meeting was enough to show that Katanga was by no means solidly behind the Government. This was subsequently made painfully clear when Tshombe's forces – imitating what Lumumba's forces had previously done in Kasai – massacred Baluba tribesmen in the opposition stronghold.

But whatever support there was for Tshombe, his Government involved no more than a dozen people: the President, a few Ministers, a Belgian colonel, and some senior officers, and one or

two advisers from the Union Minière\*. He spent a great deal of time with the foreign Press, exhorting international opinion through them. He had reckoned to secure Belgian backing to the limit. This support included not only complete recognition for the sovereignty of his state, but also Belgian commitment to resist the UN should they attempt to put their Force into Katanga. In the end the Belgians were compelled to give way; again their mistaken policies resulted in the nails being driven deeper into their tortured body.

Before leaving Tshombe's Katanga to consider its subsequent embroilment with the UN, it is important to consider the deeper problems raised by his attempt to create an independent republic. What is the right attitude to adopt when people in a small territory claim the right to form their own state? Are they entitled to expect the automatic support of liberal-minded people in the international community? It is a question that has frequently arisen in Europe in the past, and latterly also in Asia – for example in the case of the Nagas in India, and the Karens in Burma. There is obviously no golden rule, but in the African context one can clearly see some of the factors that must be taken into account in coming to an equitable decision.

Present-day boundaries in Africa cannot be considered sacrosanct, any more than those in Europe a century ago. They have all been artificially drawn, mostly for the convenience of foreign rulers, and with little regard for ethnological or economic factors. This is, in fact, the thesis of the Pan-Africanists themselves. It is a sensible thesis, especially if it is taken in conjunction with another thesis: that there should be no balkanization in post-colonial Africa. Europeans have had their own experience of the evils of

\* Eric Downton, the correspondent of the London *Daily Telegraph* described the situation from Elizabethville in an account published in his paper on 27 July 1960: 'The masquerade of Katanga "independence" is becoming daily more pathetic. M. Tshombe, the self-styled President, is today far more under the domination of Belgian officials than he was as an obscure politician before Congo independence. His regime depends entirely on Belgian arms, men, and money. Without this, his Government would in all probability be quickly pulled down from within and without. The outline of Belgium's emergency policy for Katanga is now discernible. It is to protect the great Belgian financial stake here and to hold a political bridge-  
... the hope of a Congolese union amenable to Belgium and the West.'

balkanization, and Africans rightly wish to avoid these evils. Moreover, they have a deep suspicion that some of the departing Colonial powers may wish to leave behind them a continent of small and powerless nations which, though nominally independent, will be as easy to prey on as they were when they were still colonial possessions. This suspicion goes deep, and it finds strengthening confirmation in the events in Katanga.

Does Katanga, a tiny country with a population of fewer than two millions, offer a reasonable basis for an independent state? It will immediately be said that all people should have the automatic right to decide their own future, even if this should lead to a continent of Andorras. To this there are two answers. Firstly, that a decision about the future of a territory should be freely made by all its inhabitants, and that those of their neighbours most likely to be affected by the decision should be consulted. How does Katanga emerge from these two tests? In the 1960 independence elections the people of Katanga voted between two major cartels; both favoured Congo's integrity, with CONAKAT favouring federalism. In the provincial elections CONAKAT won by a narrow margin, with twenty-five seats to BALUBAKAT's twenty-two; the remaining thirteen seats returned candidates who mostly sided with CONAKAT. Whatever story these figures can be made to tell they are hardly a convincing display of an overwhelming desire by the people of Katanga to set up their own State – a question that was never in fact put to them.

Next one must consider the effect on the rest of the Congo, if Katanga seceded. Although it holds only 12 per cent of the country's population it produces more than 60 per cent of its revenue. The effect of stripping it away would be like taking the Ruhr out of Germany, or the Midlands out of Britain. This point needs more careful elaboration.

Africa is basically a poor continent with scattered outcrops of unusual mineral wealth – gold on the Witwatersrand, copper in the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt, the 'geological monstrosity' of Katanga. It is a natural desire of people living close to sources of wealth to keep it for themselves; one has seen this with the oil-rich sheikdoms in the Persian Gulf, and with other areas of Africa, such as the Ivory Coast and Gabon. The result of allowing a relatively small community to hog a wealthy corner

would be to condemn vast areas to rural slumdom or permanent economic subjection. It is one thing for a small country, like Nyasaland, to choose poverty in independence rather than wealth in political servitude; it is quite another for a small wealthy country to exercise the right to keep its pile to itself. Moral questions aside, it must inevitably produce political instability, with the poorer neighbour wishing to lay hands on a share of the wealth. This desire would be strengthened in the case of a country, like Katanga, where a colonial power actively assisted in propping up the secessionist Government.

In the seventy years of their hegemony, the Belgians riveted the unity of the Congo to Katanga. They encouraged migratory labour from other parts of the country. They used the taxes of the Congo to develop the infra-structure of Katanga to make it the only properly developed region in the country. Thus the bulk of the capital works programme was paid for by the Congolese themselves; all the public utilities – transport, electricity, roads – were paid for, and are owned by, the Congo Government – not by the Belgian Government, nor by the present Katanga Provincial Government. Moreover, at least 25 per cent, and possibly much more, of the shares of the mines in Katanga are actually owned by the Congo Government. All this is the property of the Congolese, representing their savings and labour. Finally, the greatest part of the development in Katanga was made possible through public loans secured by the Congo Government. If Katanga stands today as a valuable asset, it is because of the contributions made by the Congo as a whole over generations of slow growth and development. It is an integral part of the economy of the whole country.

To pretend that Katanga is simply a piece of real estate belonging to its present rulers is to ignore these facts. Belgians who try to justify Katanga's secession by stirring reminders of human liberty and rights, ignore their own history as well as their own pledges. As we have seen, throughout the negotiations with the Congolese leaders it was the Belgian Government which insisted as a condition for independence that the integrity of the whole of the Congo should be maintained. The treaty guaranteeing independence sets the frontiers as those of the six provinces. The Belgians themselves undertook to defend those frontiers. The fact that things did not work out smoothly is no justification for

tearing up these agreements. Judged by the harsher conditions of political reality it was never possible to see how anybody could imagine that such a State could survive for very long in Africa. It would be a State with the sign of Cain on its brow. It would be marked down for swift reprisal action. There is nothing nice about this reality, but that is no reason for refusing to face it.

#### THE DIAMOND STATE

Tshombe's example was followed in August 1960 by Albert Kalonji, formerly Lumumba's chief lieutenant and leader of the breakaway MNC. Raising the banner of independence over the Baluba area of Kasai, with Bangwala as its capital, he called it 'The Diamond State'. More than 90 per cent of the diamond potential of the Congo comes from that region.

Kalonji's enterprise ended more disastrously than Tshombe's. Before the end of August Lumumba's forces (supported by those of the Kasai Provincial Government) had invaded Bangwala, put Kalonji and his Ministers to flight, and massacred more than a thousand Baluba.

The difficulties in which the hapless Baluba found themselves need some elaboration. As with many large tribes, the Baluba did not live in one homogeneous land unit. They were concentrated in northern Katanga and eastern Kasai. Though a large, vigorous, and intelligent tribe, they had the misfortune to find themselves in a minority in both provinces. Their tribal-based parties in Katanga (part of the cartel of BALUBAKAT) and in Kasai initially sought security and authority by allying themselves with Lumumba's nation-wide MNC. They realized that it was only by avoiding their isolation as a tribal party that they could hope to escape the danger of being dominated in Kasai and Katanga. But when Kalonji broke with Lumumba\* he put the Kasai section of the Baluba into the danger of isolation they had sought to avoid. To reduce the dangers of this isolation he later embraced the loose federalist movement, which brought him into close alliance with Tshombe and Kasavubu, and into further conflict with the dominant tribal party in Kasai (that of the Lulua) which was allied with Lumumba.

\* See page 71.

The Katanga Baluba had refused, however, to follow Kalonji when he broke away; their leader, Jason Sendwe, stuck to Lumumba. In Katanga the Baluba were fighting a defensive action against an attempt by the majority tribes, brought together in Tshombe's CONAKAT, to dominate the province. This division put the Baluba tribes in the worst of both worlds. They were massacred in Katanga by Tshombe's 'federalists', in Kasai by Lumumba's 'nationalists'.

Describing the massacre of the Baluba, Hammarskjöld spoke of the crime of genocide – the destruction of an entire race. His motives were undoubtedly right, but the charge of genocide cannot be upheld. The fact that the Baluba were killed in large numbers by opposite armies was not caused by any animosity towards them as a race. There was no policy to kill them off as a tribe; nor do the number of fatalities, high as they were – probably 3,000 – justify the charge of genocide. The tragedy of the Baluba is that the wheel of political roulette spun against them in both provinces; their leadership was incapable either of foreseeing their mortal weakness or, if they had seen it, of doing anything about it. The subsequent action of Kalonji in trying to set up his 'Diamond State' – although he had no possibility of defending it from attack – was the culminating error in a series of costly errors for the Baluba. But this is not the end of the story. The pendulum is still swinging violently in the Congo; if it should favour the Baluba, as yet it might, there will be heavy reprisals unless security is firmly established before that day comes.



## Chapter 12

### INTERNATIONAL DECISION

*'The natives are not represented at this conference . . . nevertheless the decision of this body will be of the gravest importance to them.'*

SIR EDWARD MALET, Britain's representative at the Berlin conference on Africa, 1885

*'There should not be any hesitation, because we are at a turn of the road where our attitude will be of decisive significance, I believe, not only for the future of the United Nations Organization but also for the future of Africa. And Africa may well in present circumstances mean the world.'*

MR DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD, addressing the Security Council, 22 July 1960

*'In the United Nations lies the only hope for the future of all nations. We should all of us, therefore, be most careful not to do anything which impairs its authority.'*

PRESIDENT KWAME NKRUMAH of Ghana, 17 August 1960

THE task of defending the Congo's independence was entrusted to the UN on 12 July, the day following the entry of Belgian paratroops. Two days before, the Congo had appealed to the UN for technical assistance. The mutiny had virtually brought all government and public services to a halt. The panic flight of the Belgians reduced their numbers in Leopoldville from 18,000 to 2,500; in Luluabourg from 6,000 to 200; in Stanleyville from 5,000 to 300; in the port of Matadi from 1,800 to 10. Only the gamest and the lamest Belgians had remained. The flight of the rest wrecked the plan of resting the Congo's independence on Belgium. There was nothing to take her place.

The inexperienced Ministers sat with neither staff nor policy at

their large idle desks; there were no secretaries or telephone operators. From the start, the Prime Minister had hardly given a moment's thought to the task of governing the country: every moment of his day and most of every night was spent in relentless effort to withstand the blows that came from all sides. On the day of its appeal to the UN the hapless Republic resembled the poet's ship: its sails torn and tattered, seams opening wide; its rudder gone and compass lost.

The UN Secretariat, expecting a summons for technical aid, had already made tentative plans. But these were intended only to complement the Belgians'; they were quite unprepared to take over the administration of the whole country. Still less were they prepared for the appeal that followed immediately on the first: a demand for a UN Force. For the Congo this appeal marked the nadir of its fortunes; for the UN it was an inviting challenge. There was no precedent for what it was asked to do – to rescue a young nation's independence and to nurture it to a freedom it had never known.

