

THE NEW CLASS AND REBELLION IN THE CONGO

Jules Gérard-Libois

"WE will show the world what the black man can do when he works in freedom and we shall make the Congo an example to the whole of Africa." **Patrice Lumumba** said this the very day on which the Congo, without any period of transition, formally acceded to full independence. Today, such words have a peculiarly bitter ring, particularly for those who, in 1959–60, believed in the possibility of building peacefully, at the heart of black Africa, a powerful African State of 14 million people, united and economically strong, with nearly half a million industrial workers and an urban population of more than 3 million.

Had this been possible in 1960, the whole destiny of Africa would have been deeply affected by it, particularly the ex-French African colonies, the then Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, and also the Portuguese-ruled territories of Angola and Mozambique; and the impact on the relations between ex-colonizers and ex-colonized would have been equally great. Instead, the image which has come to be associated with the very name of the Congo suggests the distance between Lumumba's vision and actual reality.

Yet, the story of the Congo, precisely because of its tragedies, its murderous confrontations, its tribal and other struggles, does have a significance which transcends its own borders: unfortunately for the Congo itself, the brutal and naked character of its struggles illuminates particularly well some main elements of socio-political reality in Africa, both in regard to internal tensions and external pressures.

The Meaning of Independence

In the course of eight days in July 1960, the Congo—with the exception of secessionist Katanga—experienced the most complete and the most spectacular **Africanization** of cadres it is possible to conceive.

The Belgian-Congolese Round Table Agreements had provided for the re-engagement in the service of the Congolese Republic, on the morrow of independence, of all Belgian agents in the Congo, whether employed in the administration proper, or in technical services such as transport, or in the police force (the Force Publique), whose officers were all white.

These agreements had been concluded with the representatives of a future Congolese political class, whose members had ensured their own

careers in governmental and parliamentary institutions, national and provincial, and who could thus afford (and needed) to show concern for administrative efficiency and the maintenance of order. Their main rivals were the lower Congolese officials, who had always been prevented from rising in the administrative hierarchy, despite their campaigns for a "common status" with white officials.¹

This rivalry might well have led very soon to conflict among those Congolese most concerned with the Africanization of cadres: on the one hand, the political element—ministers, national deputies and senators, ministers, and parliamentarians of the six provinces—which would have constituted a small and super-privileged group, with unlimited opportunities for personal agrandisement, and ruling through European agents and a Congolese political clientele; on the other hand, the Congolese "évolués", unable to gain promotion.²

A conflict of this kind did in fact break out in the first days of independence, at the beginning of July 1960, with the mutiny of the Force Publique against its white officers. This threatened to sweep away the politicians (and notably Lumumba) who were accused of betrayal for having allowed the continuation of white colonial administration. There followed Belgian military intervention, the secession of Katanga, proclaimed with the moral and material help of European settlers and entrepreneurs, and there was also a panic flight of Europeans from the Congo during the mutiny. It was only then that the Congolese politicians were driven to undertake an immediate and total Africanization of all functions hitherto assumed by whites, including the command of the Army and the staffing of the highest posts in the Civil Service.

This was how there occurred, both in Léopoldville and in most provincial centres, a fusion of interests between different elements which came to constitute a new ruling class in the Congo. Because of the emergency, the politicians were compelled to give up their monopoly of quick profit and promotion, and to recruit for administrative tasks men who had been lower officials in the Belgian administration of the Congo; occasionally, they also recruited newcomers drawn from the militant elements of the nationalist parties, but these were carefully kept away from work of internal security or information. There did not occur in the Congo a replacement of competent reactionaries by incompetent revolutionaries, but rather the very rapid filling of prestigious and profitable posts by a new *élite*, drawn either from the pre-independence political groupings, or from the petty officialdom created by the Belgians for their own colonial purposes.

