

**MY FIFTEEN MONTHS
IN GOVERNMENT**

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**University of Plano
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My Fifteen Months In Government

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Preface

Africa today looms large in the problems of the world. Laden with mineral wealth and natural resources and strategically situated below Eurasia and between two great oceans, the Atlantic and Indian, it is a prime target of the new colonialism of the twentieth century.

Africa's indigenous people are newcomers to the civilized world as we know it today. Yet they are riding the great revolution of rising expectations and hold influential voices in the councils of the world.

In the heart of this emerging continent lies the Congo which is the embodiment of all the wealth and the conflict that characterize Africa itself.

From that new land there has come one voice that has captivated the imagination of the world. Moise Tshombe, though African to the marrow, understands the western world as well as the ambitions of the new colonialism that comes from the East.

Thrust into the Prime Ministry by the demands of virtually all of the rudderless leadership of the Congo after the great debacle of the early 1960's, Moise

Tshombe plunged into the task of reconstruction with the vigor of a great leader.

He writes in "My Fifteen Months of Government" of his aspirations for Black Africa, his estimate for the old and his distaste for the dictatorship of the new colonialism, his respect for, but not reliance on, tradition in guiding his people for the long struggle ahead.

"My Fifteen Months in Government" gives to the world an insight not only into a continent but into a man we can assume will one day again take a colorful seat in the councils of the world.

Robert Morris
President
University of Plano

Note

This book is not one of memoirs. It is too early for me to be publishing memoirs, but in the difficult situation in which my country finds itself I have thought it useful to recall the various steps which marked the work of my government during fifteen months.

Many sincere persons have failed to understand why and how I resigned. They will find in these pages an explanation of the events which brought about my resignation.

Moise Tshombe

PART I

**MY RETURN TO LEOPOLDVILLE
AND THE
FORMATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

I

My Return To Leopoldville And The Formation Of The Government

After fourteen months of voluntary exile in Europe I landed on the 24th of June, 1964, at the airport of Ndjili. I had been summoned to return in the hope that I might save the Congo which appeared to be in danger of complete collapse. I knew that I faced a dramatic situation and that difficulties without number awaited me. But I had been assured on all sides that I was the one man who had the slightest chance of success in our efforts to save the situation. I had been told this by many; others had caused me to be informed of this view; and yet others had implored me to return immediately.

I had arrived and had hardly placed foot on African soil before I was accosted by a Congolese officer, an aide sent by Prime Minister Adoula. He almost pushed me into a waiting car and we started instantly through the night toward the city. This happened so quickly that some people suspected that I had been kidnapped.

Many of my friends were indeed anxious for my safety, for they knew that my fourteen months in Europe had been caused by the fact that in March and April 1963 it had been imperative that I place a considerable distance between the Congolese authorities and myself. In June 1964 these friends were deeply concerned lest the rancor and enmity towards me still existed and that I might have been lured back only to be entrapped. However, I had the formal guarantee of General Mobutu and I felt no anxiety as the car whisked me along. We followed the road to the military camp where Prime Minister Adoula lived behind the massive protection of paratroopers.

At daybreak I entered his residence. He was still in bed and his aide went to awaken him. A few moments later he appeared in his pajamas. He embraced me warmly, laughing loudly and seemingly happy and relieved to see me.

I have had differences with him in the past, but I esteem him as a man. I could not approve of all his policies, but he did make a real effort to save his country from anarchy, and he had often given proof of courage. He had failed and now faced imminent catastrophe. He was aware of this; he no longer controlled anything; and had no idea what should be done. He informed me with emotion of the death of Jason Sandwe who had been assassinated by rebels a few days previously at Albertville.

“You, Tshombe”, he said, “are the only solution”. Almost the same words were used by General Mobutu who had arrived in haste and assured me of his pleasure at seeing me. He also thanked me for having trusted his

word and for having come. He assured me that it was he who had moved Adoula to recall me.

The Prime Minister invited us to breakfast, during which we had a lively discussion of the existing situation in the country. This was dominated by the powerful revolt which was causing bloodshed in Kivu and North-Katanga and which was spreading from East to West. General Mobutu raised his arms to heaven in telling me of his trip to Kivu from which he had just returned and which had left him depressed and seriously disturbed. Several thousand rebels armed with clubs and assegais had routed several battalions of the national army. The soldiers were scared of the practices of sorcery and witchcraft which, they thought, made the rebels completely invulnerable.

I shall describe in another chapter what I know and what I think of this rebellion. For the moment it is enough to say that at the time of my arrival it was expanding rapidly and that Leopoldville itself felt gravely menaced. Nearly every day, in the capital of the Congo, explosions were heard, and people were fearing the worst. Already the embassies and various foreign organizations were preparing to recall their personnel. The government of Adoula was as unpopular as it could be; the people were muttering, growling and complaining. A spark would be sufficient to set fire to powder everywhere.

“And so,” concluded my companions, “there is no one left but you. You alone could attempt a national reconciliation. And you might succeed.”

I was not as optimistic as they, but I could not refuse. During my voluntary exile I had maintained

contact with Congolese politicians of all shades of opinion, and they had all seen in me the only possible savior. I have never had so many friends as at that period, but I was in no sense fooled. They were all seeking to attract to themselves the favour of a possible ally; they all hoped, in promoting my return, to be able to install themselves in my good graces and rise with me to power. None the less I thought it might be possible, in view of the gravity of the situation, to provoke a psychological shock that would enable me to draw together all the political forces in service to the public good, and to convince those who could not be made Ministers that there were many other methods of rendering public service in a young country just emerging from serious crisis, and one obviously destined for considerable development in the future.

I said all this to Adoula and Mobutu who both encouraged me heartily.

At nine o'clock that morning I called on the President of the Republic, Mr. Joseph Kasavubu. He had been notified of my return and was expecting me. His reception of me was distinctly cool, which rather surprised me. Kasavubu is not of a demonstrative temperament; he is a somewhat withdrawn type and silent. While he is a wise man, he is highly sensitive and one feels that he values the retention of his presidential job as highly as his life.

He was not pleased to see me. He was aware of my popularity and he obviously suspected me of aspiring to the position of the principal office of the Republic. Actually he regarded me as his only possible rival and he felt that my spectacular return at a moment when the

whole world regarded me as politically dead would assuredly react greatly in my favor.

He said to me: "I had not expected you so soon. I was counting on your return, but you should have waited until the new Constitution had been framed. You would then have re-entered political life by the normal route of election."

Obviously President Kasavubu was content for me to return, but on condition that I join the ranks and that I come simply to support the prestige of the moribund regime. He wished me well in some subordinate place, but he did not wish that I should appear as the savior of the country. I knew full well, of course, that alone I could save nothing, and that there should be the closest understanding between the President and myself. I told him that in positive terms. He listened to me somewhat blankly. I described the dramatic state of affairs in the country. He seemed to be surprised to learn that things were so bad.

When we left the residency Adoula, who had been present at the interview, said: "You see, he does not understand the situation; it is beyond him."

The rest of the day was one long series of meetings with men of affairs in the political world. Mr. Adoula installed me in a guest house of the government next to his own official residence at Kalina. My waiting room never emptied. Nobody doubted that I would be entrusted with the formation of the provisional government required under the new Constitution. Under the terms of that document the government of Adoula would resign on the 30th of June and the President would choose a new Prime Minister who would, with his

new Cabinet, govern the country until the next general election, which would mark the beginning of the new legitimate government. I would have to consider and discuss the constitutional problem, but it was well that the people should know at once that the new Constitution gave to the President of the Republic wider powers than those contained in the Constitution conceived in Brussels in 1960 on the model of Western democratic institutions.

Everybody seemed to be convinced that the formation of the government would be entrusted to me, but President Kasavubu hesitated to give me this mission which could give me considerable advantages in the race for the Presidency if I should aspire to that position. I did not covet it. I hoped that Mr. Kasavubu would keep this post in which he had had experience, but I also hoped that we should be able to work together in our aim effectively to govern the country. I told him this and repeated it at every opportunity while others also told him the same. All the major politicians besieged the President's office and urged Kasavubu to nominate me to form a government. On the 3rd of July he yielded.

At the commencement of my consultations I was fairly optimistic. The Congolese people rejoiced at my return. I had not yet had any real contact with the masses and I sought to avoid it until I could see more clearly that there was a real rebirth in the land. But wherever I went I saw faces light up in smiles because I was bringing hope. The newspapers welcomed my return. The politicians, as I have stated, pushed me forward. In short, from a psychological point of view things looked good.

From the 3rd of July I encouraged consultation. I invited each of the large political parties to give me a list of candidates for ministerial positions from which I would choose those who seemed most suitable. I would bear in mind the necessity of having a government representative of the provinces, since it was primarily the provinces that were revolting against the authority of Leopoldville.

At that time there were three large political parties: - The C.D.A. (Congres Democratique Africain), which contained the more moderate elements; The Common Front, which represented the followers of Lumumba; and the Radeco, which was the party of Mr. Adoula and which one might describe as the party of the centre but which at that moment had hardly any following.

The negotiations lasted six days. Six days of talk. The groups had hardly named their candidates before they split as there was no agreement on the choices made. Two responsible members of the Common Front came to blows. As for the C.D.A. it crumbled from internal dissension, while the Abaku, the party of Kasavubu, insisted on presenting its own candidates.

Naturally I also appealed to the refugee rebels in Brazzaville where they had founded the C.N.L., the Committee of National Liberation. The C.N.L. sent me an emissary, Mr. Lubaya, whom I would make Minister of Health.

The members of the C.N.L. in Madrid had contacted me on various occasions, urging me to join their rebellion. I told them that in my opinion we needed a policy of national reconciliation and that it was for that reason that I was willing to meet with them. Our discussions had lasted three days. They were difficult because they talked of nationalizations and of doctrinal theories whereas in my opinion the problem of the Congo was not one of doctrine or theory. None the less I sought an accord with them, feeling that I should try everything.

I induced Mr. Thomas Kanza to come from London. He also represented rebels. I was thinking of

naming him Minister of Foreign Affairs. He is a college graduate, young, intelligent and courteous. He had been the representative of the Congo at the United Nations and Ambassador in London. He was active in rebel circles and he enjoyed a wide acquaintance in international circles. And lastly, since 1960 he had aspired to be Minister of Foreign Affairs. He had one major obstacle in his career, President Kasavubu. It was an old family feud among the Bakongo. Mr. Daniel Kanza, the father of the young diplomat, has long sought to acquire the prestige of "King Kasa" in the Bas-Congo, and he even founded in 1960 a dissident Abako party.