The Congo issue came before the Security Council on 13 July. The first hurdle was to get everybody agreed – or at least to avoid the veto. The temptation to bring what was essentially a colonial disaster into 'cold war' politics must have been irresistably strong for the Soviet *bloc*. Yet, on this occasion, the Security Council acted in unison on a question that would normally have divided the West and the communists. The credit for this success belongs to the African group. It was the first time in history that Africa had succeeded in imposing its authority on the Great Powers – an event of some significance. The independent African states (excepting only South Africa) succeeded in doing what no other concert of continental powers had ever achieved – not Europe or Asia, not the Middle East or Latin America. It combined its own forces behind a policy that compelled international agreement. The Western Powers, with a few exceptions, had no motives for wishing to challenge the African states; the Soviet *bloc* did not dare to do so.

#### MR HAMMARSKJÖLD AND THE AFRICANS

On Tuesday 12 July Hammarskjöld called the African representatives at the UN into consultation over the appeal for technical

aid. From the first he recognized the importance of working with and through the African group. After leaving this meeting he heard from Cabot Lodge, the American representative at the UN, that President Eisenhower had been asked by the Congo's Vice-Premier, Antoine Gizenga, to supply military assistance against the Belgians. He had at once rejected this appeal in favour of action within the framework of the UN.\* Meanwhile, the Congo's appeal for American intervention had become known in Ghana, where President Nkrumah immediately got to work to persuade Lumumba to appeal to the UN instead.

On that Tuesday evening Hammarskjöld received a cable from President Kasavubu and Prime Minister Lumumba appealing for urgent UN military assistance against a 'Belgian act of aggression'. On Wednesday he received a more urgent cable setting out explicitly the Congo's needs and desires. This cable also included a threat to call in the Bandung Powers if the UN failed to act. Hammarskjöld spent Wednesday morning in consultation with representatives of the Security Council and, especially, with Mongi Slim, the Tunisian member of the Council. As a member of the African group Slim was a key person. The eleven members of the Security Council lunched informally with the Secretary-General where they received their first briefing. A meeting of the Security Council was fixed for eight o'clock the same night.

Hammarskjöld spent the afternoon laying his plans for speedily assembling a UN Force. With his experts he discussed how to stage the operation: setting up communications; obtaining food supplies; and deciding on the pattern for troop recruitment. Kano, Nigeria's air terminal, was fixed as the ideal base; the British Government and Nigeria were at once consulted about its use. Meanwhile, the members of the Security Council were getting instructions from their Governments. The African group met in continuous session throughout the afternoon to brief Slim. The Asian representative on the Security Council, Sir Claude Corea of Ceylon, conferred with the Asian group. Later, Sir Claude and Mongi Slim coordinated the policies of the Afro-Asian group.

\* The fact that the first appeal went to Washington should not be lost sight of in the subsequent events that led to allegations that Lumumba and his deputy, Gizenga, were in the hands of the Russians.

Hammarskjöld's concern deepened with the afternoon's developments. France and Italy were reported 'difficult' because of their reluctance to appear to side against the Belgians, and because Italy had subjects of its own in the Congo. Britain was threatening to raise objections of a more technical kind. Over all hung the threat of a Russian veto. In the late afternoon Hammarskjöld called in the Soviet delegate, Sobolev, and talked with him for an hour and a half. By this time the African group had drafted an agreed resolution to be submitted by Slim. It was considered and approved by the Asians. Hammarskjöld, too, approved. The African group then set their lobby to work on the Russians. They warned them of the impression the Soviet *bloc* would create if they went against African wishes.

#### THE FIRST SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

Although the final vote on the African resolution\* did not come until 3.22 on the morning of 14 July it had been won before the Security Council went into session.

The representatives of the Belgians and the Congolese faced each other as accuser and defendant before the Security Council. The Congolese spokesman was twenty-eight-year-old Thomas Kanza who, at the time of the Round Table Talks in Brussels, was working as a junior economist with the European Common Market. 'It is not often', he said, 'that barely two weeks after a country has achieved its independence, it is obliged to present itself almost as an accuser before the Security Council because,

\* 'The Security Council, considering the report of the Secretary-General on a request for United Nations action in relation to the Republic of the Congo; Considering the request for military assistance addressed to the Secretary-General by the President and the Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo; Calls upon the Government of Belgium to withdraw their troops from the territory of the Republic of the Congo; Decides to authorize the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps, in consultation with the Government of the Republic of the Congo, to provide the Government with such military assistance as may be necessary, until, through the efforts of the Congolese Government and with the technical assistance of the United Nations, the national security forces may be able, in the opinion of the Government, to meet fully their tasks; Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council as appropriate.'

contrary to what we might have hoped, the country which was formerly the colonizer, and which normally should have become a friendly country, violated on three occasions the treaty which we signed on 29 June, on the eve of the Congo's accession to independence. The Congolese', he added, 'are prepared to recognize that abuses have been committed.' He outlined four points on which his Government wanted action to be taken – to put an end to the aggressive action of the Belgian troops; the evacuation as soon as possible of those troops; non-recognition of the independence of Katanga; technical assistance.

Belgium's Foreign Minister, Pierre Wigny, spoke in terms both aggrieved and righteous. 'It would have been better . . . to have recognized first of all that frightful things have happened, frightful things which, naturally, have caused the departure of the Belgians who trustingly remained among you. Our action', he continued, 'is not aggression. Nor is it an act of madness. It is an action justified not by our hostility towards a people whom we love and to whom we have granted independence, nor by hostility on the part of the Congolese people towards us, but by the fact that the Congolese Government – certain of its members, and perhaps one of them alone\* – was incapable of re-establishing order. In these justified, necessary interventions we have always done everything to limit them to the maximum extent possible . . . We sent troops. They intervened strictly because of our sacred duty to protect the lives and the honour of our fellow-citizens. The action of our troops was always limited to these specific objectives.' He offered to withdraw Belgian troops as soon as UN troops arrived in sufficient number to guarantee security.

In the debate that followed the Russians were considerably reluctant to submit tamely to acceptance of the Afro-Asian sponsored resolution. They tried skilfully to force openings by going for the obviously popular issues that were not covered by the resolution, and which had been deliberately left out to ensure its quick passage. They proposed an amendment to 'condemn the armed aggression by Belgium'; another called upon Belgium to withdraw its troops 'immediately'; a third proposed that military assistance should be restricted to the African state members of the UN. All these amendments were defeated.

\* An obvious reference to M. Patrice Lumumba.

## UN STRATEGY

Although the Security Council rose shortly before Thursday's dawn, Hammarskjöld at once took Slim to his office to set the UN operation in motion. His immediate aim was to get troops into the Congo as quickly as possible. While putting the emphasis on African troops, he included two strictly neutralist European countries – Eire and Sweden – to reassure the Belgians. Slim had already obtained permission for Tunisian troops to leave at once. President Nkrumah, too, had offered to dispatch Ghanaian troops as soon as the resolution was passed. Hammarskjöld put through calls to Emperor Haile Selassie, who had thrown himself actively into the spirit of the operation, and to President Tubman of Liberia. Both responded immediately. Britain and Nigeria confirmed their agreement to the use of Kano as a staging post. Another call went through to Dr Ralph Bunche in Leopoldville instructing him to call an immediate conference to reassure the Congolese and the Belgians about the purpose of the UN intervention.

Throughout Thursday Hammarskjöld continued phoning the heads of African states. He also made personal appeals to UN members to send food, supplies, technicians, and aircraft. Within thirty-six hours of the resolution being passed, the Tunisian troops arrived in Leopoldville, just ahead of the Ghanaians. It was the swiftest and largest operation the UN had ever undertaken on its own. Its stock never stood higher.

But the UN enterprise, blessed by a happy start, was rapidly caught up in a web of misunderstandings and suspicions that threatened to bring the entire operation to grief. The Congolese leaders had hoped for two things when they first appealed to the UN: to get the Belgian troops out of the Congo, including Katanga; and to restore the country's integrity by recognizing the illegality of Katanga's declaration of independence. This second point was never clearly spelled out, although it was expressed in the speech Thomas Kanza made to the Security Council.

Hammarskjöld carefully defined his mandate in his explanatory statement to the Security Council, which nobody challenged at

the time. He laid it down that the UN Force could not take the initiative in the use of armed force, and could only act in self-defence. It would not take any action making it a party to internal conflicts. By this definition there could be no question of the UN on its own initiative, or with the cooperation of the Central Government, overthrowing the Government of M. Tshombe to restore the Congo's integrity. Nor did the resolution make provision for action in the event of force having to be used to secure the purposes of the resolution. When, therefore, Katanga threatened to resist UN troops by force, Hammarskjöld had no immediate answer to the situation that faced him. He had to return to the Security Council for a fresh mandate. This delay proved almost fatal.

The resolution suffered from one other serious weakness: its insistence on self-defence tied the hands of the UN Force in such a way that it could not intervene to prevent Congolese from killing each other. Had it been otherwise many lives could have been saved. Those who upheld the 'self-defence' restriction imposed on the UN Force rightly insist that this condition is a necessary corollary to non-interference in internal affairs. On the face of it, this argument is incontestable; but its strict application at one time threatened to bring the moral purpose of the Force into contempt. These weaknesses explain many of the difficulties in which Hammarskjöld quickly found himself.

#### IMPATIENCE AND INTRANSIGENCE

The first crisis of confidence came within a week of the arrival of the UN Force on 15 July. It was produced partly by the understandable but unreasonable impatience of the Congolese leaders over the 'slowness' of the incoming UN troops to take action; and partly by the terms insisted upon by the Belgians for their withdrawal. The target for the Congolese attack was Dr Ralph Bunche.

The weight of the United Nations' vast enterprise had fallen on him. His hotel suite had been transformed into a joint headquarters for the Government of the country and for the Military Command of the UN Forces. Backed by a small staff of UN experts, Dr Bunche was trying to mount two parallel operations:

restaffing the administration, which had virtually ceased to exist, and restoring the technical services to look after health, food supplies, public utilities, and communications. Belgian staff of the University of Lovanium, who had not gone on leave, were recruited to fill the vacant senior positions in the administration; an American economist who happened to be doing research for a thesis was put in charge of the Treasury. Hundreds of technicians supplied by the UN Specialized Agencies were allocated to priority tasks. The effort was herculean. But the task was complicated by the difficulty of getting authorization for policy decisions or actions. The majority of the Ministers were too busily occupied in other ways: government was not their immediate concern; they were preoccupied with the struggle for political survival. The administration was working virtually without a head.

Dr Bunche's other task was to direct the initial operations of the UN Force. He opened negotiations with the Belgians to agree on the 'modalities' for their withdrawal. But Lumumba was in no mood for the niceties of negotiations. On the day after the first handful of troops had arrived, he delivered an ultimatum: either the Belgians were made to withdraw within seventy-two hours, or Soviet troops would be called in. The conservative Senate (representative of five of the six provinces) at once repudiated Lumumba's threat to seek Russian aid. But Lumumba trumped their ace by getting his Cabinet to agree to a resolution agreeing to appeal to the Russians or to any Afro-Asian *bloc* country to send troops unless the UN got the Belgians out of the country.

By 18 July, 4,000 troops from five African countries had arrived in Leopoldville; on the following day Dr Bunche persuaded the Belgians to begin their withdrawal on 20 July, and to complete the operation within three days. But by then the interplay of impatience and delay had produced an untenable position. Lumumba's harassing tactics displeased the African states. Although they shared his impatience, they deplored his threats to call in the Russians.

#### THE SECOND SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

The crisis was broken by a second successful intervention by the African group in the Security Council on 21 and 22 July. In



collaboration with the Asian states, they sponsored another resolution setting out two objectives. The first was to intensify the pressure on the Belgians to withdraw. The second was to call on all states 'to refrain from any action which might tend to impede the restoration of law and order . . . and from any action which might undermine the territorial integrity and the political independence of the Republic of the Congo'. Again they forced agreement on the Security Council.