Sartre once described even the most nationalist of the Congolese parties, the *Mouvement National Congolais* of Lumumba as **the** political expression of "the Congolese *petit-bourgeoisie* in the process of discovering its class ideology".³ This may not be perfectly accurate, but neither is it possible to describe the Congolese political personnel

as made up of revolutionaries, determined to bring about the social and political transformation announced and promised to the masses before independence. It is obvious that many Congolese politicians, as many politicians anywhere else, saw in political life the most direct and profitable, and the least risky, path of their own advancement. On the evidence, one cannot take too seriously the promises made to the masses that independence would mean that the wealth of the Congo would become their wealth and that a new era of freedom would follow colonial domination.

The external observer has often been led to exaggerate the bond between the political leaders and the masses; to accept as a sign of nationalist purity the attempts made by power-seekers to capture a rising rural radicalism; and to underestimate the degree to which nationalist political ideology often merely reflects the aspirations of urban "évolués", kept down by colonial paternalism, and driven to seek a way out through politics.

On the other hand, it would be equally mistaken to think that the politicians themselves were united before independence by a common "class" ideology. Within the parties themselves, there was a strong tendency to fragmentation, and to fierce competition between various leaders. In many cases, the candidates of a party merely gave their allegiance to the leader who seemed most likely to come out on top, with no serious ideological commitment or any particular sense of lasting loyalty. Patrice Lumumba found this out when he presented his Government to Parliament. He should have been able to count on at least 120 votes in an Assembly of 137 members, but he only obtained 74 because his nominal supporters divided themselves into antagonistic sub-groups. This phenomenon of fragmentation affected as much the "nationalist" parties as the "moderate" ones; and as soon as Lumumba was seen to be in difficulties, defections in his coalition grew. Under the régimes of Adoula and Tshombe, wings and factions came to be even more fragmented. From the beginning, the defence of the interests of this new class of politicians and administrators was marked by incoherence and internal conflict. Groups attempted to destroy each other by force; armed centres of rival power were created; tribal wars were fomented; issues, such as centralism versus federalism, were taken up and dropped for immediate party purposes.

However, the situation changed and a degree of cohesion was achieved by the ruling groups, after their victory over Gizenga in Stanleyville and over the secession movements in South Kasai and Katanga. With ample external aid, a stable group of people emerged, representing the Army (Mobutu), the chiefs of internal security (Nendaka and Kandolo), the Minister of Finance (Ndele) and the Foreign Minister (Bomboko), working together with the President and the Prime Minister.

Moreover, this ruling group showed a notable skill in absorbing new elements. While quite ruthless towards potential political opponents, particularly in the provinces, it agreed to widen its own base and thus managed to subdue regional or tribal antagonisms. Thus the number of provinces was increased from six to twenty-one, with an extra federal district of Léopoldville. Each of these provinces had a government of seven members, with its own administrative and political clientele and an assembly of around seven hundred members. This process of balkanization was of no benefit whatever to the populations themselves and merely entailed a tremendous increase in the cost of administration, without any improvement in services. For their part, foreign interests and enterprises encouraged this political and administrative inflation and the strengthening of the new class.

At the same time, there grew around the new leaders in Léopoldville and in other urban centres a new commercial bourgeoisie, born of speculation, inflation, administrative corruption and trafficking in licences of commodities. Nor did this, at least until 1963, appear to arouse much hostility among Congolese wage-earners: comparing their lot with that of the growing number of unemployed, they considered themselves relatively privileged. The subsequent wage freeze and the military repression of strikes in Katanga broke the sense of solidarity between the Congolese wage-earners and the ruling groups, but this had no immediate political consequences; and the position of the ruling group was further reinforced by the settlement of the financial disputes with Belgium, which, among other things, enabled their representatives to sit on the boards of the major firms in the Congo, such as Union Minière du Haut-Katanga.