None the less I hoped that Mr. Kanza would join my government. I told him so, and he accepted with gratitude. I thought the matter was settled when, during our conversation, General Mobutu entered with a suitcase. "Look," he said, "what has just been found in the luggage abandoned by the rebels at Bolobo. A mountain of documents." He emptied the contents on a table and promptly commenced the inventory. We were helping him, Mr. Kanza and I, when suddenly Mobutu exclaimed again "Look! Here's a letter signed by Thomas Kanza!" He read it. The writer was addressing the Chief of the rebel camp of Gambona at Congo-Brazzaville and he exhorted him to continue the struggle until final victory. Kanza stood aghast. I sought to comfort him, assuring him that there would be a general amnesty and that he had nothing to fear. I even invited him to dine with me that evening. He did not come to dinner because as soon as he left me he hastened to Brazzaville. We shall soon be finding Mr. Kanza again as "Minister of Foreign Affairs" in the rebel "government" of Stanleyville.

By the 9th of July my government was ready. I had no doubt disappointed many individuals for I wanted the governing body to be small in order to make it efficient. In addition to the functions of Prime Minister I had assumed charge of Foreign Affairs, of Information, of the plans for coordination of Labor, Post Office and Telecommunications. In addition to myself there were to be ten Ministers:

Messrs.

Godefroid Munongo (Conakat) - Interior & Public Functions;
Dominique Ndinga (Abako) - Finance;
Leon Mamboleo - Justice;
Albert Kalonji (Radeco) - Agriculture;
Jean Ebosiri (C.D.A.) - Economics;
Jules-Leon Kidicho (Common Front, M.N.C.L.)
-Transport, Communications and Public Works;
Frederic Baloji (C.D.A.) - National Education;
Adolphe Kishwe (Common Front - P.R.A.) -
Mines, Land & Energy;
Joseph Ndanu (Puna) - Youth and Sports;
Andre Lubaya (C.N.L. - U.D.A.) - Public Health.

Among the malcontents were, of course, all the members of the previous government. They had been excluded on principle. In order that the Congolese people should realize that a new era had opened I had decided against the retention of a single individual of the old regime.

My Cabinet had hardly taken the oath of office before the difficulties commenced. At Brazzaville the C.N.L. accused Lubaya of treachery because he had agreed to serve in my government. However, Lubaya

had been duly authorized to that end and had been instructed to assure me that all the rebels of Brazzaville would return to the Congo under a legally constituted government. In order to clear the air, I sent Minister Mamboleo to Brazza. He met Mr. Gbenye, the responsible principal of the C.N.L., who assured him that he was in perfect accord with me and that he wished to return, but the authorities of Brazzaville had forbidden it.

I had no alternative but to govern regardless of opposition. I was encouraged to go forward by a visit I received one morning from a follower of Lumumba, whose name I may not disclose, who laid before me a whole battery of terrorist apparatus. "There", he said, "it is finished. It was I who caused explosions. Now it is ended and we are all going to work together to save the Congo."

All together! That is just what I hoped for. One of the first acts of my government was to release all political prisoners. The doors of the prisons were opened. Mr. Kasavubu sought to make one exception; he did not wish to free Mr. Gizenga, who had been languishing for two years on the islet of Bula Bema in the mouth of the Congo river. I had to argue with him step by step to convince him that there could be no exceptions if we really sought to bring about effective national reconciliation. Gizenga was an important leader in Kwilu, which was in rebellion, and in the international sphere he had almost the stature of a symbol. In order to prove our sincerity Gizenga must be freed.

Kasavubu yielded, and I was myself able to present Gizenga to the crowds of Leopoldville.

However, on the rebel side resistance continued. I could not fail to see in this traces of foreign influence since I knew that only a few days earlier all the rebel leaders were disposed to come to an understanding with me. I had ceased all military operations as evidence of my good faith. Regardless of this, the rebellion continued.

None the less, the Congolese masses understood that a great opportunity for the restoration of order and unity had arrived. On the 18th of July I was at the Stadium before forty thousand people. I addressed them; I explained to them; I presented my government. And by their loud applause they proclaimed their confidence. I paraded through the streets of the town, and by thousands people cried to me "Tshombe, Save us." It is not for me to describe the reception they gave me, but observers were vastly surprised at the enthusiasm of the crowds. At that moment I symbolized for the people of the Congo the hope of a better life. I promised the crowds better justice and more prosperity if they would truly help me in rebuilding the country. The enthusiasm of the crowds made it quite clear that they would help.

My intentions had been made clear to the whole world. I wanted to restore order, to repair the economy, and to reconstruct. It was for that, with efficiency in mind, that I had allocated unto myself several of the more important portfolios. In the situation in which the Congo found itself, I had to be a one-man-orchestra.

Western governments could hardly imagine what a herculean task it is to govern a country like the Congo. In Africa, the Chief is the father of all; he must be

active and interested in everything. Everyone has the right to call on him, to explain personal problems, and every head of government must pass the best part of his time in the almost ceaseless reception of callers. In the Congo I could not even count on efficient administrative assistance, for the departments had all suffered terribly during the past four years. There is no need for me to describe at length the decay and dilapidation everywhere.

It was necessary to do everything and to be everywhere.

From the moment of my installation as Prime Minister I undertook many quick journeys into the interior. I wanted the people of the provinces to know that from then on the government would be thinking of them and their interests. This government was in itself the result of the anger of the provinces with Leopoldville. That was neither a new nor an unusual phenomenon. In any country as vast as the Congo it would have been the same. The capital cities of all countries have a tendency to neglect the distant provinces and to organize their policies around the interests of the big city. That is why at the very moment that the world tends to form larger groupings one observes at the same time a recrudescence of regionalism.

I went to Bukavu, to Paulis, to Stanleyville, the entire zone most directly menaced by the rebellion. And everywhere the people acclaimed me as a savior. I will admit that for all the reasons that are so well known, I had some qualms and was none too assured when I arrived at Stanleyville. And I was pleasantly surprised, for nowhere had I met such a warm reception.

I delivered speeches all the time, always explaining the same truths, always seeking to convince my listeners that things could and must change.

My first care, of course, remained the rebellion. On my way to Bukavu I called at Bujumbura, where I hoped to meet Mr. Soumialot, who directed the operations of the rebels. He would not come, but he sent one of his associates, Mr. Foca, to whom obviously I had little to say. Normally I would have been able to induce the rebels to lay down their arms. Normally, that is, without the intervention of foreigners. Not having been able to see Soumialot, I sent him Mr. Bagira, leader of M.N.C. of Kivu, whom I had released from prison. It was a vain demarche. The rebellion continued. On the fifth of August Stanleyville fell to the rebels.

It became evident to me that the task was going to be infinitely more difficult than I had imagined. Instead of being able instantly to dedicate all my powers and all the resources of the country to its reconstruction, it would be necessary to fight and crush the rebellion.

At Bukavu I met Colonel Mulamba who was at his wits' end. The town was virtually surrounded. The army was demoralized. New attacks by the rebels were expected. The only protection was that of the Bashi peasants who watched the roads for the protection of their herds from rebel raids. But the Bashis were divided into two camps of which one seemed to favor the rebels. Its Chief, the Mwami Kabare, had been imprisoned for two years by Adoula's government, and he retained a violent hatred of everything emanating from Leopoldville.

PART II

THE FIGHT AGAINST THE REBELLION

Nevertheless, Colonel Mulamba remained full of anxiety. He complained that there was no military assistance from the Belgians, despite the fact that Bukavu was militarily a crucial area. I was aware that the role of Belgian technical military assistance was the formation of a new army, and not to fight with the army. In theory that was sound enough, provided that we had several years before us, but in the condition of the Congo we had only a few weeks in which to restore order.

Mulamba asked me to do everything possible to send him troops from Katanga. I took immediate action and a few days later a Katangan company arrived just in time to support the best elements of the A.N.C. and the gallant warriors of Kabare who had placed themselves under the orders of Colonel Mulamba.

Thanks to these measures Colonel Mulamba succeeded in mid-August in saving Bukavu.

In the course of my journey in the interior of the Congo in July, I discovered a situation that was at once tragic and full of promise. Tragic, because the rebellion was spreading rapidly. Full of promise, because the people were demanding only two things, — order and work. That may be too brief a summary, for the people were also hungry for justice. They had been cheated by the politicians; independence had brought them nothing but suffering. Everywhere the masses were ready to revolt, not in an organized movement, but in a diverse, dispersed manner. At that moment no unanimity of movement was possible and it was for that reason that the uprising could not save the Congo, even if it were the result, at the start, of perfectly legitimate grievances.

I shall not discuss at length the causes of the revolt for I think they are well known. Severe censure has been passed on the whole of new, emerging Africa, its frauds, its corruption, the incompetence of its administrative and political bodies. There are a thousand explanations

for this situation, but the principal reason was the fact that the colonial powers had left us with administrations of a Western type, much too rigid to suit such individualists as us Africans. Europe itself is far from the unity it has been seeking during the past twenty years, but she seems to have looked to us in the Congo for a degree of wisdom that she does not herself possess. As long as the colonial system prevailed, with its means of coercion, it could function. Even in the partition of Berlin, the coming of liberty and democracy initially shook the wholly artificial edifice that was constructed there. Of all this I shall have more to say when I approach the problems of political and administrative reconstruction in the Congo.

For the moment we faced one stark fact: the whole of the Congo had had enough of suffering and injustice. It wished to shake off the unjust and inefficient yoke of Leopoldville. The people felt themselves abandoned. They saw their Chiefs abuse their authority. That's not altogether untrue, but in exchange the Chief renders real services and assumes the security and subsistence of his subjects. But in this new Africa the political Chiefs abandon all their duties and occupy themselves mostly with their rights and privileges. I am hardly exaggerating. I know that there are exceptions and that the black continent has produced some veritable statesmen who have at heart the interests of the people, but they are swamped among their problems.

In short, the Congo had had enough. It was ready for any adventures. It would have been easy for me to exploit the situation. Before my return to the Congo the rebel leaders had urged me to ally myself with them. In

accepting I could have definitely ensured the success of the rebellion, but it seemed evident to me that such a success would have no future and that it would involve my country in more serious difficulties than ever. Moreover I would have been playing into the hands of certain foreign powers which were encouraging the rebellion with the obvious purpose of grasping the black continent for their own benefit.

I do not believe that any country in the world could escape all foreign influence. As long as such influence is not confined to a single power I regard it as beneficial and I have never been able to understand those who seek to enslave Africans in a sort of cultural and political ghetto. But it is obvious that such influences are harmful if they seek in any way to invade our freedom. The only means of escaping from constraining influences is to dominate and control them. That is the course the African countries should pursue. But I see no sense in rejecting certain foreign influences, even if they are abusive — and they often are — only to embrace other influences which might be even worse.