#### THE KATANGA LAST DITCH

On 23 July the Belgians completed their withdrawal from the Congo – but not from Katanga. They assembled in large numbers in Tshombe's Republic, and Tshombe was emboldened to defy the UN. His bravado is easily dismissed; the Belgian attitude is less easy to explain. However much they hoped to 'save' Katanga, how did they imagine they could successfully defy the UN? Their intransigence imperilled its efforts to meet the crisis; undermined the temperate policies hitherto pursued by the African states; and soon opened the way for Russian intervention. Whatever might be said in justification of Belgian policies, their prodding Tshombe into defiance of the UN was an act of momentous folly.

The consequences soon followed: first Guinea and then Ghana threatened that, if the UN did not get the Belgians out of Katanga, they would feel free to place their forces under the direct command of the Congo Government to accomplish this purpose. This action is sometimes cited as evidence of the lack of the sincerity by Africans in supporting the UN. The record shows that both Ghana and Guinea said they would act only if the UN failed to implement the Security Council resolutions. Once the Security Council reaffirmed its decisions, both President Sékou Toure and President Nkrumah at once expressed their complete confidence in Hammarskjöld. But between 23 July – the day of the evacuation of the Belgians from the five provinces of the Congo – and 12 August, when the UN Force was finally allowed to enter Katanga, the internal situation had deteriorated to a point almost past recovery. The strain between Lumumba and Hammarskjöld was near breaking-point.

During those critical weeks too, the Soviet *bloc* was able to exploit the troubled situation to such an extent that Lumumba felt he could rely on them as an alternative to the UN to achieve his purpose – expelling the last of the Belgians and bringing Katanga back under the authority of the Central Government. The Russians felt sufficiently confident to start a campaign against Hammarskjöld and the policies of the UN Command. They ‘condemned the imperialist aggression against the Republic of the Congo’ and declared they would not hesitate ‘to take resolute measures to rebuff the aggressors’. They also announced they were sending food, medical teams and equipment, and 100 trucks with instructors to the Congo; already their aircraft were engaged in the airlift of UN troops; but, unlike all the other countries, their gifts were not channelled through the UN.

The language of the Russians gladdened Lumumba’s heart, as indeed it might. Here was one power which was ready to deal with the Belgians. His attitude gravely disquieted the African group, with the exception of Guinea. They feared the ‘cold war’ was coming perilously close to Africa, and accordingly intensified their pressure on Hammarskjöld to enter Katanga.

On 4 August, twenty-two days after the first UN decision – Dr Bunche went to Katanga to inform Tshombe that the UN Force would enter his Province. Two days later he returned to report on ‘the unqualified and unyielding opposition of Mr Tshombe’. To the Congolese leaders it looked like betrayal. Was this the powerful world force they had heard so much about, a power that flinched before the threats of the contemptuous Tshombe?

Seen in these realistic Congolese terms the questions were fair. But Hammarskjöld was troubled by different considerations. ‘The introduction of army units into Katanga by the UN would be possible only by resort to the use of armed force on its part’, he said on hearing Dr Bunche’s report. ‘Such an initiative by the UN Force is against the principles established by the Security Council for the operation of the Force, and against the conditions on which various contributing countries have agreed to send units into the Force.’ Once again he went back to the Security Council. Hammarskjöld’s defence of his position was that he did not believe that ‘we help the Congolese people by actions in

which Africans kill Africans, or Congolese kill Congolese, and that will remain my guiding principle for the future'. Lumumba was not to be swayed by such arguments.

#### THE THIRD SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

When the Secretary-General faced the Security Council for the third time on 8 August, he did not try to argue against the use of force if necessary to get into Katanga. He warned that the threat of armed opposition could no longer justify further delays in putting UN troops into Katanga. Immediate action was needed to effect the withdrawal of Belgian troops whose presence was 'the main cause of continued danger'. By then he was thoroughly alarmed. 'The problem facing the Congo', he said, 'is one of peace or war – and not only in the Congo.'

The position inside the Security Council was becoming more difficult with each meeting. The Russians were becoming surer of their ground, and less amenable to African arguments. They proposed to compel the Secretary-General to 'use any means' to get the Belgians out of Katanga. Inside the African group, too, it had become more difficult to work for conciliation, especially since Lumumba also was no longer so ready to listen to their advice. Despite these difficulties, for the third time since the beginning of the Congo crisis, the African group and the Asians succeeded in presenting another agreed resolution to the Security Council. Although the Russians threatened to stick to their own resolution, they finally gave way. The Security Council warned the Belgian Government to withdraw its troops from Katanga immediately; they declared the entry of the UN Force into Katanga to be necessary for the fulfilment of their resolutions; and they reaffirmed their policy that the UN Force 'would not be a party to, or in any way intervene in, or be used to influence, the outcome of any internal conflict, constitutional or otherwise'.

Lumumba accepted this decision; amity was again restored between him and Hammarskjöld. This truce was to be the last. A fresh crisis came within a few days over the interpretation of the last part of this resolution.

## UN IN KATANGA

Hammar-skjöld entered Katanga on 12 August with the UN Force, after Belgium had recognized the limit of world patience. Tshombe blandly pretended he had never objected to the UN presence as such. What he objected to was that the UN operation should become a spearhead for action by the Central Government. This was a critical question. If the UN went in without representatives of the Lumumba government, their authority over Katanga would still be zero. Lumumba saw this danger, but Hammar-skjöld refused to allow him or anybody else from the Central Government to accompany the UN Force into Katanga.

Was this a wise decision? Even now the question is not merely hypothetical. It goes to the roots of UN policy in the Congo. By the decision of the third meeting of the Security Council, the UN clearly recognized the integrity of the Congo. But it made no proposals for re-establishing this integrity. In fact, it ruled out any initiative on its own part. The UN's own purpose in entering Katanga was to remove the Belgian troops, not to remove Tshombe. How to deal with him was a matter left to the Congolese to decide. Thus the UN action did no more than clear the way for mediation.

Hammar-skjöld was quite clear on the interpretation of the Security Council's decision. The UN Force could not be used on behalf of the Central Government to subdue or to force the Katanga provincial government to a specific line of action. United Nations facilities could not be used to transport Central Government civilian or military representatives against the decision of the Katanga provincial government. The UN Force had neither the duty nor the right to protect Central Government representatives arriving in Katanga, beyond what followed from its general duty to maintain law and order. On the other hand, the United Nations had no right to forbid the Central Government to take any action which by its own means, in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the Charter, it could carry through in relation to Katanga.

Lumumba rejected this 'unilateral and erroneous' interpreta-

tion. In a heated, quick-fire exchange of letters on 14 and 15 August the Prime Minister made it clear that the UN could not be allowed to act as a neutral organization in the Congo. He insisted that the UN Force should 'be used to subdue the rebel government in Katanga'. All non-African troops, he demanded, should be immediately withdrawn from Katanga. (The Swedes had been used initially for this operation; later Mali troops were put in as well.) The correspondence was rounded off with Lumumba accusing Hammarskjöld of losing the confidence of the Congolese, and of being a puppet of the colonialists. Hammarskjöld acidly challenged Lumumba to take his case to the Security Council. So back they went to the Security Council for the fourth time. Before the Council met, *cadres* of Congolese troops attacked UN personnel, alleging that Belgian spies were working among them. Leopoldville was threatened again with chaos.

These repeated crises began to have their effect within the African group. Guinea moved towards a militant, unilateral position. The Tunisians were inclined to move in the opposite direction, losing confidence in the Prime Minister. Dr Nkrumah, too, was anxious about the trend of Lumumba's policy. On 19 August he took the unusual step of sending a delegation to Lumumba, preceded by an urgent cable. 'Neither you personally nor the people of the Congo have anything to gain by the complete breakdown of law and order', he cabled. 'I beg you to exercise a restraining influence upon the activities of the Force Publique and police.' And in a personal letter he wrote: 'I am quite certain that the Secretary-General of the United Nations will never allow Belgians to re-establish themselves anywhere in the Congo. If the situation continues to be chaotic as it is in Leopoldville at the moment, there is a grave danger of our dear Congo becoming a battleground between East and West. This last will be a disaster for us in Africa.'

#### THE FOURTH SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

The fourth meeting of the Security Council (21-22 August) was the toughest of all. Hammarskjöld's personal reputation was now at stake. But, as on the three previous occasions, he had the solid support of the African group. Although no longer

uncritical, they were still unshaken in their determination to work within the framework of the UN. No resolution was passed by the fourth meeting of the Security Council, but Mr Hammarskjöld withstood a scorching attack from the Soviet and Polish delegates to win what amounted to a vote of confidence. His interpretation of the Council's resolutions was upheld; and his proposal to set up an Advisory Council of representatives of all the countries which had sent troops to the Congo was approved. Faced with this decision Lumumba climbed down. Once more he said he was 'satisfied'.

#### THE FIFTH SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

But this 'satisfaction', too, was short-lived. Towards the end of August a new pattern of events began to unfold in the Congo; these will be considered presently. Their impact on the UN was to make it almost impossible to pursue policies of non-intervention, while at the same time trying to maintain security and to keep the administration working. The African group had its loyalties strained to the limit, both within its own organization and in its relations with Lumumba and Hammarskjöld. The explosion came at the fifth meeting of the Security Council, which lasted for two days, from 15 to 17 September. Hammarskjöld went into this meeting not only with his personal reputation at stake, but with the authority of the UN itself called into question. For the first time since the beginning of the crisis the African group failed to impose its will on the Security Council. The Russians, finally, decided to risk going against the African States. They challenged the UN handling of the Congo issue by calling for the removal of the UN Command. They obviously gambled on winning Lumumba's wholehearted support, and were strongly encouraged to believe that they could shake the unity of the Afro-Asian group, but they were immediately proved wrong. The Afro-Asians unanimously supported the proposals made by Hammarskjöld in his report to the Security Council. These requested all states to refrain from any action which might tend to impede the restoration of law and order; called on all Congolese to seek a speedy solution of their internal conflicts by peaceful means; insisted that no military assistance

should be given to the Congo except through the UN; and called upon all states, without prejudice to the sovereign rights of the Congo, to refrain from sending materials of war and military personnel, directly or indirectly, to the Congo, except through the channels of the UN.

When the Security Council adopted these proposals – with their implicit criticisms of the Russians as well as of the Belgians – the Russians used their veto. An emergency session of the General Assembly was immediately arranged under the ‘uniting for peace’ resolution. Confronted by all the members of the UN, the Russians maintained their frontal assault. Their special target was still the Secretary-General. He was accused of committing ‘treason to the interests of the Congolese people’; and criticized for not showing ‘even the minimum of objectivity’, and for acting as a ‘screen for the colonialists’. The Russian challenge was turned into a *débâcle*; their veto was overridden with not a single country outside the Soviet *bloc* supporting them. The Afro-Asian resolution, as quoted above, was adopted by seventy votes to none, with eleven abstentions. These included the Soviet *bloc*, France, and South Africa.

## Chapter 13

### PROMISE AND FAILURE

*'Patrice Lumumba, you are the man we need; you are hope and the hope of our future. . . . Martyr of freedom, child of our fatherland, symbol of freedom, protector of our ancestors' rights, valiant soldier, let your agonizing enemies watch your triumph and our glory.'*

Editorial in *Congo Independence*

THE high hopes with which the UN went into the Congo were not immediately justified by events. By the end of September it had lost its initiative. The Government it had come to assist was in ruins. Its technical services were throttled because of the need for an effective authority through whom they could work. The policy of the UN Command was under heavy attack, and the Secretary-General had himself become the centre of 'cold war' politics, largely because of his role in the Congo. It was a dismal anti-climax.