At present, the privileged class in the Congo is constituted as follows:

- (a) at the political level proper, some 1,500 posts considered important and profitable;
- (b) at the administrative level, some 11,000 high ranking posts and nearly 100,000 middle ones;
- (c) in the Army, 23,000 men, of whom less than 11,000 are privates or corporals;
- (d) outside the state service proper, some hundreds of high ranking posts in private companies, resulting from "Africanization".

Around this class, there are "satellite" elements which depend upon it; some 110,000 lower administrative officials; between 10,000 and 15,000 policemen; some thousands of traders, speculators, party officials, and retainers whose livelihood is directly dependent upon the rich; and to all these may also be added the supervisory staff and specialized workers of private industry as well as teachers.

In all, the privileged class proper may be said to number between

100,000 and 120,000 people, while the second group includes between 200,000 to 300,000 people. Foreign military personnel and mercenaries number about 1,600 white men.

In the State budget, the privileged class has appropriated the lion's share. The Army alone has absorbed 7.1 billion Congolese francs in the first nine months of 1965; its total estimated expenditure amounts to 10.2 billion C.F. Total revenue is estimated at 40 billion C.F. but actual receipts are not likely to exceed 23 billion. In 56 months, the expenditure for the Army has amounted to 25 billion C.F., out of a total expenditure of 150 billion C.F. In the budget for 1965, expenditure for social services and development represents less than 10 per cent. In a country whose population under 15 years of age constitutes nearly half the total population, expenditure for youth and sports is one fourth that for prisons, one half that of the Prime Minister's office and one third the expenditure for the Chamber and the Senate in Ltopoldville.

Without inflation and foreign aid, the ruling group could not have kept going; even without taking into account the cost of the United Nations' intervention, foreign aid to the Congo has amounted to some \$700 million or, at the official rate of exchange more than 100 billion C.F. Eighty per cent of this aid has been provided in roughly equal shares by the United States and Belgium under a variety of forms—direct financial aid, assistance in personnel, supplies, military aid, food deliveries, etc.

Despite spectacular fluctuations and sudden changes in the régime, the ruling *élite* in Ltopoldville is fairly secure. In the provinces, conflict and fragmentation have been less well subdued, but this relative turbulence has not brought to power men capable of offering a challenge to the rulers of Léopoldville, or showing any sign of wanting to do so. .

Since the end of the secession of Katanga, which caused intolerable tension between the powerholders in Léopoldville and those in Elizabethville, the new class has only faced one major challenge, namely the rebellion in Kwilu and the Eastern Congo during the second half of 1964. In order to meet this challenge, it subdued its own internal conflicts and changed its Prime Minister, resorted to the help of South African, Rhodesian, Belgian and German mercenaries, and relied upon Belgian high-ranking officers to organize and coordinate military aid. After the reconquest of Stanleyville and the ruthless repression meted out in the rebel zones, the ruling group long seemed to hesitate as to the policy it should pursue—whether to seek a new understanding with the other African states, or to continue repressive policies in the Congo with the help of Mike Hoare's mercenaries. The dilemma was resolved by the Army, whose leaders seek to gain popularity by attacks on corrupt politicians and by some measures of reform. But there is no reason to believe that the Army

will really transform the nature of the régime, its reliance on external support and its exploitation of the mass of the people.

Rebellion and the Hope of a "Second Independence"

The Congolese régime, since the coming of independence, has been of no benefit to the overwhelming majority of the Congolese people. On the contrary, the number of regularly employed wage-earners has fallen steadily in Léopoldville, notwithstanding the fact that the city has grown from 350,000 to 1,200,000 people; the purchasing power of the people has also fallen because of inflation. In the countryside, the situation has been no better, save for some regions where production and exchange were more or less maintained at their previous level. But in general, the Congolese countryside returned to a subsistence economy of acute scarcity, unemployment, police oppression and administrative corruption, the neglect of education, etc.

Given all this, the question is not why the rebellions of 1964 broke out, but why they did not break out earlier; and also why they did not assume a more general character and include large urban centres other than Stanleyville.