When the plots of international communism encourage quarrels among the Congolese, it is not the welfare of the Congo that they have in view, but that of international communism. In the subversive plans of the Communists the main object was to destroy. They would tell me that they would then build in Africa a better society. Let us remember that Colonialism also proclaimed a desire to build a better society; it failed, just as will fail all attempts at development in Africa which are not led by us Africans. I believe that we constitute a human group markedly different from oth-

ers, and I do not think that formulas which work in Europe or Asia would be successful with us. In my opinion the black world will be obliged to discover its own original solutions. I believe it will find them. I do not say that we should disregard the experiences of Europe and Asia; they might well enlighten us. For me, as Prime Minister of the Congo, the problem was to create such conditions as would enable my country to develop economically, politically and culturally so that it could occupy the place to which it is entitled on the international scene. My own experience as a former merchant had often caused me to minimize the importance of international affairs and to attach more importance to more immediate problems — those of production and those of the low level of life of the masses. That still holds good, but, though it is true that the first care of a statesman should be the welfare of the people, he is charged with many other cares among which the country's prestige abroad is most important. I shall be told that the best way to create prestige in the world is to present the image of a happy, contented people. I am in absolute agreement. In accepting the post of Prime Minister I had hoped to be able to devote myself principally to the tasks of economic development and reconstruction. A thousand other cares prevented me from giving to those things all the time and energy I wished.

In July 1964 I found myself captain of a ship that was leaking everywhere. There was a need to reach the people. I travelled in all directions explaining to the people and speaking from a full heart. I told them that the rebellion was no solution. I urged them to work harder rather than destroy. I called upon them to rally

around me, so that all together we might redeem the situation and chase all the disorder and corruption from our institutions. I told them all the harm that bad politics had caused them. I sought to arouse a vast enthusiasm which would create the psychological climate necessary for the reconstruction. I explained that they should not destroy the schools and dispensaries, that they must not harass the whites, that our future did not lie in turning back and shrouding ourselves in tradition. We must not ignore our traditions, but we must not make of them a refuge; we must make them a point of departure toward controlled evolution. I advocated obedience of the traditional Chiefs who were in a position to understand and guide the aspirations of the masses. I did not regard the old order as necessarily a brake on development. On the contrary I thought it the best foundation for the launching of development along regional lines. I know well that some parts of Africa have advanced far beyond the stage of their old established order, and I do not pretend that my formula should be applied everywhere. There exist in Africa tremendous differences in the degree of the political evolution of the masses. It is for this reason that I do not believe in rigid commitment to any one formula. Quite often ethnic conflicts have been stressed, but I think these would soon disappear if one could find the means to administer each region with special concern for its own particular needs.

All this does not really divert me from my subject. The Congolese rebellion was not, as I have already stated, a single, unanimous movement. The causes were everywhere the same, but there was no sense of solidarity. Actually the rebellion epitomized all the centrifug-

al tendencies of the Congo. The Chiefs sought to gather all their forces together, but they did not succeed in giving the whole even a minimum of cohesion. It was a revolution without a frame. Its leaders quarrelled ceaselessly. They were divided between pro-Chinese leanings (Bocheley-Davidson), and pro-Russian (Gbenye). They had nothing in common except a total incapacity to command obedience of the rebel bands.

These were the reasons why I could not make common cause with the rebels. I chose a different course. I decided to try to save what could be saved, endeavoring to extricate from the mire the existing institutions: institutions deficient in many ways, but at least existing. I knew full well that it would not be easy, but I was convinced that there was no alternative. I hoped to be able to induce the rebels to lay down their arms, and I would certainly have succeeded if it had not been for foreign influences which manifested themselves in the neighboring capitals of Brazzaville and Bujumbura.

In August 1964 it became evident that the revolution would continue. It covered three-fifths of the country. A few more weeks and it would be in Leopoldville; it would be everywhere. My first aim, therefore, was to block its expansion. The reports furnished to me by General Mobutu had left me without any illusions concerning the army.

After the ceremony of swearing-in the Government, Mobutu had informed me of the dramatic situation in regard to army supplies. "There is nothing", he said, "in any of the depots except a few hundred Mauser rifles". It was then that I offered to place at his disposal

the Katangan gendarmes who had remained loyal to me, together with all the equipment, armament and airplanes of which they retained control.

I had no illusions as to the value of these troops. I am not suggesting that the Katangan soldiers lacked courage, but the army was badly trained and the soldiers knew it; they felt but little confidence in themselves and in their officers. Moreover, it must be admitted that some elements of the army were in large measure responsible for the discontent among the people, for they had been "living off the land" for four years and had exerted pressure on the villagers.

In defense of General Mobutu it must be recognized that he took command in extremely difficult circumstances. He became chief of an army that had mutinied and the general was obliged to integrate in it thousands of Gizenga's followers of the Stanleyville secession and the gendarmes from Katanga. I do know that from that moment the soldiers from Katanga brought full honor to the army of the Congo and fought with superb courage in many terrible battles. On the other hand the troops of the Gizenga party earned for themselves a horrible fame in assassinating twelve Italian aviators of the O.N.U. at Kindu and twenty European missionaries at Kongola.

The military problem was essentially one of enlistment and organization. The Belgians helped a little with organization, but not with recruiting. They did not wish to extend their aid further on the principle of non-participation by Belgian officers in military operations. I simply had to find more effective aid. I might get it little by little, but time was pressing.

The dilemma was dramatic. The rebellion had to be stopped. The zones in the East, ravaged by the rebels, had to be relieved. If I sought to confine myself exclusively to bilateral military agreements, the Congo would soon be convulsed in total anarchy. It was necessary at all costs to find effective military forces, and to find them rapidly. It was in these circumstances that I took the occasion to engage foreign volunteers. Belgium had consented to send me a military adviser intimately acquainted with the Congo. This was Colonel Vandewalle. I told him to organize the 5th Mechanized Brigade, consisting of foreign volunteers. Katanga gendarmes and soldiers of the A.N.C. I counted on American aid to permit the rapid equipment of this brigade which would as soon as possible be sent to Stanleyville.

In the meantime other foreign volunteers were speedily organized in small groups which would set off with great haste to the regions most immediately menaced. In a few weeks several hundred men had been recruited.

I knew I would be violently criticised for this, but there was so little time. I recall that we were on the edge of the abyss. I would ask other African countries to send troops to help us to restore order, but they would not be able to help; they had barely enough troops for their own needs.

While I was busying myself with the promotion of the fight against the rebels, they committed themselves

in the territory they occupied to innumerable and terrible extortions. Recognized Chiefs, intellectuals and government officials were killed in most shocking and appalling ways. The people were crazed by a wave of sheer barbarism. In the regions of the North and East thousands of persons were executed in front of the monuments erected to the memory of Lumumba. Witnesses reported that the flagstones around the monument at Stanleyville presented the appearance of gutters in a slaughterhouse. The rebels were bent on the destruction of the entire elite of the country. They held some two thousand European hostages for whose fate the worst was feared. Some efforts were made by the Red Cross to bring about the release of the European women and children, but they failed.

By the beginning of November, the Fifth Mechanized Brigade of Colonel Vandewalle was ready. It left its base at Kamina to proceed to the North. It made rapid progress, liberated Kongolo and Kindu, and dashed on to Stanleyville.

For some time past I had been receiving anxious appeals from the United States and from Belgium. Both were naturally greatly concerned for the safety of their nationals who were prisoners of the rebels. They feared that the advance of the army would be too slow and that the rebels might massacre the hostages as soon as the battle reached the streets of Stanleyville. The United States and Belgium requested authority to organize a raid of paratroops on Stanleyville. The Belgium paratroops, who had come via Ascension Island, would be dropped at dawn on the airport of Stanleyville. Thanks to the element of surprise they would rapidly invest the

city and liberate the hostages, among whom was the American missionary, Dr. Carlson. I was convinced that the Fifth Mechanized Brigade would take Stanleyville without much difficulty. It was a well-disciplined force, doubtless insufficiently equipped, but in spite of everything very efficient since it had succeeded in passing victoriously through a number of ambushes in the course of its journey which had covered several hundred kilometers.

I saw clearly the arguments against the use of Belgian paratroops. There would be cries of Belgian interference in the internal affairs of the Congo. It would be forgotten that it was the Congolese army, aided by foreign volunteers, which had done all the work and made the long journey; and only one thing would be remembered — that it was the Belgians who had liberated Stanleyville. Not only would the Congolese army feel itself frustrated and cheated of a victory that it was on the point of winning since it was so rapidly approaching Stanleyville, but African extremists would raise the cry: “Colonialist Aggression”.

None the less I accepted the offered paratroops. President Kasavubu was against it, but I could not think of declining an operation which might perhaps save the lives of so many. Perhaps! We shall never know what would have happened without the paratroops. Would there have been fewer or more deaths? Nobody can tell, but it is certain that if I had rejected the Belgian-American operation I would have been charged with responsibility for all the deaths. I think today that there might have been fewer killings of Europeans without the paratroops' attack; it was that, and not the offensive of the Congolese army, that gave the signal for

the massacre of Europeans. But of course this is nothing but an opinion which cannot be proved or disproved.

On the 24th of November 1964 the Belgian paratroops and the Fifth Brigade arrived at Stanleyville and freed the hostages on the right bank of the river. The rebels had had time to kill 26 hostages, among whom there were both women and children, but there were more than a thousand who escaped. The missionary, Dr. Carlson, was among the dead. On the left bank twenty-nine Europeans, almost all missionaries, men and women, were assassinated. And in other rebel centers massacres were repeated. A total of about three hundred Europeans died in atrocious ways, as when at Munghere they were bound with wire and thrown into the river. There were many women and children among them, many missionaries.

I think with emotion of all these victims.

I think with emotion of the tens of thousands of Congolese who were massacred by the rebels in this fractricidal butchery.

It is vain to tell me that history is written in blood. I believe that all these horrors could have been averted if there had not been beyond our borders countries that were encouraging the rebellion—if there had not been at Bujumbura and at Brazzaville Chinese diplomats far too numerous to be engaged in diplomacy.

At that moment the rebellion was broken, but not definitely crushed. Military pressure could not be re-

laxed. This became clear when several months later a meeting took place in Brussels between General Mobutu and Messrs. Harriman and Spaak to discuss ways and means of making more effective the operations of the army. It was there agreed that the United States and Belgium should make greater efforts to furnish additional military supplies. Thanks to these measures the victories of the A.N.C. were slowly consolidated.

PART III

DIPLOMATIC ACTION

III

Diplomatic Action

When I returned to Leopoldville at the end of June, 1964, the Congo had no longer any international credit. In this respect my country was the laughing-stock of the world. We still had a few questionable friends but many enemies in whom our weakness inspired scornful arrogance. It is always pleasant, when one is small or mediocre, to see a giant knocked down, and there are those who seek to make the plight of the giant as difficult as possible. At Bujumura, at Brazzaville, at Dar-es-Salam, in Cairo, at Algiers, at Accra the rebels met with generous assistance. The rebel chiefs could operate freely from the territories of Burundi and Brazzaville. From Tanzania they received arms, mostly Chinese, and in Congo-Brazzaville veritable training camps were created for the rebels. The best known of these was at Gambena, from where various offensive actions were launched against the Congolese army.

At that time Brazzaville and Bujumbura were the two main centers of Communist Chinese penetration in Africa. At Brazzaville the Chinese intervened quite openly in the administration of the State. Burundi, less trusting, passively allowed the dozen Chinese who constituted the Embassy of Peking to operate. But Burundi was to finish later by chasing this Embassy from its soil when the Government perceived that the diplomats of Peking took too great an interest in the internal problems of the country, even inviting citizens of Burundi to see propaganda films in support of the revolutionaries.