The events leading up to the complete breakdown of government in the Congo can be conveniently traced from 15 August, just one month after the first UN troops arrived in response to the appeal from the Central Government. By then the UN Force had virtually secured its primary objective: the Belgian troops had left, and a UN contingent had been allowed to enter Katanga. The explicit instructions given to Hammarskjöld by the Security Council had been fulfilled; the other duties imposed on him – to provide technical assistance, and to help maintain security without interfering in the Congo's domestic affairs – could be achieved only through cooperation with Lumumba's Government.

Lumumba was left with two main objectives after the Belgians' expulsion: to secure effective power within his shaky coalition Government, and to restore Katanga to the authority of the Central Government. He sought UN support for these two aims,



but Hammarskjöld refused. Not only did he refuse to allow the UN Force to be used against Katanga, but he made it virtually impossible for the Congo Government to take direct action by itself. Not altogether unreasonably, from his point of view, Lumumba saw the UN presence as a guarantee for the continued separate existence of Katanga, unless the deadlock could be broken by some different method. He refused, however, to consider negotiating with Tshombe because such negotiations could only proceed on the basis of a federal solution, which touched the central problem of Congolese politics. To concede on this point would have weakened Lumumba's position, and strengthened the federalists'. He refused to abdicate. Instead, he rounded on the UN and began to pursue two contradictory policies. While publicly threatening to call in the aid of 'another Power', he privately took up the Russian offer of aid made on 31 July. But he did not tell either the President, Joseph Kasavubu, or his Foreign Secretary, Justin Bomboka. At the same time he asked for the active support of the African States against the UN decisions (as interpreted by Hammarskjöld), and for a military campaign against Katanga. The Russians responded; the African States did not.

On the diplomatic front the Russians backed Lumumba's attack on Hammarskjöld's decision not to accept orders from his Government. This issue came to a head at the Security Council meeting on 23 August, when the African States supported Hammarskjöld's interpretation, and compelled the Russians to withdraw their censure motion on the Secretary-General. Lumumba, too, declared himself satisfied with the outcome. Yet three days later he was back in the fray with a demand that the UN Force should be withdrawn. This policy was unanimously repudiated by the Congolese Senate. Lumumba next took his case to the 'Little Summit' of thirteen African States which met in Leopoldville on 25 August; again he met with failure. Let down by both the African States and the UN, Lumumba decided to 'go it alone' with the help of the Russians.

Soviet aid, unlike others, went directly to the Government, instead of being channelled through the UN. The Russians delivered 100 military trucks and 29 Ilyushin transport planes, together with 200 technicians. This transport enabled Lumumba

to send hand-picked units of the Force Publique to subdue the dissident 'Diamond State' proclaimed by Albert Kalonji in Kasai. More than 1,000 Baluba tribesmen were killed.

#### THINGS FALL APART

That was the situation on 5 September, the day on which everything began to fall apart. On that day, Lumumba's uneasy coalition finally broke up. The President dismissed him as Prime Minister, and appointed Joseph Ileo in his place. The coalition had always been a shaky affair. The federalists, though displeased with the Prime Minister's erratic policies, had closed their eyes to his actions, hoping that he would expend himself in the effort to impose his personal authority. They had hesitated to act sooner, knowing they could not command sufficient support to make their power effective. But though they were not yet ready to act when they did, events drove them to do so before Russian aid could tip the internal balance of power in Lumumba's favour, and because they felt they could no longer ignore the mounting chaos and the drift to civil war.

The UN representatives in the Congo were equally alarmed. Lumumba's unwillingness to cooperate, his secret negotiations with the Russians, and his determination to secure his ends by the use of force, made a mockery of the UN Force, which was supposed to maintain security. They felt a desperate need for any legal authority with which they could cooperate to carry out the desires of the Security Council. When Kasavubu acted against Lumumba, the UN at once recognized the legality of his action, without even waiting to see whether he could establish his authority. In the event he could not. The Senate refused to confirm the President's dismissal of the Prime Minister, and the Prime Minister's dismissal of the President. Although both leaders were re-established in office by the Senate, the *status quo* had in fact been destroyed. There were now two rival Governments, Lumumba's and Ileo's, each appealing to the people and to the troops for support. It was a situation ripe for civil war.

Faced with this threat the UN representatives in Leopoldville acted under their mandate to maintain security. They feared two immediate dangers: that the use of Leopoldville radio by either

or both sides would whip up national feeling to the point of open conflict; and that rival commanders of the Force Publique would bring their troops into the capital. Without waiting to consult Hammarskjöld, the UN organization in the Congo ordered the closing of the radio station and of all airports. When Lumumba attempted to force his way into the radio station, his entry was barred by Ghanaian troops acting under UN orders. The popular Press in Britain gave the impression that this action was taken under the orders of one of Ghana's British officers; the action was in fact taken by a Ghanaian Sergeant. Two British lieutenants serving with the Ghana Army came on the scene only after Lumumba had been stopped. The Ileo Government found a way round the ban. Exploiting the good relations between Kasavubu and Foulbert Youlou, the President of the (former French) Congo Republic across the river, they obtained access to Radio Congo in Brazzaville. Thus only the voice of Kasavubu was heard. After a few days the ban was dropped.

A new factor now entered the picture. Colonel Mobutu, a twenty-eight-year-old army officer (formerly a political journalist and a trained accountant), used his command over the companies of the Force Publique then in the capital to proclaim army rule. While acknowledging the authority of President Kasavubu as Head of State, he ordered the dismissal of both Lumumba's and Ileo's Governments. He shut down the parliament, formed a Government of University Students, and ordered the immediate withdrawal of the Soviet *bloc* representatives. He followed this by threatening to demand the withdrawal of Guinean and Ghanaian troops on the grounds that they were interfering in internal politics.

While Ileo accepted Colonel Mobutu's orders, Lumumba did not. For several weeks the capital witnessed a bewildering change of fortunes. Lumumba and his lieutenants were only just saved from death; later they were arrested, and escaped. Members of Mobutu's 'Government' had similar experiences. Lumumba sought the protection of Ghanaian troops; members of his personal staff fled to sympathetic embassies. Claims and counter-claims of rightful authority came from all sides. But in all this chaos and tension not a single person was killed; nor was a single politician held in effective confinement.

Foreign Press representatives were inclined to view these events as tragi-comedy. But a more accurate perspective would be to see them as a contest between rivals carrying on a vigorous dialogue in public, with each side striking postures and making grandiose claims in attempts to out-manoeuvre the other. Though it perhaps looks ridiculous to outsiders, there is something to be said for a typically African cultural pattern which enables bitter rivalries to exist without either party actually harming the other physically.

The explanation of what happened was that no side felt itself strong enough to take an irrevocable step. Power belonged nowhere, and the UN was helpless to act. The African States tried to reconcile the rivals, but their efforts were continually frustrated. This was the situation in the Congo when the Security Council met on the eve of the 1960 UN General Assembly, where the Congo was tossed into the arena of the cold war. The Soviet Government charged the UN with acting in the Congo on behalf of 'a coalition of colonialists'. The African and Asian leaders criticized some of Hammarskjöld's policies, but with restraint and understanding.

Quite rightly, the Soviet Government had insisted\* that the events in the Congo should be seen as 'a serious test of the impartiality of the United Nations apparatus'. Did the UN, in fact, behave impartially? To what extent did its policies contribute to the collapse of the Central Government? Could different policies have avoided this collapse? These questions are as important for the future as for an understanding of what went wrong. But before trying to answer them it is necessary to consider the role played by external forces in the Congo.

\* Statement by the Soviet Government, 1 September 1960.

## Chapter 14

### ROLE OF THE AFRICAN STATES

*'Once we admit our impotence to solve the question of the Congo primarily with our own African resources, we tacitly admit that real self-government on the African continent is impossible. . . . I would not be so presumptuous as to put forward a Monroe doctrine for Africa. I must say, however, that the Great Powers of the world should realize that very often African questions can be settled by African states if there is no outside intervention or interference.'*

PRESIDENT KWAME NKRUMAH, 8 August 1960

PAN-AFRICANISM met its first real challenge in the Congo: previously, the emotional urge towards continental unity had been tested only in committee rooms and on conference platforms. Disagreements privately arrived at could be publicly hidden behind resounding resolutions denouncing colonialism, racialism, and imperialism; and by pledges of undivided loyalty to the concepts of an undefined African personality. Pan-Africanism thrived on its search for unity; in the Congo it faced the need for agreed decision speedily taken in response to sharply changing situations.

I am not concerned here with a discussion of the nature and forces of Pan-Africanism, except in so far as it helps to clarify the role of the African States in the Congo. The manner in which this group behaved, and the tensions that exist within it, will undoubtedly have important repercussions; to pursue these now would be irrelevant to the central theme of this book.

The previous chapter described the unanimity maintained by the members of the Conference of Independent African States\*

\* Cameroons, Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Libya, Liberia, Morocco, Nigeria, Sudan, Somalia, Tunisia, U.A.R. The Algerian Provisional Government is also recognized as a full member. The bulk of the French Community states and Nigeria became UN members only in October, and were therefore not active participants in the African group during the period under consideration.

represented in the African group at the UN. The two non-participant members were the Cameroons Republic – the only member of the French Community which formally adheres to the Conference – and Somalia; neither sent troops to the Congo.

The African group work largely through informal machinery. Their permanent nucleus are the African Representatives at the United Nations. This nucleus was paralleled in the Congo by the African Ambassadors, who frequently consulted each other.

### THE ROLE OF GHANA

The initiative in the Congo lay in Accra, where President Nkrumah kept in daily contact with Leopoldville and the UN Headquarters, and carried on rapid consultations with other African states through his Ambassadors in their capitals, as well as through their Ambassadors in Accra.

Dr Nkrumah's leadership role is due to two factors. A close personal relationship exists between him and Patrice Lumumba. Before independence, the two leaders had tentatively explored the possibility of the Congo formally adhering to the Ghana–Guinea Union\*. Although no definite decision had been taken, their identity of views and of possible interests explains the special role Ghana played in the Congo. The second factor is Dr Nkrumah's essentially revolutionary view of Pan-Africanism. For him it is not just a cosy notion of a lot of African leaders trying to work together. He has staked his reputation, and Ghana's, on a militant campaign to build a United States of Africa. Critics accuse him of 'empire building'; a more useful concept would be to see him as the champion of an idea which transcends countries and personalities. Although he has created organizations of his own design to foster his policies, he has always been careful to work within the framework of the Conference of Independent African States,

\* This Union exists in name only, although tentative steps have been taken to allow for continuous interchange of views between the two states by each, theoretically, admitting a Minister from the other to its Cabinet. Relations between these two countries in no sense conform to the general idea of what a Union should involve. The increasingly independent role played by Guinea in the Congo (though not in the African group at the UN) suggests growing differences within the Union.

and within the less rigidly structured All-African People's Organization. On a wider front he has worked within the framework of the Commonwealth of Nations, and on the international front he has worked within the framework of the United Nations. But within the limitations imposed by these wider organizations he has consistently tried to maintain the initiative for his idea of a political union of African States. It is this concept of a 'political union' that divides Pan-Africanists. In the Congo Dr Nkrumah was well-placed to promote an extension of his idea of 'political union' between African States. He was never afraid of committing his own Government.