There are many reasons for this. For one thing, Belgian intervention in July 1960 and the secessions of Katanga and South Kasai helped to strengthen the ruling group, as did the United Nations presence from September 1960 to the end of 1963. The main beneficiaries of the law and order which the United Nations helped to maintain were of course the rulers of the Congo.

Also, mass discontent against the new class was in many regions diverted into tribal wars often initiated by traditional chiefs intent on restoring ancient kingdoms; the wars between Balubas and Lulus in Kasai are only the most extreme example of bloody tribal confrontations which have occurred in the Congo.

Nor could a serious protest movement be expected to come from Léopoldville. As already noted, a certain part of the wage-earning population considered itself and constituted a kind of labour aristocracy, linked to the new class by material and sometimes by tribal bonds. Moreover, it was in Léopoldville that were stationed the most reliable troops of the Congolese Army; and there did not in any case exist popular forces socially and politically organized to provide the basis of a genuine challenge to the ruling group.

Thus it was that the only serious uprising before 1964 was that which occurred in North Katanga in July 1960 against Tshombe's régime after the proclamation of Katanga's secession. But this movement was quite distinct from the later ones, and must be seen more as a struggle of the Balubas against the dominant secessionist groups, the Lundas of Tshombe and the Bayekes of Munongo, than as a politically and ideologically inspired rising.

In analysing the uprising of 1964, the first question to answer is whether there was one rebellion or, on the contrary, a number of local rebellions, mainly provided with an appearance of unity and co-ordination by their external spokesmen in Brazzaville, Bujumbura or Cairo, and similarly provided with a common aim and organization by the Western Press or the New China News Agency.

The Left has of course tended to see rebellion in the Congo as a form of action deliberately chosen by the best among Lumumba's followers, inspired by the Chinese, Algerian and Cuban examples, and providing the masses with organized and coherent leadership against the new class and its foreign, mainly American and Belgian, backers.

The facts are rather more complicated than this. One of them is that in Kwilu province, a small group of men led by a nationalist leader, Pierre Mulele, decided in mid-1963 to create a partisan movement to fight against what they described as the foreign imperialists and their Congolese lackeys; and to do this by means of guerrilla action for the conquest and organization of a vast revolutionary area.

P. Mulele, then thirty-four years old, had been one of the leaders of the *Parti Solidaire Africain*, which won 13 of the 14 seats in Kwilu in the elections of May 1960. As a member of the National Assembly, Mulele was one of the closest allies of Antoine Gizenga, the President of the P.S.A. and he was among those who, with Gizenga, withdrew to Stanleyville at the end of 1960. Mulele represented Gizenga in Cairo until 1962, at which time he is said to have visited China.

The area chosen by Mulele was highly favourable. There existed widespread discontent among the rural masses; independence had only brought under-employment and destitution to the villagers and to the fruitcutters of the great plantations. The provincial police and the Army had behaved abominably in Kwilu, particularly in those areas where Gizenga, by then a prisoner at the hands of the central power, was assumed to have the greatest popular support. The population, and particularly the groups to which belonged Gizenga and Mulele, the Bapende and the Bambundas, lived in destitution and also in terror of the police; but they also nursed the hope of a "second independence" which would sweep aside the new class of exploiters and their foreign supporters. This redemption was awaited in Kwilu with something akin to religious fervour, allied among the Bapendes to a collective memory of the bloody uprising of the fruit-cutters in 1931.