For the Congo of 1964 it was absolutely essential that the revolution be crushed. I tried, as is well known, to negotiate directly with the rebel Chiefs. I encountered rebuffs, despite the promises that had been made to me before my return to the Congo. I have no doubt that the rebel leaders were sincere when they made those promises, but it became clear that those who were pulling the strings did not wish to lose so good an opportunity to destroy the Congo and that they were opposed to national reconciliation. I have already stated that I sent Mr. Mamboleo to Brazzaville to contact Mr. Gbenye and he returned after having seen the rebel Chief. The latter had explained that while he was in favor of national reconciliation, the authorities in Brazzaville would not permit him to leave their territory.

I decided that a military victory would not put a definite end to the disorders unless the foreign influences causing the revolt could be stopped. Look at the map of the Congo; look at its borders; you will see that it is quite impossible to prevent infiltration. It would be necessary, therefore, to persuade neighboring countries

to stop aiding the rebels and to urge them to respect the Government of Leopoldville. I took steps in July to impress upon the world that the Congo was a land to be respected.

In July a Conference of Non-aligned Powers was held in Cairo. The Congo was invited and I decided to attend, but Nasser sent me telegram after telegram to say that I could not preside over the Congolese delegation. Were they afraid of me? I wished to go to Cairo to tell all those who criticised me that I sought to save my country, but that in order to do so I must have the neutrality, if not the good will, of all those countries that called themselves non-aligned. I would tell them that in my opinion the Conference of Non-aligned Powers would have no meaning if they persisted in interfering in the internal affairs of others. But Nasser would not agree; his telegram was denunciatory. He was agreeable to President Kasavubu coming, but he did not wish to see me. I still wished to go, but my Government and President Kasavubu were opposed. The President decided that no one should go to Cairo. I had to admit that that was the wisest course, and I had to yield.

I did not go to Cairo, but a few weeks later a Conference of the countries belonging to the Organization of African Unity was to be held at Addis Ababa. Emperor Haile Selassie issued the invitations. The Emperor held himself above the rivalries of Africans, and he stated that I had a right to state my case and that Africa must listen. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Arab States, with the exception of Algeria, did not attend at Addis Ababa in person because an Arab conference was being held in Cairo at the same time.

Their absence did not distress me; quite the contrary. I was certain that I could make myself understood among the black countries and that I would be able to dissipate the misunderstandings that separated us. I was not at all sure that the delegates of Arab extremism would wish to hear me. But even if the extremists were disposed to listen to me I doubt whether they would have been able really to understand. Anyway it was evident that neither Nasser nor Ben Bella would ever overcome the prejudice they held against me. By my efforts to find an African solution to the problems of Black Africa I menaced their hopes of taking over the direction of an Africa united under their influence. Did they not see that for us that would be a new form of colonialism? Black Africa preserves bad memories of the influence that certain Arab countries had exercised in the past. The people preserve vivid memories of the operations of slave traders from Egypt and the Sudan only eighty years ago.

I certainly do not wish to suggest that all Arab States wish to conquer Africa; it is the dream of a certain number of ambitious leaders who are swayed by political passions rather than the immediate problems of their countries.

I arrived at Addis Ababa on the 5th of September. I was received with all the honors due me as Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of a great country.

I was not entirely free of anxiety when I arrived at

Addis Ababa. I had intended to oppose consideration by the Conference of the problems of the rebellion in the Congo, but President Kasavubu would also be at the Conference. There was but one course for me to pursue — to grasp the nettle, to breach the wall of hate that surrounded me, and to demonstrate to my friends that I was strong enough for them to dare to proclaim themselves my friends.

I was well received at Addis Ababa. Emperor Haile Selassie surprised me by his knowledge of the state of affairs in the Congo and by his keen judgment. He is a man of great experience, wisdom and prudence. He encouraged me to persevere in my efforts at reconstruction in my country.

Mr. Diallo Telli, Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity, was also friendly. After an hour's conversation he told me that I did not conform in any way to the reputation of me that he had heard at Conakry, at Algiers and in Cairo. He is a passionate doctrinaire, thoroughly convinced that the future of Africa lies in extremism, whereas I hold on the contrary that moderation offers us infinitely better chances of success. Moreover, moderation is much closer to the African temperament. For the African the essential values of life lie in joy and pleasure. The doctrines of the extremists have in them nothing African: they are strained, hate-ridden and restive, while the idea of happiness is a total stranger to them. The extremists are willing to sacrifice the happiness of the African peoples to dreams of grandeur. I am myself an ardent partisan of grandeur for Africa, but I am convinced that Africa can only be truly great in remaining herself, — wise and happy. As soon as all the contradictory passions are

exhausted Africa will find her grand destiny. I have not the least doubt that she will one day enjoy considerable development and that the time will come when she will make an important contribution to the welfare of the world of the future.

At Addis Ababa, therefore, I presented myself as a realistic leader of Africa. I knew full well that doctrines of moderation were little calculated to arouse great enthusiasm among nationalists, but I was persuaded that the part of common sense was the part of wisdom, and that if urged with determination it would win out in the end. Beyond the artificial and temporary excitements of the moment, beyond the fabricated passions, there was the real Africa, badly organized, poor, tortured by leaders who did not hesitate to sacrifice the interests of the people for the sake of their doctrinaire ideas. To me it was evident that it is this basic Africa, which is the real Africa, that will win the final victory, even if only after a thousand bloody conflicts. Might we not be able to avoid those conflicts? Surely we must continue to try. It was for this that I had come to Addis Ababa on that 6th of September 1964.

I assured the assembled delegates that I had not come to the Conference to accuse anybody. I suggested the sending to Leopoldville of a committee of inquiry, the members of which would be chosen at the Conference. In the same spirit I offered to dispense with the services of any mercenaries whose presence in the Congo might seem to the Committee to be undesirable. I expressed the wish that friendly African States might send us detachments of troops and police. These could undertake the maintenance of law and order in the

tranquil regions and in those which had been recently pacified. This would relieve the military strain on my Government and would permit of our sending our own troops into the troubled areas.

When I had concluded I was greeted with applause of much greater warmth than I had dared hope. The only ones who preserved their air of pouting sulkiness were Egypt, Algeria, Mali and Guinea. All the other countries were in accord with me.

During the Conference I had opportunities for many private discussions which revealed that I had more friends than I had thought. But many of these friends urged me to proceed with all haste towards the pacification of the Congo, and they pressed me to seek contact with the rebels whose delegates were present. The Conference had met my wishes by excluding them from its sessions, but I was urged by many to meet with them. I refused, and I explained for the umpteenth time the real nature of the Congo.

A few days before, I had received in Leopoldville Mr. Mennen Williams, American Under-Secretary of State, and I had expressed the same views to him. He also wanted me to promote national reconciliation and suggested that I include in my Cabinet men in whom he had confidence, like Adoula and Bomboko. I told him that he might be right in placing faith in these gentlemen, but it was perfectly clear that the Congolese people wanted change and did not wish to see any of the former Ministers in the new Government. It would weaken all my efforts if I were to concede this point. It was essential that the Congo should know that there had been a new beginning and that all ties had been ruptured

with the political practices which had been at the root of all the discontent. I stressed the fact that the country no longer had an effective administrative or political structure, and that I stood before crowds crying out to be saved, and that my only hope of success lay in their coherence and their continued goodwill. If I were to change my line of conduct I would profoundly deceive the Congolese people who expected me to be different from other politicians, and wanted me to rescue the country from all the corrupt practices that the people had come to know so well.

Mr. Williams understood the situation full well. One of my preoccupations was the reform of the police force of Leopoldville. That force had been seriously demoralized following a riot in 1963. Efforts had been made to reorganize it, and to that end a hundred Katangan policemen were brought from Elizabethville.

I outlined to Mr. Williams a plan which I had already prepared and which could be brought into force immediately with aid from the United States. Mr. Williams expressed a wish that I make an appeal for African troops to replace the white volunteers. I had thought of that before him. I made the appeal, but it brought no results. It is true that I made it a condition that I should select the countries that could send me troops as I wished to be sure that no extremist countries should profit by the occasion to infiltrate my country. This seemed to me to be an obvious and elementary precaution.

The foreign volunteers had been recruited individually; they were entirely subject to my government and I was sure of being able to control them. They were verily

soldiers of the Congolese army. It was evident that we would not have any comparable control over any contingents supplied by foreign armies. Despite all its drawbacks, the foreign volunteers constituted the sole force safeguarding the sovereignty of the Congo.

The Conference at Addis Ababa concluded with the passage of a resolution creating an ad hoc commission to promote nation-wide reconciliation within the Congo and to seek to restore amicable relations between the governments of Congo-Leopoldville, Burundi and Congo-Brazzaville. The committee was composed of the representatives of ten countries and would be presided over by Mr. Kenyatta, the head of the government of Kenya.

The resolution passed by the Organization of African Unity called upon "all who are fighting in the Congo to cease hostilities in order to seek, with the aid of the Organization, a solution which would open the door to complete reconciliation and the restoration of order throughout the country."

In the same document I was urged "to cease immediately the recruitment of mercenaries and, in order to facilitate the solution of this African problem, to deport as speedily as possible all the mercenaries now in the Congo."

Lastly, the resolution appealed to all foreign governments to end their interference in the internal affairs of the Congo.

So far as I was concerned this ad hoc commission had only one mission to fulfill, — to put an end to the foreign aid keeping the rebellion alive; but efforts would be made to go further and to lead me, under the aegis of the commission, to renewed discussions with the rebels. The Commission was to meet at Nairobi on the 16th of September.

I went to Nairobi and there I met Mr. Kenyatta, who impressed me as being a man of great kindness and goodwill. But from all appearances he had no proper appreciation of conditions in the Congo and he seemed to dream of my being able to reconcile everybody. It was obvious that this idle dream stemmed from a noble and generous nature. I recapitulated for his benefit all my views on the situation in the Congo. He understood my arguments and once again the rebels were excluded from the meetings of the commission. It was decided by the commission that a sub-committee should be appointed which would go to Bujumbura and Brazzaville to endeavor to restore normal relations with Leopoldville and the neighboring areas. In short the Organization of African Unity decided to limit itself to the role of appeasement.

It now remained for me to tackle an important task. A conference of non-aligned countries was to meet at Cairo on the 6th October. I knew that my presence there was manifestly not desired. Nasser made several attempts to dissuade me from attending, and Ben Bella announced that he would never sit under the same roof with me. And yet it was important that I go in order to convince the African world of the soundness of my views.