The threatening dangers in the Congo had been raised by the African States for the first time at their second conference in Addis Ababa in May 1960. Their concern was about continued Belgian interference in the internal affairs of the Congo, and especially about the apparent inability of the Congolese leaders to come to an agreement in forming their first National Government. This concern was reflected in a proposal by the Nigerian delegation for a 'good offices' committee to be sent to the Congo, an idea vigorously criticized on the grounds that it encouraged support for the view that Congolese leaders were incapable of managing their own affairs. Nevertheless, African leaders did, in fact, later play an important part in persuading Lumumba to accept Kasavubu as the first Head of State. Ghana's intervention with Lumumba was especially influential – a fact privately acknowledged at the time by Kasavubu.

Ghana's support for a national government including both the Pan-Africanists (Lumumba's supporters) and the federalists ('tribal nationalists') went against the grain. Dr Nkrumah is uncompromisingly committed to a strong, centralized form of government – 'centralized democracy'. He regards federalists as the harbingers of Africa's balkanization. 'In my view,' he has said, 'any person who talks of a federal type of constitution for the Congo is a supporter of the imperialist cause.'\* Nevertheless, his realistic assessment of the situation in Leopoldville on the eve of independence was that Belgian influence could only be effectively removed, and Congolese unity established, through a Government that rested on both Lumumba and Kasavubu. This expedient

\* Address to Ghana National Assembly, 8 August 1960.

has remained the guiding principle of nearly all the African States.

The intervention of African States on the side of the Congolese was officially proposed for the first time by Dr Nkrumah at a Press Conference in Accra on 6 August. He declared that the behaviour of the Belgian Government over Katanga created a situation which, if not firmly and immediately dealt with, would constitute a major threat to world peace. If no UN solution was forthcoming, Ghana would be willing to fight alone, if necessary, with the Congo 'against Belgian troops and other forces maintained and supplied from Belgium.' But he added, 'my Government believes that if such a struggle did arise, Ghana and other African States would not be without aid and assistance from other countries which value, as a principle, the conception of African independence.'

Dr Nkrumah followed up this initiative by a dispatch to the heads of other African States proposing joint action through the UN. 'A special responsibility, in my opinion, rests upon all African States to take vigorous steps to reassert the authority of the United Nations. I consider it is essential for all African States to act with complete solidarity and to support a common policy. . . . Such unity is also essential to prevent outside interference in the affairs of the African continent.' He added that he believed the UN would act against the Belgians, but 'if the worst came to the worst and no United Nations solution was found and therefore, Ghana had to give military assistance to the Congo outside the framework of the United Nations, Ghana would have your sympathy in taking this action. I hope we shall also have your support in any military steps which become necessary through the failure of the United Nations to deal with this issue.'

The response to Dr Nkrumah's appeal was unanimously favourable, although several of the African States felt that his declaration of intention to 'go it alone' with the Congo was somewhat flamboyant and cast a reflection on his colleagues. But this was a passing irritation. Accra's determination to show that among equals it is the most militant has become a recognized feature of the African scene. But on the question of the Congo, Ghana found that she was by no means the most militant. Guinea began to outflank her on the left.



## RELATIONS WITH MR LUMUMBA

Although the African States were willing to give full backing to Lumumba's Government, the Prime Minister's erratic policies imposed an increasing strain on their loyalty as August lengthened into September. It was not only that he was difficult to deal with; his personal quarrels with Dr Ralph Bunche and Mr Hammarskjöld, his nagging doubts about the UN and especially his connivance at attacks on UN personnel by members of the Force Publique, and his private negotiations with the Russians, all contributed to dissension and division. At the UN the African group formulated their policies after consultation with Lumumba; but they were not guided by him. None of the African leaders was willing, for obvious reasons, to criticize him publicly. They were conscious of the need for African States not to interfere in the internal affairs of another independent state, however great the temptation to do so. Dr Nkrumah came nearer than most to criticizing Lumumba openly. After the attack on UN personnel at Leopoldville airport in the middle of August, Dr Nkrumah sent a delegation to warn Lumumba of the dangers of his policy.\*

The situation by the middle of August was extremely critical. With the future of the UN operation in the Congo at stake, the African group worked hard to prevent this disaster. Although at times Guinea seemed less in accord with this policy than the rest of the African States, Dr Nkrumah vigorously championed the UN's cause. He summoned a special meeting of his National Assembly to 'reaffirm our faith in the purpose and principles of the United Nations and its Charter. . . . In the United Nations lies the only hope for the future of all nations.'

The African group was under considerable pressure from Lumumba to provide him with troops to enable him to invade and overthrow Tshombe's Government in Katanga. Although Guinea, Ghana, and the UAR publicly affirmed their willingness to consider doing so all three made their offer conditional on the UN's refusal to take steps to restore the integrity of the Congo. None of the African States was willing to settle the Katanga question outside the framework of the UN, or at least not until an effort

\* See page 137.

had been made to reach agreement through conciliation. Tshombe himself appealed to Dr Nkrumah to come to Katanga with a view to discussing some settlement, and Nkrumah was willing to do so. But Lumumba withheld his consent. His view was that no settlement was possible with Tshombe except on the latter's terms. He repeatedly insisted that the ultimate constitution of the Congo could be settled only in the manner agreed: that Parliament should act as a Constituent Assembly to decide the country's future.

Dr Nkrumah's own position was unequivocal. 'The proposal to establish a loose federation in the Congo is merely an attempt by those who failed to detach Katanga from the Congo Republic to get balkanization of the Congo by the backdoor', he said. Nevertheless, he went on, 'the question of a constitution for the Congo is entirely a matter for the Congolese people themselves to decide'.\*

Although Lumumba appears at no time to have lost his confidence in Dr Nkrumah – they constantly exchanged personal letters on most intimate terms – his staff in Leopoldville began to reflect the influences that were gaining weight in his own mind. The Guineans were prominently in attendance; other members of his entourage were drawn from supporters of the 'Conakry line' with its anti-Western, though not necessarily pro-Soviet, bias. In this situation the non-revolutionary wing of the Pan-Africanists (especially Tunisia and Liberia) found themselves increasingly isolated. The Sudan was inclined to take a back-seat, while Ethiopia and Morocco leaned towards the position of the Ghanaians and the UAR. The latter state played only a minor role in the Congo, although its voice was naturally influential in the African group.

Relations between Lumumba and the African group were finally brought to a head by the 'Little Summit' of African States† held in Leopoldville from 25 to 31 August. Lumumba's hopes from this conference were that he would get backing for his view that the UN was too greatly guided by 'colonialist influences', and support for military action against Katanga. He was particularly hostile to the Tunisians, whose UN representative, Mongi Slim,

\* Address to the Ghana National Assembly, 8 August 1960.

† Algeria, Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Libya, Liberia, Morocco, Sudan, Togoland, Tanganyika, Tunisia, United Arab Republic.

was singled out for a cold attack in the officially-sponsored *Congo* on the eve of the conference. Its discussions, though at times heated, ended in agreement, with only the Guineans inclining to a minority position. Having heard Lumumba, the conference decided against his views on all except one issue. They praised the work of the UN and regretted the 'incidents' which had interfered with what they felt should have been the whole-hearted co-operation between the UN and the Congo Government. They unanimously agreed to send a message of appreciation to Dr Ralph Bunche\*, who had been fiercely criticized by the Congo Prime Minister. They emphasized the importance of 'harmonizing' all aid to the Congo within the programme of the UN. Their only division of opinion was over action against Katanga. While condemning the 'secession and colonialist manoeuvres' and pledging support to the integrity of the Congo, the conference offered nothing positive in reply to Lumumba's appeal for direct action to overthrow Tshombe's Government. In private sessions efforts had been made to persuade Lumumba to begin negotiations with Tshombe; but no agreement came. Despite this growing gulf between Lumumba and the African States, great care was taken not to estrange the Congo Prime Minister – although the Tunisians were notably out of patience with him, and he with them.

#### NATIONALISTS' CORRESPONDENCE

The African States were never willing to see Lumumba sacrificed, especially not to the forces of Kasavubu. Tunisia, and perhaps Liberia, were less staunch in this attitude than most others. The relationship between Lumumba and Nkrumah, however, remained intimate, as is shown by the letters which Colonel Mobutu decided to publish in an attempt to prove that Ghana's President was 'plotting' in the Congo. For the sake of clarity it is necessary to keep two points separate: the role of Ghana's troops in the Congo, whose loyalty to the UN Command has never been questioned except by Colonel Mobutu; and the advice proffered to Lumumba by Dr Nkrumah.

\* Soviet propaganda represented this distinguished Negro leader as 'an American imperialist'.

His letters, though revealing, contain nothing surprising. His advice to Lumumba proceeds along precisely the same lines that he had followed in establishing his own power in Ghana. His tactics rested on the basis of isolating and dealing with opponents singly; not striking before he was quite sure of success; mobilizing all possible support to increase his strength; not offending those who might be useful; and trusting none except tested friends.

The propriety of Dr Nkrumah's giving advice to the Congo Prime Minister cannot be questioned. This is the normal business of allies. All that might be questioned would be any indication in the correspondence that Ghana was proposing, through its troops or in any other way, to interfere actively in the Congo. No such evidence appears. On the contrary, Dr Nkrumah's counsel is for caution and restraint. He explains but does not criticize the action of Ghanaian troops acting against Lumumba in carrying out UN orders; and he continues to plead for cooperation with the UN. His advice on tactics is not relevant to charges of interference.

Dr Nkrumah had never made any secret of his distrust of federalist leaders like Kasavubu and Tshombe; at the same time, as his letters show, he recognized the need to maintain national unity, and to avoid precipitate action at a time when the Congo was in chaos. One final point must be borne in mind in trying to understand Nkrumah's letters: he is writing to a bitterly frustrated leader, a man increasingly difficult to influence. He is clearly trying to get in on Lumumba's 'wavelength'.

In response to a letter from Lumumba referring to the 'treachery of Kasavubu', Dr Nkrumah wrote on 12 September: 'You cannot afford, my brother, to be harsh and uncompromising. Do not force Kasavubu out now. It will bring you too much trouble in Leopoldville when you want calm there now. Do not make an issue of [Kasavubu's] treachery now, or even of Tshombe's treachery. Time will come to deal with them. Let sleeping dogs lie.' He urges Lumumba to work 'even with the bitterest political enemies' until his position is consolidated, and he warns him: 'You must not push the United Nations out until you have consolidated your position.' Looking more deeply beneath the surface, he calls attention to the danger that the people would not continue to go hungry while the politicians quarrelled.

This letter gives some sound advice on Cabinet reorganization,

working through a small Inner Cabinet for quick decisions (Nkrumah's own method of working), and appointing a separate technical Cabinet to ensure effective cooperation with the UN and with foreign states.

'You may be sure', Nkrumah confided to Lumumba, 'that in any crisis I will mobilize the Afro-Asian *bloc* and other friendly nations as in the present attempt to dethrone you. Whenever in doubt consult me. Brother, we have been in the game for some time now and we know how to handle the imperialists and the colonialists. The only colonialist or imperialist I trust is a dead one. If you do not want to bring the Congo into ruin, follow the advice I have given.' And he ends up by saying that if Lumumba failed he would have only himself to blame; but failure would be a great blow to the African liberation movement.

#### BASIS OF POLICY

Up to this point it is easy to define the main lines of policy pursued by the African States. They took their stand behind the Congo Central Government (with Kasavubu as President and Lumumba as Prime Minister), and against the Katanga secessionists. They vigorously defended the status and authority of the UN in the Congo. They opposed all efforts to extend the cold war into Africa. They sought to avert the settlement of internal problems by the use of military force, counselling reconciliation and peaceful negotiations. While giving freely of their advice to the Congolese all, except Guinea, were careful to avoid direct intervention in the Congo's internal affairs. At the same time they kept themselves free to develop and expound their own policies at the UN.