Alone, without any external help, Mulele and his friends began by recruiting young men in the regions of Gungu and Idiofa. They organized basic political education, mainly Mao Tse-Tung's instructions to the Chinese partisans; and they also taught some elementary techniques of guerrilla warfare, with the help of some deserters from

the Congolese Army and some policemen sent back from Léopoldville to their villages of origin for misconduct. This preparatory phase was marked by close co-operation with the majority of local chiefs, which explains why all attempts to capture the leaders failed, despite the promise of rewards, police operations, and the proclamation of a state of emergency. A second phase, aimed at the conquest of a firm territorial base, began early in 1964 with armed raids by groups of twenty to a hundred men. This caused a number of casualties among Europeans, notably among missionaries and teachers, and led to the total evacuation of the white population, with the help of the United Nations' forces.

Mulelist influence spread to neighbouring districts and provinces and the Congolese Army suffered a number of defeats. On the other hand, no important town was captured by the insurgents, and military repression in areas suspect of **Mulelist** sympathies was implacable. But this merely reinforced the solidarity of the population with the partisans.

Since April 1964, however, the **Mulelist** rebellion has lost ground and the **partisans** have retreated into forest areas where the Congolese Army has not wanted or has not dared to pursue them. The civilian populations followed the partisans and centres like Idiofa and Gungu were practically abandoned at one time. Occasionally, groups of partisans make incursions into the "pacified" zones, even towards the towns—on one occasion in 1965 towards Kikwit, the capital of Kwilu. But very little is known of their real situation. Optimists believe that Mulele's revolutionary organization has been strengthened in the *maquis* and that it bides its time, confident of ultimate success behind an austere and incorruptible leader. Others, basing themselves on accounts from refugees, believe that the civilian population is leaving in increasing numbers the areas occupied by the partisans, driven by the threat (and the reality) of sheer starvation, while the Congolese Army (not backed by mercenaries in this part of the country), tolerates the *maquis* as a waning force presenting no military threat.

At any rate, all attempts made by supporters of Mulele to break his isolation from the outside, notably from Congo-Brazzaville in July 1964 and in June 1965 have failed, not surprisingly given the smallness of numbers involved. These groups succeeded neither in establishing a base in the Congo nor in linking up with Mulele.



The **Mulelist** operations in the Congo developed without any reference to an internal or external Congolese organization. In contrast, the rebellions in Eastern Congo, which culminated in September 1964 in the proclamation of a People's Republic in Stanleyville, claimed membership of the Conseil National de Libération (C.N.L.) of which Christophe Gbenye, the leader of the *Mouvement National Congolais*

and the companion of Lumumba, had been the president in Brazzaville since October-November **1963**.

This National Council of Liberation was a coalition of the "revolutionary opposition" to the Adoula Government, which had been forced into underground activity and exile after the dissolution of Parliament and the assumption of special powers by the Government in September-October **1963**. The programme of this opposition asserted the need to achieve "the complete and effective **decolonization** of the Congo from the domination of foreign powers", but its membership was extremely heterogeneous. It included former ministers dismissed by Adoula, as in the case of Gbenye himself; men who had been defeated in political struggles in their own province; some of the most extreme followers of Antoine Gizenga; ex-officers of the Congolese Army, etc. In political terms, the only serious groups represented in the C.N.L. were those of Gbenye, Gizenga and a regional group from Luluabourg presided by A. Lubaya. Two parties which had supported Lumumba, one in Kivu and the other in Katanga, did not enter the C.N.L. It does not seem unfair to say that some members at least of this "organ of **co-ordination**" were only to be distinguished from the new class in Léopoldville by the fact that, for one reason or another, they found themselves in opposition.

A cleavage in the C.N.L. soon appeared between Gbenye's group, with its strong following in Maniema, Kivu and Stanleyville provinces and a so-called "Chinese" group, which supported insurrectionary methods but had no base in the Congo itself. This group claimed to be behind Mulele's activities, though there does not appear to be any evidence for this, and managed to remove Gbenye from the Presidency of the C.N.L., with accusations of treason, of misappropriation of funds and even of attempts to assassinate Mulele. Gbenye then decided to counter-attack in the Congo itself and started his own *maquis* in Eastern Congo. But both camps also entered into negotiations with Tshombe in Madrid and a provisional agreement was even signed on **23 February 1964** between Tshombe and two emissaries of Gbeneye, according to which both were to join in a common effort to "free the Congo by revolutionary means from the grip of neo-colonialism", to "form a revolutionary government" and to "adopt the economic system of African Socialism".⁵ This agreement remained a purely paper affair but was extremely useful to Tshombe when he returned to the Congo in June **1964**, not least because of the confusion it created.