The journey began badly. The Egyptian Embassy had the passports of my delegation and said the documents could not be found. The ill will of the Egyptian Embassy was only too apparent, and I decided that we should proceed without passports. At the last moment Mr. Mustapha, an Egyptian diplomat, delivered the passports, but with obvious reluctance. When the diplomats accredited to Leopoldville assembled to bid me farewell, not an Egyptian was present. But suddenly Mr. Mustapha showed up — in a sports shirt. I told him of my discontent in the matter of the passports, whereupon he became so indignant and irate that I had to ask him to leave the plane. He left while muttering that he would telegraph to his government so that they might treat me the way I had treated him. A strange incident which did not, I thought, reflect high diplomacy.

But that was only the beginning. Things became more complicated when the airport at Cairo forbade the Boeing Air-Congo to land on the pretext that all the runways were out of service. This was untrue for dozens of planes landed that day, bringing numerous delegations. But they did not want me. My plane was diverted to Athens. There, at the airport, I met Emperor Haile Selassie who had come from Bulgaria and was on his way to Cairo. I told him of my misadventure, which made him very indignant. He promised to lodge a protest in Cairo and to see that I was received as was my right.

I had no alternative but to take a regular flight to Cairo. At midnight I took a seat in a Boeing of the Air Ethiopia Line. There was, of course, no question of refusing the Ethiopian Company the right to land, and a

few hours later I found myself on Egyptian soil. I was most cordially received. Nasser had sent an aide and a car for me. I was taken to the Oruba Mansion, one of the most beautiful residences in Cairo. The aide conducted me most amicably to the room that had been reserved for me, and after assuring himself that I lacked nothing he took his leave. I thought I would inspect my new quarters and went out to the landing, intending to go down to the salons. But outside my door stood a soldier who would not permit me to proceed. I was Nasser's prisoner.

My prison was a gilded cage with beautiful silk drapes and objets d'art aplenty. I like such things of beauty, but it was my liberty that I wanted. I was not to regain it for three days. They were strange and anxious days. I was cut off from the world and was not permitted to telephone my Embassy or the members of my staff who had been placed in semi-surveillance in several hotels in town. I had one visit only, that of Nasser's Chief of Cabinet, who confirmed that I was a prisoner. His pretext for this was that the Egyptian Embassy in Leopoldville had been surrounded by Congolese troops. Nasser's purpose was obviously to prevent my addressing the conference of the non-aligned, and the incidents in Leopoldville had nothing to do with my detention. Anyway the incidents in Leopoldville were of a quite minor character and were the result of my confinement, for when he heard of my imprisonment in Cairo the Minister of the Interior had decided to keep a close watch on the movements of the members of the Egyptian Embassy. In the circumstances it was a perfectly natural and normal thing to do. During my brief captivity I had plenty of leisure to meditate upon my own

situation and that of my country. Since my return to Leopoldville at the end of June I had succeeded in forming as effective a government as possible. I had pursued every likely avenue towards a peaceable ending of the rebellion and, having failed, I had inaugurated the military campaign against the rebels. In the meantime I had, in the realm of diplomacy, achieved some successes which permitted me to hope that perhaps the foreign powers who were helping the rebels might withdraw their aid. I was shocked to realize the terrific cost of all this. The cost of the army was seemingly a bottomless pit engulfing thousands of millions, and gravely menacing the precarious balance of the national budget. But I had no choice; I was convinced that if I succeeded in restoring peace throughout the land, the revival of the economy would be such that the Congo would soon be able to return to a healthy financial state.

I pondered also the destiny of Black Africa, which, after shaking off the yoke of colonialism, was experiencing a series of grave crises and seemed to be unable to find herself while plunging thoughtlessly into adventures inspired from abroad. Black Africa possesses an enormous latent dynamism, but she has not yet been able to find the means of expression. While starting from our native traditions we must do everything possible to build an Africa which will be modern while remaining Africa. It is we alone, we blacks, who must discover the formulas. We must not depend upon the whites. They can help us, but they must not take our place in discovering systems suitable for us. Certain African intellectuals, in particular the Senegalese president, Mr. Senghor, have launched the idea of "African socialism". I think we must probe in that direction.

Occasionally, in the midst of these meditations, I received a little news from the outside. I learned that the Liberian president, Mr. Tubman, had threatened to leave the conference if I was not released. Others were moving in the same sense; the black African countries saw clearly that beyond my own particular case it was all Africa that was menaced by extremism. As a result of much pressure Nasser was obliged to permit me to leave. He had me conducted to the airport and I was under surveillance until a regular flight on the Sabena Air line took off for Athens.

My mission to Cairo was then terminated. All things considered, I think it was successful, as my detention had produced more understanding and more sympathy than any talks of mine could have done. I was, of course, fully aware of the fact that while moderate Africa came to my aid, there were others who had retired to seek new ways of encompassing my ruin. The governments of Egypt, Algiers, Guinea and Mali were all considering new ways and means of aiding the rebels.

On my return to Leopoldville after my adventure in Cairo I was profoundly moved to discover that my fellow countrymen had followed events closely with great indignation over my misfortunes. Hundreds of thousands met me and hailed me with delight. Nasser had done me an outstanding service for at that moment I was made aware of a sense of complete unanimity; all the politicians felicitated me; everybody supported me. General Mobutu foamed with rage when talking of the Arabs. I wanted to convoke a meeting with the masses at the stadium to tell them of the precise situation, but General Mobutu advised me to wait a few days. He

wanted the army to organize a grand anti-Arab spectacle. The background for this was already available; it dated from the time of the Belgians who in all their grand displays presented a tableau of the anti-slavery campaigns.

“We have all the details”, said the General; “it will be easy to organize, and for the parts of Belgian officers I have a number of mulattoes with very light skins.”

I was a trifle surprised, but I did not wish to oppose the General. The play was shown at the stadium a few days later and I must admit that it was a tremendous success.

To the assembled multitudes I explained how difficult the tasks of government had become since the intrusions of foreign powers in our domestic affairs compelled the authorities to concentrate on problems of security. I stated that I was overburdened with work; there was so much to do, to decide, to see and to control. We were just a handful of ministers, the heirs of an administration which, despite the presence of a few competent men, had virtually collapsed under the strain and endless pressure of grave political troubles. There had been no dearth of good intentions but the machine had often idled and almost stopped. It was evident that amid all my other duties I would soon have to devote myself to administrative reforms.

But before everything else I must devote my time to the restoration of normal relations in the field of diplomacy. On the 30th of November I went to Paris where I was to be received by General de Gaulle. I was deeply moved at the thought of finding myself in the presence of this man who had shown such understanding of

Africa and whose generous and intelligent policies had paved the way to independence for the countries of Africa. I believe that all Africans regard de Gaulle as the greatest of Europeans. Nobody would dare dispute this in Black Africa, not even in Guinea or Mali where they may have had some reason to complain of his harshness.

General de Gaulle received me with great cordiality. The interview lasted sixty-five minutes. The General told me his views on the problems of the moment, — in Europe, Africa and the Congo. He told me frankly that his wish was to help the Africans to be themselves. In regard to the Congo he surprised me by his thorough understanding of the actual situation of which he knew the details. He assured me that if we needed French technicians for specific purposes he would gladly help us to find them and to see that they were competent and efficient.

France, he said, had no desire to supplant Belgian technicians in the Congo, but she would be happy to furnish experts in any field where we might need them.

The General promised to send me in a few weeks time an eminent official, Mr. Lamy, former Governor of Chad, who would guide in administrative reforms.

Another visit which impressed me greatly was my audience with Pope Paul VI, with whom the problems of missionaries were discussed. He felicitated me on the help I had rendered to the Catholic missions. He knew I was a Protestant, but assuredly that was a point of no importance. I hope that in our world of the future there may be neither Catholics nor Protestants, but simply true Christians.

I begged the Sovereign Pontiff to see to it that the church should not relax its missionary efforts. I assured him that beyond the lamentable massacres which were the work of madmen was a great mass of people who loved the missionaries and were keenly alive to all their good works and to all they owed them. It would be wrong to suggest that Africans take for granted all that is done for them, for the great majority of the people of the Congo had great faith in missions and missionaries. They were fully alive to the sacrifices made by monks and nuns in going to Africa to preach love and kindness and who brought education to their children and help to the sick.

I was aware that some church missions and some missionaries had sometimes erred by the practice of excessive paternalism, but that was of little importance in relation to the immense services rendered. I paid homage to those who had lost their lives in pursuit of their apostolic calling. The Congo would never forget the part that missionaries had played in its development.

I had planned to leave Rome for New York where the Security Council was to examine the tragedy of Stanleyville. I wished to present the story as I saw it, but pressure was brought to bear on me to stay away. My friends feared that my very presence might envenom the proceedings. I was by no means convinced of the validity of their arguments, but I yielded to them rather than risk eventual complications.

Besides, I had many other things to do. Since I had now restored the diplomatic prestige of the Congo, I felt that the time had come for me to devote my attention to extremely pressing economic problems. My trip to New

York having been eliminated, I decided to remain a few days in Europe with a view to informing possible investors of the promising openings they might find for the creation of new industries in my country. I went to Germany where I was received in friendly and encouraging fashion by President Luebke. Then I sought contacts in German industrial circles. Being fully aware of the dynamic energy of German business men, and having great confidence in their technical and commercial skills, I felt that the Congo must surely interest them. I had many discussions in these circles, and I appreciated their frankness and their practical views. I venture to hope that they found similar qualities in me and I believe that I succeeded in arousing real interest in my suggestions. Numerous German firms undertook to study the question and I gained the impression that my visit to Germany had been worthwhile. I delivered a speech in Duesseldorf in which I sought to dispel the mistrust and doubts of entrepreneurs. I believe that I succeeded.

It is true that new political crises in the Congo soon beclouded all my efforts, but I think that in spite of everything German industrialists will be coming. I verily believe that one's time is never entirely wasted if one devotes oneself wholeheartedly to a task, for even if one has not been completely successful the expended effort will have contributed in some measure to advance matters. But at that moment I had no idea that my difficulties were soon to be aggravated by a thousand simmering complications which I had up to that time been able to hold in check.

On the 16th of November I ended my stay in Germany with a brief visit to Berlin. I wished to see the

Wall of Shame. Viewing that wall I meditated on the stupidity of the calamitous degree of misunderstanding and incomprehension that exists among men. Here was a people, formerly united, and today shockingly divided against their will by the imposition of compulsion by a minority of rabid doctrinaires. Never as much as in Berlin have I realized so poignantly how utterly hateful excessive dogmatism can be.

At Berlin a surprise awaited me in the form of an American military airplane which had been sent to take me post-haste to Brussels to see Mr. Paul-Henri Spaak, the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Spaak wished to speak to me and begged me to see him at the earliest possible moment. The message was almost an ultimatum. I was somewhat annoyed, but I felt that it was impossible to refuse so urgent an invitation without provoking a useless incident.