This outline of policy was broadly supported by the African group. There were, of course, differences in the interpretation of some of the principles, and these gradually led to a weakening in the purposefulness that had been such a feature of the African group's earlier interventions in the UN. Nevertheless, so long as the Central Government remained intact it was possible for the African States to avoid becoming actively involved in the rivalry between the federalists and the unitarians. But after Kasavubu's initiative in dismissing his Prime Minister, it was more difficult to avoid taking sides.

Guinea was uncompromisingly in favour of hoisting Lumumba back into power, with or without Kasavubu. Tunisia took the opposite line; they were ready to write Lumumba off as a hopeless proposition. Ghana, Morocco, the UAR, and Ethiopia formed themselves into a 'good offices' committee to work for reconciliation between Kasavubu and Lumumba, holding firmly to the original policy that the UN could recognize only the 'legitimacy' of the Government which had invited its intervention. The arguments for such a policy were straightforward.

To recognize either Kasavubu or Lumumba separately would be to recognize a Government that did not have the backing of the people. The will of the people, as expressed by the National Assembly before it had been prorogued, was to divide its power between the two leaders. Colonel Mobutu was a young interloper with only the support of a remnant of the Force Publique, trying to impose his views on the country, and with no kind of mandate from the people. To acknowledge any Government that did not rest on some recognizable basis of legitimacy would involve the creation of a dangerous precedent in Africa. If the African States lent their support to such a precedent, it could open the way in the future for 'colonialists' to help overthrow other legitimate governments and to replace them with 'stooge governments' who could then appeal to the UN for recognition and support. The only safe course was to proceed from a recognition of where the people's mandate lay.

#### ATTITUDE TO THE UN

It was on this issue of legitimacy that the most serious difference of opinion developed within the African group, and between it and Hammarskjöld. He recognized Kasavubu's action as constitutionally justified under the Fundamental Laws which give the President the right to dismiss the Prime Minister, provided his action is countersigned by constitutionally responsible Ministers. The Prime Minister, though, is not entitled under any circumstances to dismiss the Head of State.

By recognizing the Ileo Government, the UN put itself against Lumumba. Had the Ileo Government survived, the situation might have been put beyond legal argument; but it did not. The

Senate's action in confirming both Kasavubu and Lumumba in their old positions created a new situation – one for which the UN could find no immediate answer. It was, therefore, left with no authority on which to rely, until Colonel Mobutu set himself up as the government. The UN, in desperation, dealt with Mobutu and his team; but it had virtually no African support for this decision. Although the majority of the African States were strongly critical of Hammarskjöld on this question, they determinedly refused to criticize him publicly and continued to support his general policies in the Security Council and in the Assembly. They acted in this way for two reasons. They did not want to open a breach between themselves and the Secretary-General which would allow the Great Powers to get at each other's throats; and they patiently hoped and worked for a solution that would offer a legal alternative to Mobutu.

The majority of the African States were also disturbed by the actions of the UN representatives in the Congo in closing the radio station and the airport. Their feeling was that this action, whether intentionally or not, helped Kasavubu. Why, they asked, did the UN not at least try to stop Radio Congo\* from broadcasting Kasavubu's statements if it was genuinely intended to keep both contestants off the air?

But although most of the members of the African group believed that 'foreign interests' – that is, Belgian and French – were behind Kasavubu's attempt to overthrow Lumumba, they did not suggest for a moment that the UN representatives in the Congo had anything to do with it. Nor, once the Senate reconfirmed the President in office, did they raise any objections to accepting his position.

\* When France conceded independence to the French Congo she secured a lien for thirty years on the powerful Radio Brazzaville for her own programmes. The Congo government in Brazzaville established a separate Radio Congo which uses the buildings and facilities of Radio Brazzaville. The broadcasts by Kasavubu were made from Radio Congo and not Radio Brazzaville.

## Chapter 15

### POWER POLITICS IN THE CONGO

*'Tshombe is a turncoat, a traitor to the interests of the Congolese people. If one compares Tshombe with his counterpart in the revolution in our own country he is a Petlyura. Mr Hammarskjöld, on behalf of the United Nations, is backing in the Congo Colonel Mobutu, who is acting against the Congolese Government. But Mobutu is a highwayman. If we search for an analogy in our own country, it is something like a Wrangel, Kolchak, or similar flotsam of history which our people chucked out.'*

NIKITA KHRUSCHEV, 27 September 1960

As usually happens in African controversies, the West found itself divided over the Congo. But this time the rift was small, with Belgium the odd man out, relying only on France's sympathetic support; this did not amount to much – except that it gave France's enemies in Africa fresh ammunition. Portugal hardly counted.

#### THE ROLE OF THE WEST

France's role in the UN was largely confined to abstaining from any proposition touching the Congo. When the UN closed down Leopoldville Radio, Kasavubu was allowed to use Radio Congo in Brazzaville. Ghana has officially accused France of going behind the back of the UN on the grounds that Radio Brazzaville is, by treaty, still controlled by the French. But this accusation is based on a misunderstanding explained in a footnote on the previous page.

The Western approach, as could be expected, showed the same unwillingness to be too hard on one of its allies as it shows to France over Algeria, and, sometimes, towards South Africa over South West Africa. But, understandable as it is that allies should



not wish to wound each other on issues that temporarily divide them, the West should not be surprised if its actions in the non-committed world are viewed with some suspicion so long as its internal dilemmas remain unreconciled.

France, Belgium, and Portugal aside, the rest of the West were broadly united; their agreement was expressed through general support for the line taken by the Afro-Asian group. The explanation of this remarkable line-up is that, for once, Western interests happened to coincide with those of the non-committed nations. Both groups wish to keep the cold war out of the Congo, though not necessarily for the same reasons. It was inevitable that this community of interest should have looked like 'ganging up' against the Soviet *bloc*, which found itself isolated in the Security Council, with the Western nations (Belgium and France excepted) supporting the resolutions put forward by the Afro-Asians.

Although the Western *bloc* showed a notable softness towards the Belgians, they did not equivocate on the main issues in the Congo. While they did what they could to dissuade the Afro-Asians from presenting too sharply-worded resolutions to the Security Council, they also used their influence on the Belgians to dissuade them from pursuing some of their more extreme policies. For example, the Western nations firmly refused to play Belgium's game when she sought recognition for Katanga's independent status; only France equivocated. They succeeded in persuading Belgium herself not to grant such recognition to Katanga. Even when Belgium threatened to withdraw from NATO, the West stood firm.

There is no other recent example when the West played so passive a role in international affairs as it did in the Congo. It was not that the Western States had no interests. Politically, Portugal and the Central African Federation (hence, by implication, Britain) might easily have found themselves in an awkward position, had events turned out differently. Economically, Britain and the United States shared large interests with the Belgians.

The classic analysis of imperialism would lead one to conclude that the 'colonialists' would have banded together to safeguard their interests. The Soviet *bloc* operated on this theory; but their theoretical approach led them into serious difficulties because it failed to recognize the new relationships that have been developing

between the former colonial powers and the newly-independent states as a result of decolonization.

The Belgians imperilled their future economic relations with the Congo, but there was no such threat to the other Western Powers. Indeed some of them, notably the United States, stood to gain considerably from the Congo's independence. Patrice Lumumba, when he was Prime Minister, negotiated an agreement for the joint development of the Congo's resources by the Congo Government and the Congo International Management Corporation, headed by the American financier, L. Edgar Detwiler, who was supported by important Wall Street interests, and who claimed also to have the support of the State Department. This £700-million deal was held up only because Lumumba's Cabinet refused to approve the contract signed by their Prime Minister. Right up to the time he was deposed, Lumumba continued to urge this deal on his Cabinet. Powerful American financial circles, therefore, had every reason to desire a strengthening of Lumumba's position, and the restoration of his Government's authority over Katanga.

Not all financial interests in America or Britain were equally content however. Those who had close Belgian ties were alarmed at the prospect of their losses if the Belgians should finally lose all influence in the Congo; they were also afraid that new financiers, like Detwiler, would be involved in 'take-over' bids with the Congo Government. But although several powerful financial interests, especially American, colluded with the Belgians, they were unable to influence American and Western policies, which never once came into conflict with the policies of the non-committed nations.

The British attitude to the policy followed by the majority of the African States was summed up by Mr Sandys, the Minister for Commonwealth Relations, in September: 'The world owes President Nkrumah a considerable debt for the statesmanlike way he has approached the crisis in the Congo.'

#### BELGIUM'S ROLE

If the Congo became a happy hunting-ground for the Soviet *bloc*, at least for a time, the responsibility is Belgium's. Her attempts to recover from her mistakes led to a succession of crises which

produced chaos and finally opened the way for the increasingly isolated and frustrated Congo Prime Minister to turn to the Russians. In this way, the Belgians, who had the most to fear from Russian influence in the Congo, contributed most to its growth.

Belgium's role in the Congo, after the UN decision to intervene, greatly harmed her true interests, and those of her allies. It is possible to make excuses for her decision to commit her troops in the first place; but the subsequent behaviour of the Belgians is less easy to excuse. They misled Hammarskjöld into believing that all their troops had been withdrawn from Katanga, when, in fact, they knew this was not so. Hammarskjöld criticized them severely for their deception. Not only did they staff Tshombe's Government, but they allowed 'volunteers' from the Belgian Army to stiffen his army, thus maintaining the reality of the Belgian presence in the Congo. When they were finally compelled to withdraw from their bases in Katanga (having unsuccessfully tried to argue that these were not covered by the Security Council resolution), they transferred large quantities of arms and supplies to the Katanga Army. This was done at a time when the UN was insisting that no military supplies should be sent directly to the Central Government.

The Belgians deliberately built up Katanga's military strength. The extent of Belgian aid, disclosed by authoritative sources to Eric Kennedy of the London *Daily Mail*\* showed that, between 11 July (the day on which Tshombe set up his state) and 8 September, more than 100 tons of arms and ammunition were flown from Brussels to Katanga, including mortars, sub-machine guns, and FN-38 automatic rifles. (This was in addition to the supplies transferred from their Congo bases.) Twenty-five Belgian Air Force planes were repainted with Katanga's colours. Eighty-nine Belgian officers and NCOs, serving with the Force Publique, were seconded to Tshombe's Army, in addition to 326 Belgian NCOs and technicians who are serving as 'volunteers'. At the beginning of September a further seventy Belgian officers, NCOs, and members of the *gendarmerie* were despatched from Brussels. The UN finally put an end to these reinforcements by closing Elizabethville airport on 8 September.

The Belgian-officered force of Katanga volunteers came into

\* *Daily Mail*, 9 September 1960.

armed conflict with UN troops in the third week of September when they set out to capture Luluabourg, the capital of Kasai. General Indarjit Rikhye, the Indian military adviser to Hammar-skjöld, reported severe casualties before the invaders were persuaded to withdraw. He disclosed that they were supplied by jet helicopters and planes from Katanga; the troops were armed with modern weapons. Belgian policy in the Congo therefore continues to represent a threat to the country's integrity.