The decisive impulse to rebellion did not in fact come from outside the Congo but from local groups, under local chiefs, and as a result of extreme administrative oppression and police brutality. On the other hand, the agents of the C.N.L. did provide some technical help and some ideological direction to these local movements.

One of the most remarkable features of the rebellion was its mass character. In one region of Kivu (Uvira), the first partisan actions were the work of small bands of youth; but very rapidly, the whole population joined in and the Congolese Army was unable to resist the sheer pressure of numbers, despite the fact that their opponents were practically unarmed. This also happened in many other-areas: the desperate desire of the local population to rid itself of hated administrators, soldiers and policemen ensured the rapid development of the rebellion from area to area and from one tribe to another. The headlong retreat of the Congolese Army, often without any immediate pressure from the rebels, had assumed such proportions by July-August 1964 that the leaders of the *Armée Populaire de Libération* (A.P.L.), and particularly its little known "general", Nicholas Olenga, found themselves in command of important centres and areas, notably on the axis Kindu-Ponthierville-Stanleyville, and extended rapidly into other areas, while the provinces of North Katanga, Lomani and Sankuru were altogether or partially freed from the control of the Army.

Unfortunately, the military successes of the A.P.L. far outran its ideological and political development, and the very scale of its military victories created some serious problems. From mid-July 1964, there existed a provincial government of the rebellion, led by Soumialot and Kabila, but it failed to produce a revolutionary strategy, or new economic policies, or a coherent political apparatus.

Moreover, new regional "governments" came into being, while Army leaders and chiefs conferred upon themselves new ranks and honours; "traitors", i.e. officials, members of Adoula's party or of the ruling parties of the province, and others guilty or suspected of one kind or other of misdemeanour were often indiscriminately punished by youthful partisans, soldiers of the A.P.L. or civilians. Very quickly, the revolution, established in the towns, came to be the victim of its own success. In Stanleyville, Olenga was compelled to throw out the first revolutionary government and some military chiefs who showed obvious criminal tendencies. Similarly, Soumialot had to deal with mayors and officials who made arbitrary arrests or requisitioned buildings and other property for their own benefit. Also, tribal nepotism was rife, particularly in the A.P.L., while the single party, the M.N.C., was often used as a kind of employment agency for its members. Finally, indiscriminate recruitment into the A.P.L. weakened its fighting capacity and led to demoralizing reverses.

The rebellion did not have a really clear idea of its own meaning. It wanted, according to Soumialot, to conquer the whole of the Congo in order to "re-establish justice and peace", and also to "restore Parliament, and follow this with a general amnesty and the immediate organization of elections".⁶ Meanwhile, it established a "People's Republic", of which Stanleyville was proclaimed the capital. Its

foundations were declared to be "African patriotism and nationalism" inspired by Lumumba's ideas, "free from chauvinism and xenophobia", and refusing to choose either capitalism or Communism, "theories and methods which are alien to us."⁸ The revolution also preached officially non-violence and the reconciliation of all black men with each other ("including the soldiers of the Congolese Army which will soon breathe the air of liberty and peace"); and it even presented itself as the vanguard of the whole of Africa.⁹ But the language of peace and "reconciliation" was not that of the population, even less of the "simbas" (the soldiers of the A.L.P.) who quickly came to organize themselves as an organ distinct from the state. Thus those who claimed to be the people's army were cut off from those who claimed to be the people's representatives.