I boarded the American plane which soon deposited me in Brussels. There I found Mr. Spaak highly agitated. He had been upset by reading a Congolese decree which I had signed on the 29th of November. It contained provisions intended to clarify the relations between the government of the Congo and certain foreign enterprises in Katanga and Kivu. It had been suggested in Brussels that the decree pointed to the eventual nationalization of those organizations. I assured Mr. Spaak that such a construction of meaning was entirely false. The purpose of the decree was simply to affirm the right of the Congo to control the exploitation of its mineral resources. This action seemed to me to be elementary. The decree created nothing new; it simply contained a juridical clarification of an existing situation. In particular it ended the special

committee of Katanga which had not functioned for four years. It also laid a firm foundation for the discussions I would soon be conducting in Brussels on various thorny Belgo-Congolese questions. Mr. Spaak understood my position and promptly set a date for those discussions.

I was astonished that this decree had stirred up such a fuss in Brussels. In Belgian political circles they were talking of cancelling all aid to the Congo in order to recall me to my senses. The reactions of the Belgians are sometimes truly surprising. I had heard from General Mobutu that I must take prompt steps to appease the Belgian authorities as it had been impossible, since the publication of the decree, to obtain any aid from the Belgians in the realm of military affairs.

Personally I appreciate to the full the help we have received from Belgium. I know how much the Congo owes to her, and I have always felt that it was preferable to be aided by a small country rather than by one of the great powers. Besides there are occasions when the might of a friendly nation can be of inestimable value.

I am not among those who assert that the Congo would die without Belgium, for I know that is not true, but neither am I of those who claim that Belgium only helps us for her own economic interests. Belgium has done great things for the Congo and she has continued to aid us despite the terrible trials we have lived through. I know that there are many close ties which bind us besides those of an economic nature. We have lived together for eighty years, and that is not easily forgotten. We were the dominated and the Belgians were the dominators; we have broken the domination,

but a part of our heart still remains in Brussels. It is a town where our people feel at home, and no Congolese travelling abroad would wish to miss a visit to Brussels.

I am aware of the astonishment of some foreigners that the relations between the Belgians and the Congolese have remained so good despite a stormy history and despite many conflicts which could have estranged the governments of the two countries.

It is not that we particularly love the Belgians, but we know them and we respect them. We know that we can count on their cooperation even in the face of occasional difficulties. There have been many disputes between Belgians and Congolese, and there will be more; but fundamentally I believe our friendship will survive all differences, both great and small — sometimes, perhaps, with the exchange of invectives and even in those occasional cases where disagreement is not entirely dissipated.

I know well that they say in Brussels that one must speak firmly with the Congolese. It is true, and we like people to say what they mean; but we, too, must be firm with the Belgians. The difficulty is that the Belgians hate to admit it. I have frequently been astonished at their surprise when I raised my voice. The whites often say that in dealing with the blacks they must arm themselves with patience, but I affirm that this is reciprocal, at any rate as regards the Belgians. We often have to call on all our reserves of patience in discussions with them when they have reasons, sound or not, for being slow to understand us at once.

In the course of my discussions with Mr. Spaak I was often aware of his firmness; I hope he was also

aware of my own. That is why I held for him the high esteem which I would like to think he reciprocated.

But on that occasion Mr. Spaak did not wish only to discuss the unwelcome decree. He thought that the time had come for me to enlarge my Cabinet and that I should include therein Messrs. Bomboko and Adoula. I reminded him that rightly or wrongly the people of the Congo regarded those two gentlemen as largely responsible for their woes; wrongly, I thought. The desire of Adoula and Bomboko to do good was beyond question, but neither had been successful in a degree that would merit their being entrusted with the execution of policies that were not without dangers.

I have often had disagreements with Mr. Adoula, but he is a political adversary whom I respect. None the less, to include him and Bomboko in my government would be to destroy my whole plan which seeks to gain the support of the masses and thus create a climate favorable to the restoration of law and order. I repeated to Mr. Spaak my reluctance at the moment to take back these two former ministers in whom I recognize fine qualities that might enable them to serve their country in the future, but the time was not yet. Later, perhaps, when I had disposed of more urgent tasks. I knew, of course, that the Congo should avail itself of all its intellectual forces, but we were a stop-gap regime and my government was one dedicated wholly to the welfare of the people. They expected from us new policies, and it would be regrettable if, in taking back some already discredited individuals, I should give the impression that the government of the country was going back to the old ways. I reminded the Belgian

Minister of the new constitution of the Congo; it was very clear. The transitory government is required to revitalize old departments and bring them into conformity with the times. It is not a normal government; it is a government in transition and I hoped that I might be allowed a free hand to make the most urgent and efficacious changes without having any spokes thrust in the wheels. We must hold elections to the Legislature and then proceed to the election of the President. Only then will things in general revert to normal.

I cannot assert that my arguments aroused the enthusiastic assent of Mr. Spaak, but he was glad to know that elections would be organized as soon as possible.

My readers may be a little surprised that I speak so freely of the various pressures to which I was subjected, or rather which I repulsed. I do not hesitate to speak of them because I know that similar pressures are brought to bear on the governments of all countries, and that mine was a relatively normal experience. I cannot pretend that I have not myself often exerted upon the Belgian government whatever pressure I could to achieve my ends. After all, that is politics.

I left Mr. Spaak after making another appointment for the discussion of Belgo-Congolese problems.

On the African scene at this period my enemies had not been inactive. At the Conference of formerly French African colonies held at Nouakchott on the 10th of February, my two representatives had been excluded.

My friends went into action immediately and induced the Mauritanian government to reverse this decision. In the course of this conference at Nouakchott the Organization for African and Malagasy cooperation was founded with a view to promoting the development of the former French colonies in Africa. I hoped that the Congo would be included in this enterprise and I won my point, for at the next conference at Abidjan on the 28th of May the Congo was invited to join the group. I regard this as a diplomatic victory and a sign, perhaps, that "moderate" Africa is gaining strength.

I went to Abidjan and had the comforting surprise of being warmly received by a quite considerable crowd. The affair in Cairo was still fresh in everybody's memory, and for the people of the Ivory Coast I was the man who had resisted the hostilities of Nasser. Friends crowded in upon me. They told me that the incident in Cairo had opened people's eyes and had recalled the lessons of history. They received me with sincere friendship in this land which the wise government of Mr. Houphouet-Boigny had made authentically African.

For the moment it was important that the realists in Africa should make it abundantly clear to the small fraction of extremists that they must renounce all thought of domination. Africa must choose her own friendships and alliances and cannot permit herself to have imposed upon her those which please Mr. Nasser.

Reviewing my achievements to date, I felt that I had succeeded in causing my country to be accepted anew in the "concert of Africa" and that I had been able to convince Africa of my single-minded determination to work exclusively for Africa and the Congo. I had

been able to bring about some of the most difficult decisions without ever losing sight of my main duty to promote the welfare of my people. I believed that I had gained every desirable end that it was possible to reach in the field of diplomacy. I still had hardly time to breathe, but I rejoiced now to be able to devote more time to the internal problems of my country.

PART IV
THE ADJUSTMENT OF
BELGO-CONGOLESE PROBLEMS

IV

The Adjustment of Belgo-Congolese Problems

If I was to promote the revival of our economy along sound lines, it was vitally important to resolve all matters in dispute between ourselves and the Belgians. The first task was to restore the credit of the Congo in the lending markets of the world, since in the past four years it had failed to honor its obligations. It would have been completely impossible for us to have met them. The debts were contracted by the colonial power, and the Congo recoiled strongly from the burden of a debt which she had not herself chosen to incur. A part of these debts had been guaranteed by Belgium, which continued to meet the charges upon them as its own credit was at stake, but this was not done without some little resentment on her part.

In retaliation Belgium continued to retain the share of the State in the colonial enterprises which was known as the famous "portfolio". In order to settle the difficulties arrangements would have to be made for the Congo to retrieve the portfolio, which means the control of her own economy, and on the other hand to give holders of Congolese securities, whether or not guaranteed by Belgium, a normal return or some legitimate compensation.

I have already alluded to these negotiations which from the start had given me much cause to worry. At Leopoldville President Kasavubu was beginning to show serious resentment over my successes. He did not wish me to go to Brussels to settle personally a problem the solution of which would delight public opinion in the Congo. The preparation of my brief on this subject was made somewhat tedious by reason of innumerable suggestions from people who felt they had good counsel to offer. For my part, I did not wish to engage in long, sterile argumentation, for I was assured that the wisest course would be for me to discuss the whole problem in Brussels as one businessman dealing with another. This would not prevent me from asking much of the Belgians, and possibly obtaining much.

I persuaded the Belgians to assume charge of the two-fifths of the foreign debt which had not carried their guarantee. From my intimate knowledge of Belgium and the Belgians, I think I am justified in claiming this as quite a remarkable success.

Difficulties mounted, however, when we came to the discussion of such vast parastatal organizations as the C.S.D. (which had already disappeared though its

assets had yet to be distributed) or the C.N.Ki. (the Comité National de Kivu). These were autonomous semi-private states within the state.

I was told in Brussels that objections had been raised in financial circles. In spite of his genius for negotiation, Mr. Spaak had been unable to arrive at a settlement. Heated arguments were in progress, and there was talk of discussion being broken off altogether. I therefore suggested to Mr. Spaak that I should go myself to speak to the interested parties. He wished me luck with a smile which indicated clearly that he did not entirely approve. Nevertheless, I succeeded, and we obtained from the Belgian businessmen what Mr. Spaak had failed to secure,—considerable concessions which may be summed up briefly in these terms: in addition to the participation of Belgium in the settlement of the foreign debt, the right of the Congo to the portfolio was recognized. The government of the Congo would control or recover extremely important participation in the largest enterprises and in all industrial fields such as transportation, power, mining and agricultural developments. The value of the portfolio was discussed, but I did not regard this as the most essential element. What really mattered was that thenceforth representatives of the government would be able to make their voices heard within the administrative bodies of all the important concerns; the Congo would have a precious instrument for the conduct of her political economy. Since the signing of that agreement the arrears of dividends due the Congo for five years have been paid.

The negotiation of these agreements had unhappily been preceded by a terribly sad event, the death of Sir Winston Churchill, a man whose character and life had

given a high example to all humanity. I was present at his funeral and I conveyed to his country and to his memory testimony of the great admiration of my country.

On that occasion I met a number of diplomats: Mr. Dean Rusk, who represented the United States, and several distinguished African personalities of international reputation, especially from various parts of formerly British Africa.

During the negotiations in Brussels I was received by King Baudouin. It was indeed a joy to me to discover how great an interest the King took in all things pertaining to the Congo and how solicitous he was for her good fortune and her future. I also had the pleasure in Brussels of addressing a well-informed gathering on the main lines we hoped to follow in the foreign relations of the Congo.

A few days later I returned to Leopoldville, bringing with me the agreements, the title deeds and dividends in a black leather attache case given me by Mr. Spaak, and once again I met with a warm and enthusiastic welcome at the hands of the large crowds that greeted me.

Here we were, the beneficiaries of a portfolio which should serve as the basis of my whole program for the development of our economy and for the modernization of our existing, traditional, economy. Next I drew up a project for a bank for development, and sent members of my Cabinet to Washington to coordinate its functions with the International Monetary Fund, which had aided the Congo for several years.