Criticism of Belgian policy is not confined to outside critics; at home the Government has been hard pressed by influential Belgians. The nature and tone of these criticisms are shown by the speech of M. Victor Larock, deputy, former Foreign Minister, and member of the Belgian Socialist Party Executive, when he moved a motion of no confidence in the Government.\*

It is largely the fault of the Belgian Government that Belgium is held in discredit by virtually the whole of the world. . . . The prestige of Belgium in the world has fallen – it could not be lower. . . . The Congo was lost to Belgium not on 30 June, but in the succeeding period, when Belgians had become undesirables in the Congo and Belgium suspect in the United Nations. At the time of the first resolution of the Security Council the Government had two choices – unreserved compliance with the resolution, or following the ‘ultras’ whose only concern is their investments and who look only to the force of arms to save them. The Government tried to combine the two attitudes. It gave an affirmative reply to the UN, but it failed to repudiate the policy of force, trying to satisfy the champions of force, by devious interpretations of texts, ambiguous statements, and unjustified delays. From the onset of the mutinies the Government shilly-shallied and committed unpardonable blunders.

M. Larock added:

The ‘ultras’ had one obsession – to save their financial stake in the country. We Socialists are not indifferent to the fact that the greater part of the Congo is not viable without Katanga, nor to the fact that the Mining Combine contributes three milliards of francs annually to the Belgian Exchequer. What revolts Socialists is the hypocrisy of concealing – with humanitarian, civic, or moral pretexts – interests which are not named, but which all Belgium and all the world can point a finger to. . . . The big idea of the ‘ultras’ was to reform the

\* Belgian Chamber of Deputies, 17 August 1960.

Congo, beginning with the Katanga, but first to provoke its break-up. . . . The Government should have acted firmly. . . . To encourage secession and then, as a result, to favour a split-up of the Congo was no way to save what could and should have been saved in Katanga, in the interests of the Belgians and the Congolese alike. Once it had been reconstituted, the Congo would have become the prey of foreign capitalism, looking for the best titbits. . . . The lack of loyalty to the UN has done harm to our cause. I accuse the Government of having acted in such a way as to make it appear that Belgium was indifferent to her duty to the UN, and was much too grief-stricken by its financial losses. . . . Nobody knows where the Congo is heading. If it is to anarchy and disintegration, the policy of the Government will have contributed . . . the responsibility for the present disaster lies at the feet of the present Government. Never has our country been so isolated under the burden of the mistakes committed in her name.

#### SOVIET INTERVENTION

The Congo gave the Soviet *bloc* their first real taste of African politics. They made just about every mistake in the book, and when they were finally forced out, their emissaries were happy to leave; personal accounts of their experiences were bitter. One prominent Polish emissary said: 'We might as well have been Belgians.'

The Soviet *bloc* found itself at an initial disadvantage, with few friends or allies through whom to work. At the UN they were faced with a solid *bloc* of African and Asian States unwilling to yield to either of the power *blocs*. In the Congo they found two Ministers, Anicet Kashamuru, the Minister of Information, and Antoine Gizenga, the vice-Premier, willing to offer them an outlet for some of their propaganda; but though both are described as Marxists, neither is a Muscovite. At first Lumumba was coldly hostile to them. It should be recalled that his first appeal for aid went to Washington; his second to the UN; his third to the Bandung Powers; his fourth to the African States. It was only in a final state of despair that he decided to use Russian aid.

Lumumba's decision to ask for Russian aid, and Russia's decision to supply it, cannot be questioned on legal grounds; their rights are clearly established. The only point at issue is whether Russian actions conflicted with the Security Council's

decisions. In a Note on 5 September, Hammarskjöld alleged they did. The Russians rejected this charge on the grounds that the first resolution of 14 July did not restrict, and could not restrict, the right of the government of a sovereign state to request assistance from the governments of other countries; nor did it give UN officials the right to control any assistance given. The Russians' position on this point is unquestionably right. But the Security Council's second decision urged all states to refrain from actions which might hamper the restoration of law and order, and the exercise of its authority by the Congo government; and also to refrain from action that might undermine the Republic's territorial integrity and political independence. The Russians claimed they were assisting the Congo government to fulfil these purposes. The supply of civil aircraft and motor vehicles 'far from running counter to the resolutions of the Security Council, is completely in accordance with them'.

The Russian claim that their aid assisted the Central Government to carry out its policies is, of course, true. Their aid was used to put down the revolt of the 'Diamond State'. Without the help of Russian transport, Lumumba could not have undertaken that mission, since all planes and other suitable transport in the country were in the hands of the UN, whose Command would not allow them to be used against the rebel government. Whether UN policy was right on this question will be considered separately. What is relevant here is to recognize that the Russians chose to operate outside the framework of the UN, thereby diminishing its authority and control. The Russians did not seek the approval of the African States for their action. On the contrary, when the matter came before the Security Council the African group insisted that all aid to the Congo should be channelled through the UN.

Although the Russians can fairly claim to have acted in response to a legal government, which had the right to summon its aid, their action was clearly intended to flout the UN authority; this was consistent with their view that UN policy in the Congo was insupportable. They were critical of the UN Command, and thought its policies served the 'colonialists', while discriminating against the Russians. They relied on one element to justify their allegations of bias. The UN had relied mainly on British and

American planes, with civilian crews, to fly troops to the Congo. The Russians were not asked to make their planes available. When they did use them to fly Ghana troops to the Congo, Hammarskjöld protested on the grounds that all troop-carrying had to be routed through UN controls. This principle is obviously of vital importance. But would the UN position not have been less assailable had he also invited the Russians to supply planes with civilian crews?

Russia's long, losing battles in the Security Council have already been described. The basis of her policy, and her criticisms of UN policy, still need to be considered. The Soviet case rested on the premise that UN intervention amounted to 'a coalition of colonialists which aims to suppress the young African state by the hands of African soldiers from Tunisia, Morocco, Ethiopia, and Ghana'.\* The Russian attempt to isolate these four is the closest they came to suggesting the African States were the stooges of the colonialists. The detailed charges pressed against the UN by the Russians are contained in the following summary of a speech delivered by Valerian Zorin to the emergency session of the UN General Assembly on 17 September.

Having put itself at the head of a conspiracy against the young African State, the United States had waited for its subversive activities to bring down a government for which it felt a fierce hatred, as did the other colonial powers. That hatred arose from the fact that the Lumumba Government had been so bold as to adopt a policy of consolidating its country's independence and of getting rid, not only of the Belgian colonialists, but also of all other colonialists. The Lumumba Government's patriotic policy endangered the position of the colonialist powers in the Congo, including those of the United States – powers which are vitally interested in retaining control over the extremely rich resources of the Congo. The tragic developments were a direct outgrowth of the criminal activities of a coalition led by the United States. That coalition had succeeded in using the United Nations Command and Secretary-General Hammarskjöld in person for its own ends. The sad upshot of the operations of the UN Command and the Secretary-General is that the territorial integrity of the Republic of the Congo, far from being restored, is being exposed to an

\* Statement by the Soviet Government, 9 September 1960.

even greater threat today than it was two months ago. . . . The final effect of their action in the Congo – action which should have been aimed at providing assistance to the legal government of that country – was the removal of that government, and what looks like the physical extermination of its leaders. The Secretary-General became a party to a farce which took the form of an open crime. For the rest, the charge seeks to establish a direct link between Belgium and its NATO allies in Katanga and in the rest of the country.

Leaving aside the overtones of cold war politics, what truth is there in the Soviet allegations? Was the United States the prime mover in the ‘coalition of colonialists’ against whom Lumumba sought to act? Lumumba never criticized American policy in the Congo, either directly or indirectly. Far from showing any desire to remove the control of Congo resources from the U.S., Lumumba’s ‘patriotic policy’ was to try to force through his deal with the American financier Detwiler against the overwhelming opposition from his Cabinet.

Was Hammarskjöld the agent of the ‘colonialist coalition’? Some of his mistakes have already been mentioned; others will be considered in the final chapter. Hammarskjöld’s policies were considered by the Security Council on four separate occasions; each time they upheld him. Only once did the Russians seek to oppose a Security Council decision. This led to a direct appeal to the UN General Assembly. His policies were endorsed by seventy votes to nil.

What logical deductions can be made from these decisions? All the resolutions passed by both the Assembly and the Council were formulated by the African group and endorsed by the Asian group. Are they therefore the agents of the colonialists? Although the Soviet *bloc* has never said as much (except for the incautious reference to Ghana, Tunisia, Morocco, and Ethiopia referred to earlier), this really is their view of the governments of the present African and Asian states (excluding possibly only Guinea and the U.A.R.). Their difficulty is that it is politically inconvenient for them to say so too openly, especially when the Africans act in unison.

Is the Security Council the agent of the colonialists? The Council’s decision, challenged by the Russians, was upheld by



the whole of the UN Assembly, with the Soviet *bloc* dissenting. Neither the U.A.R. nor Guinea; neither Yugoslavia nor Indonesia; neither India nor Iraq, upheld the Russian objections. The only logical conclusion, therefore, is that the entire UN (barring only the Soviet *bloc*) is in the camp of the colonialists.

We are left with one final allegation: that the UN was responsible for overthrowing the Lumumba Government. The evidence for this has already been discussed in the last chapter. The African States believe that mistakes were made by the UN, but they have never suggested that the UN had sought to overthrow the Lumumba Government. Dr Nkrumah's\* summing up was 'that it would be entirely wrong to blame either the Security Council or any senior officials of the UN for what had taken place . . . these difficulties are in essence the growing pains of the UN.' Presented with a choice of verdicts on this question – that of the Soviet *bloc*, and that of the African group – it is not difficult to come to a decision. However, it is one thing to say that the UN did not deliberately seek to overthrow the Lumumba Government, and quite another to suggest that the combination of its policies and its mistakes did not help to produce this result.

\* Address to the UN General Assembly, 23 September 1960.

## Chapter 16

### SUMMING-UP

*'The UN Force in the Congo is the most advanced and the most sophisticated experiment in international cooperation ever attempted . . . among all that is so sad and so mean and so sour in world politics it is heartening to think that something so good and so pure in its purpose is possible.'*

WALTER LIPPMANN

THE fortunes of the UN in the Congo depended on several factors. The most important was the internal political struggle. The most helpful was the role of the African States. The least helpful were Belgian and Soviet policies. The balancing factor was the character and capacity of the UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, and the quality of his staff. None of these factors operated individually; yet each, except for the Soviet factor, was capable of destroying the international effort. Bearing these in mind, two conditions were necessary for success – to secure and maintain UN agreement; and to mobilize an international army and administration capable of running the country in harmony with the wishes of its political leaders. At the time of writing, the UN intervention in the Congo is still in the balance; all that can be done here is to examine the success and the failure of its role up to the end of October 1960.

#### UN BALANCE SHEET

UN intervention in the Congo was intended to achieve five aims. The first was to expel the Belgian troops. This aim was achieved; but it stopped short of expelling Belgians seconded to the Katanga Army. This failure left open a backdoor through which hundreds of Belgian reinforcements returned as 'volunteers' before the UN finally shut down Katanga's airports.

The second aim was to provide the Central Government with

military assistance until their own national security forces could fully meet their tasks. Such assistance was provided. More than 19,000 troops from fourteen countries (ten of them African) were brought in. They dealt with civil disturbances, maintenance of essential services, protection of refugees and minorities; they used their good offices in situations ranging from tribal war to arbitrary arrest of individuals; they maintained a pacification line between Katanga and the rest of the Congo; and they made a start with forming and training a national army. But from the first there was no agreement between the UN Command and the army commanders on the role of the troops in relation to the Force Publique. General Alexander, acting under the authority of the Ghana Government, wanted to disarm the entire Force temporarily as a prelude to establishing discipline and reforming it into a national army. This was not the view of the UN Command. It saw its task as a 'peace force' which should not even temporarily replace the Force Publique. Its role was to separate contesting foes. The theory is that 'keeping the peace' creates the chance of peaceful negotiations. Few will quarrel with this theory. But if the UN Force was to be restricted to a purely 'non-intervention' role, how was the UN's third aim – restoring the unity of the Congo – to be met? The weakness of UN policy was not that it ruled out a forcible solution but that in a situation that demanded a settlement it provided no alternatives.