It is true that some attempts at reform were undertaken: in some cases the property of people who had enriched themselves during the former régime was taken over;¹⁰ some very few European firms, "which had exploited the masses long enough", were nationalized without compensation;¹⁰ and "people's co-operatives" were set up in some centres. But on the other hand, all trade union action was "suspended", and the authorities attributed to themselves any power required to improve the "productivity" of Congolese workers; the A.P.L. often turned itself into the sole judicial authority and claimed the right to impose fines or levies on local communities; income differentials remained similar to those of the previous régime and new officials claimed a salary from the Republic—local leaders of the single party, leaders of the "nationalist women", members of the new "council of elders". In conditions of scarcity, a new black market came into being and the formal freezing of prices to a pre-independence level did little to improve the lot of the masses.

The revolution also soon ran into trouble from within its own leadership. The common phenomenon in the Congo of fragmentation and conflict among leaders and groups was once again repeated. Thus, Gbenye quarrelled with Soumialot over the custody of the new state's funds, with the latter seeking to have these controlled by the C.L.N. There was also conflict between the military and civilian leaders; between the various Lumumbist factions of Stanleyville and Maniema; between honest and corrupt officials; between medical men and witch doctors; between various units of the A.P.L., sometimes at critical moments of military operations; between young partisans and committees of elders. Questions of hierarchy, of money, of rank, played a considerable role in the affairs of the People's Republic, as it has always done in Léopoldville. With the military defeats that followed increased foreign intervention and the appearance of foreign mercenaries recruited by Tshombe, all these negative features were powerfully enhanced, with more arbitrary arrests and ruthless repression, with hoarding by some leaders, with the demagogic exploitation

of xenophobia and primitive beliefs, and with a reckless wastage of young lives in ill-prepared operations. The documents of the rebellion and its press organ, *Le Martyr*,¹¹ show only too well the rapid decline which occurred in Stanleyville.

It would thus appear that the insurrections which led to the creation of the People's Republic were first of all a revolt of impoverished and exploited peasants for whom the enemy was not only the foreign colonialist but above all those Congolese who had monopolized all the fruits of independence, and also those policemen, administrators and even teachers who served the new class and sought to imitate its style of life. The rebellion also had, but only in some instances, some features of a peasant *jacquerie*; and it also sometimes appeared as a revolt of the young, deprived of schooling and of hope for the future, and seeking to cut loose from a discredited traditional social framework.

But the rebellion was also, for all its limitations, the hope of a new independence, fundamentally different from the first, and through which the wealth of the Congo would accrue to the poorest and in which a new, genuinely decolonized African society would come into being.

The rebellion did not find the united, effective and revolutionary organization it required, and it is very doubtful whether the brief experience of the People's Republic made any contribution to its creation. But the rebellion did show the existence of large zones of Lumumbist influence, and it also showed that the Congolese Army was extremely vulnerable; the rebellion's military defeats were primarily due to Belgian and American aid to the Leopoldville forces and to the intervention of the mercenaries. And there was also the inability to act of the Organization of African Unity, and the additional strains and divisions produced inside the C.N.L. by the Sino-Soviet ideological struggles.

Today, the rebellion has withdrawn from the urban centres which it had too easily conquered and its official leaders are almost all in exile, and for the most part bitterly at odds with each other. Only some of them, notably Gbenye himself, have maintained links with the rebel areas which remain unconquered. One of these is in the Uvira-Fizi-Baraka region, where the mercenaries have been unable to make serious inroads in the territory occupied by well-armed and unusually well-led insurgents; another is in the neighbourhood of Stanleyville and Ponthierville and in the north-east in the territory adjoining the Central African Republic and the Sudan.