PART V
THE REVIVAL OF THE ECONOMY
AND FINANCIAL POLICIES

V

The Revival of the Economy and Financial Policies

The great discourses of Westerners on problems of development are generally good and high-sounding, but very misleading. They often testify to an almost total ignorance of the problems in hand. However, I must admit that my African colleagues often sin in similar fashion, since they have too often lost contact with the real Africa, the Africa of the peasants.

Am I repeating myself? For me there is only one purpose in politics, the furtherance of the happiness of the people, their joy and their prosperity. In the strange world in which we live happiness counts for nothing; the care one should have for it is supplanted by pride of achievement. There is preoccupation with the health of the people; there is much talk of prosperity, but of happiness never a word. Never does one hear a politician devote a speech to the subject of happiness. I think it is very important. If people were concerned with happiness in the feverish passion to create a technical

world, international politics would be very different. I do not deny that we must construct our world on technical lines but, if in doing so we lose sight of the main essential which is the happiness of the people, we shall never get honest politics.

One gains the impression that politics, in the actual state of affairs, has no thought of making people happy, but only of using them as in great maneuvers. But I suppose it has always been so.

In a sphere less redoubtable, but not less innocent, an accessory aim of politics seems to be the promotion of the prosperity of the politicians everywhere. There has been given too much publicity to the extravagant luxuries of certain African leaders for me to dare to affirm that we Africans dream only of the ideal and of the happiness of our people. But I think, indeed I am convinced, that African politics would be quite different if African statesmen could escape the thousand nefarious influences which have sought to guide them, if only they were able to elude the vast maneuvers of corruption that have afflicted Africa since independence. All the disorders and unrest made of our various countries an ideal hunting ground for light-fingered international gentry. In Europe and America bandits attack the banks, but with us they do not attack the banks; their swindles are much more profitable and less dangerous. Some day I may perhaps tell what I know of the activities of the crooks who invaded the new Africa to profit by the inevitable weaknesses of a period of transition as sudden as that of the last few years.

In contemplating the African economy one must not forget that eighty per cent of the population is

engaged in agriculture. A comparison of the money spent on agriculture with the sums expended in industrial and urban communities reveals the former in a highly unfavorable light. In a sense that is natural, for services in the zones of greater population are necessarily more costly in view of the greater demands of great masses of people. But the difference in Africa is enormous. It is no exaggeration to say that the peasants of Africa are abandoned to their own devices.

We have some excellent universities in Africa, complete and well equipped, but I do not know one that has a practical school for the study of agricultural development. I know one which has a good atomic reactor, the initial cost and the upkeep of which are far larger than would be the cost of creating a center for research in matters pertaining to agriculture. Our students are taught all the economic theories evolved and practiced in highly-developed countries, but they are given nothing practical in the important area of instructing our rural population. I know that this charge could be levelled at all the African universities which are institutions essentially suited to Western culture. I am aware that science knows no nationality, but it should be evident that the teaching of the humanities should not be the same in Africa as elsewhere. How many errors would have been avoided if the academic leaders had kept this problem in mind. It is certainly one of great difficulty, but it has never been seriously tackled with determination to find a solution.

In my opinion the universities, both black and white, deserve blame for neglecting the importance of this problem which is vital to our rural communities. It is true there is some research and some instruction in

agriculture, but it is not so much that which matters. It is, of course, highly important to teach and to improve the techniques of agriculture, but in rural Africa the point of primary significance lies in the field of psychology.

Belgium did initiate several "peasant schools". Some of these were notably successful—the income of the peasants grew with their increased productivity; but the fact remains that, once these practical technical demonstrations terminated, all the lessons learned were forgotten, and the African, who is obstinately conservative, returned to the old method of his ancestors in whom he has greater faith than in the "tricks of the whites" which he does not understand because they were not sufficiently explained to him. I know that such instruction is not easy and I know that many carefully prepared plans of development foundered. Why? Nobody really knows. It was certainly not because of laziness on the part of the African peasant, for he is considerably more enterprising than people think, despite the relative ease of subsistence which is his as a result of our favorable climate.

Why, then, have programs of rural development so often failed? It should be the task of some scientific body to grapple systematically with these problems, and to seek methods which could surely be found; to promote a form of rural development which would not be artificial and which would not be imposed by authoritarian technicians, a rural development which would be the work of the peasants themselves without the constraint of administrative pressure. *That* should be the goal. I have heard that in some parts of Africa a new class of relatively prosperous peasants has been born.

Nobody has ever been able to explain to me why what has proved possible in one region should not be equally attainable elsewhere.

It is true, of course, that the quality of the soils may have had something to do with some of the failures, but this explanation does not seem to me to be sufficient. The greater part of the Congo should be capable of extensive development in agriculture; indeed, the agricultural production in my country should be the largest of any part of Black Africa; we should be able to export our foodstuffs instead of having to buy them abroad as we are doing at present.

Whenever I fly over Africa and see its immense, fertile lands, I wonder how it could be possible that fear of famine should still exist. Occasionally I notice a solitary plantation in the middle of a vast expanse of neglected territory, and then I tell myself that one day that entire plain should be covered with similar prosperous plantations. What white colonizers were able to do in spots here and there, the Congolese peasant should be able to do wherever the soil permits. It is technically possible, but for that to be achieved it would be necessary to induce rural communities to organize efficiently with a clear understanding of what should be done.

The development of the economy of Africa must be supported by the development of rural communities whose prosperity would provide industry with the markets it needs.

Even though some small improvements may have occurred, the weakness of Congolese business still manifests itself everywhere in the country's old and established methods of trade. With few exceptions Congolese

shops are small and poorly managed; they do enable hundreds of thousands of my fellow-countrymen to eke out an existence, living from hand to mouth and buying provisions in the tiniest of quantities. For example, a shopkeeper will buy a packet of boxes of matches which he will sell at retail. Next he may buy a carton of cigarettes, sell these likewise at retail, and only go in search of a new supply when his small stock is completely exhausted. Another, perhaps a woman, has enough money to buy three fish; she sells them and then goes in search of another trifling supply. Imagine the lamentable loss of time and energy, and the economic waste all that involves!

The creation of the Bank of Development and the consequent easing of credit will some day change all this, but in the meantime the existing methods, bad as they are, permit large elements of our population to live. Utter destitution is rare in Africa. The situation is not at all like that of India where whole populations literally starve. We do have undernourishment, but rarely famine. However, the undernourishment suffices to put a brake on our progress. To correct this condition we should form active groups at all social levels, including university graduates. In Europe there is, of course, a vast range of intellectuals among whom we could always find some individuals exceptionally qualified in sociological affairs. In all societies it is only a small elite that lifts the masses to higher levels. The best, the most intelligent administration in the world would be but little effective without a few front-rank leaders to inspire it. In my opinion this is equally true of private institutions. An enterprise might have numerous excellent engineers and yet amount to little if the best of them did

not assume leadership and inspire both confidence and enthusiasm.

One of my most constant ambitions is to succeed in giving to all Congolese an opportunity to show their mettle, and I am certain that we shall be able to find among ourselves a sufficient number of gifted men to enable us gradually to dispense with the aid of foreign technicians.

Perhaps I should not have dealt with this problem in this chapter on economics, but it is important to bear these things in mind if one is to approach economic questions in a practical and efficacious manner. Too often it is forgotten that economics is not an end in itself, but an instrument of human beings for human beings. Some economists without sufficient human enlightenment pursue economics for the sake of economics. That can only lead to endless aberration.

But enough of these general problems.

For the moment we had to face a number of pressing problems. I cannot do better than recall the program I outlined when I became Prime Minister, a program which could not be implemented because of the dramatic convulsions which were shaking my country. I had been able to suppress the uprisings, but I was unable to effect our economic recovery. I still clung to this urgent need which was constantly in my mind, but I had not the time to devote myself to it with the entire concentration I could have wished.

My first task was to combat the ever-rising cost of living. This had attained alarming proportions by July 1964. I did succeed in reprovisioning the consumers' markets which had been alarmingly depleted.

My program for economic recovery was based on one fundamental truth—that any effort that neglected agriculture was bound to fail. I have already dealt with the difficulties that confront our agricultural development. I know that in this field it is impossible to work miracles. We must face things as they are and accept the Congolese farmer as he is—a hard worker, but unversed in modern techniques, and, above all, despondent after five years of misery.

For five years, in many parts of the country, the peasantry had not seen a trace of useful merchandise for sale. The greater part of imported products was kept for Leopoldville and other large centers, and none penetrated beyond. The income of the farmer was so limited that even if he found the goods he wanted they were priced beyond his means and he had to do without. He learned also to grow only sufficient for his own requirements. He knew from experience that in the absence of transportation his cotton would rot. One does not need many such failures to render nugatory all the efforts of the agricultural development services. No goods to buy, no production.

The most urgent problem clearly lay in the liberated areas where the excesses of the rebels had had the tragic result of dispersing the best of the Congolese agricultural centers.

The first task was to assure a minimum of administrative organization. It was for this reason that I decided to take immediate steps to create administrative services strongly officered by the best-qualified Belgian technicians. In August 1964 Belgium promised us 62 specialists comprising agriculturists, physicians, ac-

countants, public works, etc. The purpose of these groups was to reactivate essential services. They were given autonomous powers and were highly paid. The plan assured a pliable and efficient administration, wherever it was put in operation, as fast as the arrival of the Belgian technicians permitted.

During the academic vacations of 1965 the students of higher learning joined these forces of reconstruction in the zones that had suffered the rebellion; several groups went into the regions of Stanleyville and Paulis. This was for them a magnificent opportunity to blend their theoretical learning with the practical realities, and at the same time to manifest their solidarity with the nation. For the regions which did not suffer from the rebellion and where the administrative offices had not been disturbed but functioned poorly as a result of weakness in the central offices, I requested Belgium to help by the installation of centers of instruction for the formation of an administrative service along the lines of that established at Jadotville in 1960. I felt that such schools would enable the Congo to improve existing services and make them more adaptable to changing conditions, for the administration could not remain exactly the same as under the colonial system.

In the realm of specifically agricultural matters, I started an experiment in the region of Sandoa. A committee was formed of responsible citizens of the area consisting of lawyers, heads of businesses, local officials and representatives of any existing organizations promoting any form of development. This formula brought local leaders together and afforded means of coordinating their activities in a strictly delimited

geographical area and seemed to offer the best chance of success.

In the same spirit a number of agricultural plans were presented to the businessmen of the European community in the hope of raising a European loan for development.

I was preoccupied with the problem of industrial development, as it was obviously impossible to do much to raise the standard of living of the masses without industry. The Congo had been fortunate enough already to possess some equipment of various types, but unhappily the rebellion wrought considerable destruction. Not a single lorry or truck remained undamaged. It was therefore necessary to take immediate steps to repair all damaged equipment so that accustomed activities of vital importance to the economy of the region might be resumed. The security of the land obviously depended on all available means of transport. Considerable credits for re-equipment would be required.