The fourth aim was to provide technical assistance to enable the Government to function. It made gigantic efforts to meet this obligation. Had it not been for the collapse of all effective authority, which largely confined the UN to providing emergency services, its contribution in this field might have been – perhaps it might still become – its greatest achievement.

The fifth aim – to keep the cold war out of Africa – was also not achieved. The Russians were used by Lumumba; and the Soviet *bloc* turned the Congo into a major cold war incident by indicting the Secretary-General for his 'lack of impartiality'. This became the Russian pretext for demanding the reorganization of the UN Secretariat to reflect the division of the world into three *blocs*: Western, communist, and non-committed.

## CRUCIAL ERRORS

The analysis thus far leaves out of account the 'hot blood' of Congolese realities. To cast all the blame for what went wrong on the UN is demonstrably false; equally, to ignore its mistakes is to falsify the facts.

In retrospect it is much easier to see where the UN went wrong. It made three crucial errors all of which stem from the doctrine of 'non-intervention'. It made no effort to restore the unity of the Congo. It acted with equal impartiality towards the legal and the rebel governments. And it failed to deal effectively with the Force Publique.

The Central Government originally sought UN intervention on specific issues affecting its internal affairs: to train a national army; to set up a civil service; to maintain security; to uphold the country's integrity. The UN accepted all these obligations; nevertheless it insisted on being guided by its own policies as to how they should be fulfilled. This was both natural and proper. But in fulfilling these obligations it sometimes allowed itself to intervene in matters of clearly domestic concern – for example its decision to close down the Leopoldville radio station and to keep control over the airports at all times – while at other times it took refuge behind 'non-intervention'.

The guiding principle of 'non-intervention' established by the Charter of the UN, was re-affirmed by the Security Council in its resolution of 9 August 1960, which specified that the UN Force in the Congo 'would not be a party to, or in any way intervene in, or be used to influence the outcome of, any internal conflict, constitutional or otherwise'. This was also the view of the African States.

That 'non-intervention' was never possible is admitted even by the UN Organization for the Congo\*: 'It is manifest that the decision of the Security Council, in acceding to a governmental request for military assistance to the national security forces in the restoration of law and order, has itself automatically juxtaposed the international and domestic spheres of action.' The Organization also admits that 'it was already a difficult and

\* Progress Report, 20 September 1960.

delicate task . . . in the period from the date of its first entry up to the end of August 1960, to exercise its responsibility for maintaining peace and security without impinging on any internal function of government. By mid-September, however, the constitutional crises had resulted in the breakdown of the formal structure of government into partially overlapping but largely competitive power groups. . . . In such circumstances actions undertaken by the UN tended to become a bone of contention with one internal group or another.'

The fallacy of the doctrine of 'non-intervention' in the Congo derives from the mistaken concept that the situation was analogous to previous interventions by the UN Force where, as a peace force, it could stop two antagonists getting at each other's throats. But this was not possible in the Congo, where the situation demanded active intervention on the side of the Government.

#### THE FIRST MISTAKE

UN policy on Katanga\* rested on two principles. The first was that the UN Force could not be used to subdue Tshombe's Government by force. The other was that the UN had no right to refuse the Central Government to intervene in Katanga.

This policy left the initiative for restoring the country's integrity entirely to Lumumba. In the circumstances he could deal with this situation in one of two ways: either to appeal for help outside the UN, or to negotiate a settlement with Tshombe (and later with Kalonji in the 'Diamond State') on the only basis they were willing to consider – the concession of a federal solution. The Government refused to negotiate on these terms. Criticisms of its actions must be political judgements, not legal verdicts.

The African States did their best to persuade Lumumba to act differently, but the Prime Minister chose to ignore negotiations, to use Russian aid, and to attack the 'Diamond State' as the first step towards re-establishing the Congo's integrity. The consequences of this action were disastrous for him. It destroyed national unity, and it wrecked his Government. The result was that the Government which the UN had agreed to support disintegrated, with appalling repercussions. It is ridiculous to blame

\* See page 136.

the UN for Lumumba's mistakes. But his mistakes came from his attempt to restore the integrity of the Congo. It was the wrong way, but he was within his rights to act as he did.

There were only two ways of preventing his actions: either the UN could have taken the initiative in restoring the Congo's unity or it could have insisted on peaceful negotiation. The first alternative was ruled out by its own policies. To have insisted on the second would have been gross interference in an internal question, since the issue of federalism or unitarianism was the nub of Congo political divisions.

The total effect of UN policy in Katanga was to freeze the position in Tshombe's favour. It failed to take sufficiently into account the dangers the Katanga threat held for the rest of the Congo. Katanga's continued existence as an independent state, resting on Belgian arms and support, was as lively a threat to the integrity and security of the rest of the Congo as if it had been, in fact, engaged in open hostilities with the Central Government. Here was a colonial base in which the Belgians were openly working for the dismemberment of the Congo, and for the downfall of the Lumumba Government.

The longer Katanga survived as an independent state, the stronger its encouragement to others to follow its example. The 'Diamond State' of Kasai tried to follow its example. It received active support from Katanga when it proclaimed its independence. When this happened there were signs that other regions might follow the examples of Katanga and the 'Diamond State'. What was the Central Government to do when the rot began to spread from the Belgian-supported Katanga to the rest of the country? Its ability to assert its weak authority was even further weakened; confidence was sapped; and the political leaders were prevented from concentrating their efforts on governing the country. The divisions inside the coalition widened, with the federalists encouraged to press their demands against the unitarians. Simply to ignore these problems and to pretend that Lumumba was just an irresponsible madman hardly squares with the facts as they must have appeared to him.

The case for not acting against Katanga should also be considered. In the early stages of the crisis Katanga was the only oasis of relative tranquillity in a sea of chaos. It would have been

no easy task to persuade the UN to extend the area of conflict. But any realistic assessment of the situation in Katanga would have shown that its tranquillity was illusory; it could not possibly survive for long. Sooner or later, unless there was a peaceful solution, which became increasingly remote, it would have been overwhelmed by the Congo's legal Government. Meanwhile, it was contributing actively towards creating instability in the Congo. The Belgian presence strengthened the rebel Government, and induced rebellion against Lumumba's. For example, it was Belgian 'volunteers', arms, and supplies which made possible the Baluba march on Luluabourg, the capital of Kasai.\*

While forcibly putting the position of the Congolese, it must be remembered that the UN has its own difficulties. It is not free to act as it wishes. It is circumscribed by its own conventions and conditioned by the nature of its membership. This much is conceded; but only to emphasize the need for a revision of UN concepts. In the Congo, the Secretary-General could have avoided many of his personal difficulties if, from the beginning, he had established a Regional Advisory Council of African States to work with the UN Organization. His later attempt to set up an Advisory Council shows that he had recognized the value of this concept. But his action suffered from two defects. It came too late, and it included two European States, on the grounds that they were contributing to the UN Force; this weakened its value as an impartial sanctioning authority.

#### THE SECOND MISTAKE

UN policy suffered from one other, almost fatal defect. It made no apparent distinction between legality and illegality in the Congo. Dr Nkrumah's analysis† of where the UN went wrong deserves attention. 'Certain propositions seem to me to be self-evident,' he said. 'The first of these is that the UN need not to go to the assistance of any country which invites its intervention. But once it has done so, it owes an obligation to the Government and people of that country not to interfere in such a way as to prevent the legitimate Government which invited it to enter the country

\* See page 160.

† Address to the UN General Assembly, 23 September.

from fulfilling its mandate. In other words, it is impossible for the UN at one and the same time to preserve law and order and to be neutral between the legal authorities and the law-breakers. It is, unfortunately, exactly this which the UN has attempted to do in the case of the Congo, and which is the cause of all the present difficulties and disagreements. My second proposition is that in any sovereign state there can only be one national army. If a soldier disobeys his superior officer and uses his arms to murder and loot, he is a mutineer. There is, however, no difference between his position and that of a colonel who disregards the authority which appointed him and uses the troops under his own command for his own purposes. The UN, in enforcing law and order, must deal equally sternly with either of these two types of mutineer. This failure by the UN to distinguish between legal and illegal authorities led to the most ludicrous results. . . .'

#### THE THIRD MISTAKE

The failure to discipline and reorganize the Force Publique, and to bring the new army under the temporary supervision of the UN Command, was crucial. The Security Council resolution called for the creation of a national army. Such an army could only have been created if the Katanga Army had been brought under the control of the UN and peacefully integrated into the new force. The UN made not the slightest effort to give effect to this part of its resolution; the result was that Tshombe's army remained intact and could be strengthened almost at will by the Belgians, until the UN finally closed the airports.

Had the Force Publique been temporarily disarmed and then reorganized, it would not have been possible for Lumumba to have launched his campaign on the 'Diamond State' of Kasai. Nor would it have been possible, later, for Colonel Mobutu to have overthrown all forms of parliamentary government. To have escaped only these last two developments would have added considerably to the security and stability of the Congo.

Although there was a time - after Lumumba mistakenly thought he had gained control over the Force Publique - when it would have been difficult to have acted along these lines, two opportunities were missed. The first was when the Ghana troops,



under General Alexander, began to operate along this policy and were opposed by the UN Commander. The second opportunity came after the collapse of the Central Government when the Force was used against parliament. But the UN doctrine of 'the peace force' ruled out any policy of this kind. The question that must be considered in case of future 'Congos' is whether this approach is compatible with the UN's undertaking obligations such as it did in the Congo.

#### OTHER WEAKNESSES

The UN was obviously unprepared to deal with the swift and gathering responsibilities thrust on it by the Congo. In its rush to develop a scratch administration it failed to field a balanced team of experts representing all the major elements in its membership. This failure, however understandable, must cause misunderstanding, especially when two-thirds of the staff recruited for the Congo administration, was drawn from Western countries. In assessing what weight to give to the Russian's criticisms on this point it is necessary to remember their refusal to contribute to the UN technical personnel; a policy they have deliberately fostered. Soviet bloc countries asked by Hammarskjöld to provide technical personnel for the Congo refused his requests.

The UN Organization in the Congo was also sadly lacking in experts with experience in African politics; there is a world of difference between an African expert and an expert in problems of African Government. The result was that the Organization misjudged the political forces in the country and, at times, appears to have been guided by wishful thinking rather than by accurate diagnosis. It was always possible for Hammarskjöld to have asked for a dozen senior African civil servants to be seconded to his staff. As far as I know he had only two such persons in senior posts.

#### CONCLUSION

At the time of writing, the UN has failed to maintain the two conditions established earlier for the success of its operation. It failed to maintain agreement within the UN, and it failed to

establish administrative and armed forces capable of working in harmony with the wishes of the political leaders. These failures do not stem only from the mistakes of the UN. Cold war politicians could always find a way round the most impartial of policies; but their tactics in the Congo thrived on the UN's mistakes and difficulties. Nor is it possible to establish harmony with political leaders unless they are broadly united in their wishes. This condition existed at the beginning at the UN operation, but it was unfortunately lost later.

To criticize the UN is an act of faith. Unless disaster follows disaster in the ill-starred Congo, there is still reason to believe that, before the last chapter is written in the Congo story, the UN will have overcome its initial difficulties; the Belgians will have come to understand how short-sightedly they have behaved; and the Congolese will have found their true destiny in Africa, endowed as they are with a rich cultural heritage and with great potential wealth.