No less than 20 per cent of Congolese territory remains outside the control of the Central Government. Whether a revolutionary economic and political organization exists in these areas, and if so of what kind, cannot now be answered since no reliable evidence has so far come out of rebel territory. Nor even is it possible to say whether

there is effective communication and understanding between the different areas of the rebellion. But it is at any rate clear that the rebels are able to forbid access to these areas to the Congolese Army, the mercenaries or government officials. Even where an Army column is able to travel the distance between two urban centres in rebel territory, without encountering serious opposition, the countryside nevertheless remains in the hands of the men of the *maquis*.

Against this, there is the fact that the rebellion has almost no effective African allies. Burundi is no longer friendly and its ruler, who is under strong Western influence, no longer allows help to be given to the insurgents from its territory; nor is the situation in the Sudan and the Central African Republic favourable to them. Congo-Brazzaville itself draws nearer to the Léopoldville Government and the Organization of African Unity is not ready to jeopardize its own existence in order to settle the Congolese question in a manner acceptable to the men who are fighting the Congolese Army and its mercenaries.

Meanwhile, the Army has seized power in Léopoldville and the new Government is skilful enough to condemn the profiteering and corruption of some politicians, while announcing at the same time a programme of aid to the "martyred" regions which were or still are under rebel control. It also claims to be ready to co-operate with other African states in the struggle against Rhodesia; and, most important of all, it receives the same aid from Belgium and the United States which was extended to its predecessor. Both the Congolese rulers and their Belgian backers are agreed that the first priority is the security of European enterprises, and that it is now necessary, if order and stability are to be maintained, that some of the grossest malpractices should be curtailed, since these ultimately threaten the new class itself.

In the present context, it does not therefore seem likely that the rebellion is capable of scoring decisive military successes in the short term or to recreate a political and administrative apparatus on the scale of the People's Republic of Stanleyville. Certainly, the ruling group in Léopoldville and the Western powers would do all in their power, by way of military effort and the provision of massive aid, to prevent a repetition of the events of July-November 1964.

It may even be that, in the light of its present lack of ideological and political cadres and the relative passivity of the wage-earners in the urban centres, it is more appropriate for the rebellion to remain outside the towns, to form its political cadres and to cure itself of its propensity to fragmentation. The rebellion cannot at present afford massive confrontations with the Congolese Army and its white mercenaries, but it can prepare for changing circumstances in the Congo and in Africa as a whole, and to begin the creation of an effective revolutionary alternative to the new class.

NOTES

1. J. P. Sartre has well described their situation, with reference to Lumumba, who had been a postman in **Stanleyville**: "He knew by the time he was **20** that he had reached the zenith of his career. Having gone beyond most other black men, he must remain forever inferior to every white one" (J. Van Lierde, *La Pensée Politique de Patrice Lumumba*, Preface by J. P. Sartre, *Présence Africaine*, Paris-Brussels **1963**).
2. There were **112,000** such people in the administration and public services on **30 June 1960**; **22,000** in the Army, 8,000 in the police and more than **20,000** in various forms of teaching.
3. *La Pensée Politique de Patrice Lumumba, op. cit.*
4. The political lectures given to the partisans who operated in the region of Nioki (an earlier group operated in the region of Mushie-Bolobo) have recently been published in their original form: "Les Cahiers de Gambona, Instructions Politiques et Militaires des Partisans Congolais", *Travaux Africains* (Centre de Recherche et d'Information socio-politiques, C.R.I.S.P., Brussels, December **1965**).
5. The text of the agreement has been published in *Congo 1964*, Dossiers du C.R.I.S.P., and in *Jeune Afrique*, **21 March 1965**.
6. Declarations made to journalists in June and July **1964**.
7. "Catechism of the Revolutionary" issued by the *Mouvement National Congolais* in **1964**.
8. The Peking *People's Daily* also described the "revolutionary forces of the Congo" as "the first wave of a movement which will sweep over the whole of Africa".
9. Decree of the Revolutionary Government of Maniema, **30 July 1964**.
10. Decree by Olenga in Kindu, **2 August 1964**.
11. Published in *Congo 1964, op. cit.*