I was at this time doing everything in my power to encourage the creation of new industries. There was little Congolese capital, and it was therefore necessary to seek capital from abroad, taking care at the same time to retain general control of our economy. For this reason I caused to be promulgated a set of laws governing investments. I introduced methods whereby the government would be associated with foreign investors, and in spite of great difficulties I had the pleasure of seeing created a number of new enterprises in the Congo which changed raw materials into finished products.

One hears much about the economic independence of countries that are being newly developed, and it is

assuredly a goal worth attaining, but it is obvious that such countries cannot by their own capital resources alone reach a sufficiently rapid rate of acceleration for their immediate industrial needs. It is consequently necessary to turn to foreign investors. This is inevitable, and it often holds good even for many already highly-developed countries, among which not even the most powerful can pretend to be entirely economically independent.

For us the problem is to make sure that foreign aid does not impose upon us too great a dependence either on the financiers or on the foreign countries. This is indeed of prime importance. There are certain steps that must be taken even though they may not be pleasing to everybody. We must face the facts squarely. Objectively we must face the realities of a situation, and not too easily accept ready-made ideas which may be cleverly presented to us with excellent slogans, but which might also involve us in more trouble than profit. It is precisely in this domain that we must preserve absolute objectivity of mind. After all, independence of mind is the most important of all forms of independence; it is that which will enable us to attain our ends despite all the difficulties that confront us because of our weakness.

Another of my urgent tasks was to put an end to the pillage of our resources by the international crooks I have already mentioned. Some importers have lent

themselves to profitable operations by invoicing their imported goods at fictitiously high prices. The losses thus caused to buyers have been estimated as high as twenty million dollars annually. I imposed a strict control of the quality and quantity of all imported merchandise.

But the most spectacular fraud, without doubt occurred in connection with the diamond. It is estimated that at times the fraudulent export of diamonds equaled the value of our officially controlled production. The annual loss to the national exchequer is believed to have run to six million dollars. Thousands of peasants abandoned their fields to pursue their search for diamonds in secret quarries.

The suppression of these frauds is particularly difficult because it involves fighting against the conviction of the people that the diamond is free to everybody, and that anybody finding it may sell it to the traffickers who infest our country. Control is both difficult and unpopular.

Quite apart from the national loss caused by these frauds, they wrought a certain demoralizing effect on the people of the region. Why cultivate laboriously a field of corn if there are diamonds to be picked up which provide easy profits?

The measures I introduced enabled us to bring about in two months a marked reduction in this illicit trade.

The financial condition of the country had suffered seriously. The cost of restoring peace and of adminis-

trative and economic reconstruction had been very great, and far surpassed the means at our disposal. It had been necessary to pay the provinces various grants and subventions which had not been checked for many months because of weakness of administration, and these had risen by 22% in 1965 as against 1964. The cost of education had also risen considerably, and in 1965 we had to pay arrears of wages covering periods of 15 to 20 months.

The rebels had taken nearly two thousand million francs from the various branches of the national bank in the interior. Military expenses had grown to dizzy heights. In 1961 they amounted to two thousand million francs; in 1964 they were six thousand million, and in 1965 they were over sixteen thousand million.

The disorganization of the Department of Finance made it difficult to make collections, and this naturally increased the budgetary deficit. Radical efforts at straightening out this chaos were urgently needed, and steps were taken to engage a team of specialists to introduce simplified methods of management and more effective methods of control.

But serious as these monetary difficulties were it must not be forgotten that both monetary instability and military expenditures were caused by the serious troubles the country had been called upon to face. Moreover, to attempt to restore the monetary situation by decrees and ordinances would be like trying to reduce the fever of a patient without dealing with his sickness. For measures in the domain of economics and finance to be effective there must be a degree of solid stability within the country, but for the attainment of this there was still, alas, much to be done.

PART VI
POLITICAL RECONSTRUCTION
AND
PRESIDENT KASAVUBU

VI

Political Reconstruction

and

President Kasavubu

I was advancing rapidly with the prosecution of my mission. The rebellion was not yet conquered, but it was broken and exhausted. I had restored the diplomatic prestige of my country and I had laid the foundation for economic recovery. I should have liked to have been able to devote all my time and energy to that recovery, but I could not forget that I also had the duty to organize elections and to prepare for the creation of new institutions. My own predilection would have been to give first importance to economic matters, but I had to admit that it was necessary to accelerate the transition to the required new constitutional regime.

If my efforts were not to be in vain, it would be necessary for me to lean on a national political foundation with as broad a base as possible. Up to this point I had been above parties, but because of the innumerable political divisions in my country it was necessary for me

to take the initiative to create a movement of unification which would embrace all the politicians who realized that the time had come to close ranks.

With this end in mind I convoked a congress of all political parties at Luleabourg to form the National Congolese Convention which became know as Conaco (i.e., *Convention Nationale Congolaise*). I succeeded in convincing the greater part of my listerners; and the Conaco would include all the parties except those who vaunted themselves as the followers of Lumumba, and also, except Abako; the party of Mr. Kasavubu. The Abako assured me of their sympathy and support, but stated that they preferred to remain a completely independent political party.

Conaco circulated lists of those seeking election, and I was overjoyed to find among them the names of men who had been until then some of my most formidable political opponents. Here they were now, at the time of the elections, my friends! I was glad to accept them, as their presence might help considerably towards the nationwide reconciliation for which I longed. But my very power at that moment testified to the fragile nature of Conaco, for everybody knew that in order to be elected a candidate had to be a "Tshombist"; and I had good reason to fear that many were rallying to my colors simply as opportunists and that they would not last beyond what they considered opportunity. I hoped that the days of opportunity might be prolonged and that necessity and advantage would keep my new friends in a state of relative fidelity to me so that the Conaco might become sufficiently strong to prove itself successful in the service of the Congo.

The rebellion was no longer the grave menace it had been previously. Fear had diminished and in some political circles the feeling grew that perhaps a favorable moment had arrived for them to resume the game that had made the fortunes of many. As fear dissolved, schism and divisions revived.

Elections took place throughout the land and were supervised by official observers from other African countries. These observers expressed surprise at the meticulous care with which we observed the rules of democratic elections. These foreign observers travelled throughout the Congo, and they all confirmed the regularity of our electoral operations. Conaco made large gains, and I was assured of the control of both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

From the moment that the results of the election were known, my opponents, who were highly dissatisfied, laid plans to diminish my influence. Candidates who had lost sought under all kinds of pretexts to have the results annulled. They lost no time in seeking the support of President Kasavubu to declare the elections void in certain regions where they hoped to be able to manipulate things more satisfactorily for themselves.

In short, now that I had succeeded in bringing about an improvement of conditions in the Congo, and had been able to revive people's hopes, a number of politicians wanted to get rid of me and they set themselves immediately to the task. An insidious task it was. They were well aware that the weakest link in the

political chain was President Kasavubu. The situation called for the closest and strongest alliance between the President and myself, but what I have already described of his reception of me on my return to the government sufficed to show that the President had not the least desire for such an entente. Throughout the months I had had many disagreements with him. He had been full of mistrust and he had viewed with the utmost disfavor the growth of my popularity and the decline of his own. My enthusiastic supporters rendered me a poor service that day when they surged forward to greet me at Kitona in the presence of President Kasavubu, who went to his place completely unnoticed. Since then I have always been careful to avoid arriving before crowds at the same time as the President, but the damage was already done. President Kasavubu was convinced that I intended to run for the office of the Presidency of the Republic, and that if I did I would be elected. My political opponents did not fail to encourage this conviction and urged him to withdraw from me at the earliest possible moment my appointment as Prime Minister.

For my part I did everything possible to appease the President. I assured him that I had no desire whatever to be a candidate in this election, and I felt that Kasavubu could usefully retain his position as long as he permitted me as Prime Minister to govern the country. I even suggested to him a "gentlemen's agreement" on this point. I knew, of course, that under the new constitution the essential powers would be entrusted to the Prime Minister, but I was convinced that the interests of the country demanded that the President and I should establish between ourselves the closest and most faithful degree of collaboration, and that together

we could evolve a method of government as efficient as humanly possible.

Mr. Kasavubu wanted none of this. He became more and more unfriendly toward me; but, being determined to do everything possible to arrive at the desired entente, I denied that there was any conflict between us and I extolled his great wisdom. All my attempts at charm were of no avail in my efforts to allay the suspicions of him who was called the Sphinx of Mount Stanley. Mr. Kasavubu was mistrust incarnate. He was persuaded that I wanted his job, and suddenly he attacked. He granted interviews in which he declared that it was he, and he alone, who held all the powers.

In this he was wrong, for the normal regime of the new constitution was not yet in force; the president had simply had his functions prolonged at the end of his original term in order that there might be no break in legally constituted government. That was what was desired at the convention of Luluabourg, which had established a careful program for the induction of the new institutions by the provisional government.

President Kasavubu could not bear the thought that it was I who directed the presidential election and he had made up his mind to do everything possible to thwart me. He wanted me to resign. He presented this as being merely an indication of his wish scrupulously to observe the constitution, but that document specifically requires that the government resign at the end of the presidential term six months after the election of the new parliament. I reminded him that the new constitution clearly provided for a transitory regime to act for a period in order to pave the way for the newly-elected ministers, including the new President of the Republic.

Only then would the term of the present regime end. It would start the new, the normal, regime, and he, Kasavubu, who had not been called upon to vow allegiance to it, had no authority to assume powers which did not properly belong to him.

I refused to resign but he insisted, seeking to convince me that it was a mere formality. I would resign and he would at once reappoint me as Prime Minister. I suggested that his logic was somewhat bizarre: if he was going to reappoint me, what need was there of my resignation?

About that time I had been thinking that the moment had come to widen the base of my government, and I had prepared a reshuffling of ministers. Since the departure of Mr. Munongo, who had been elected Governor of Katanga-Oriental, I had been without a Minister of the Interior. The replacement of this minister had been on my mind and was one appointment that needed to be made. And then, suddenly, I learned from the newspapers that I already had a new Minister of the Interior. Without consulting me, the President had appointed Mr. Nendaka.

I knew that Mr. Nendaka had been elected as a "Tshombist", but he had also been among the most active individuals in throwing fuel on the fire of differences between Kasavubu and myself. He had virtually declared war by quitting Conaco and forming a new political group which he called the Democratic Front of the Congo.

This was the beginning of deep confusion which was to continue several weeks and which poisoned the whole political climate. I saw all my work of recovery

rapidly dissolve before this offensive, the purpose of which was to subvert my authority and clip my wings now that I had successfully taken all measures necessary for the recovery of the Congo. My party still remained the strongest, but intrigues to weaken it were assiduously promoted. Conaco resisted. There would be a few deserters, but they would not be sufficient to reverse our majority. None the less, the political climate deteriorated rapidly.

Parliament was to meet on the 13th of October. On the 8th Kasavubu called on me again to resign. I refused. I argued at length that we should place the interests of the country above those of individuals. I pointed out that the nation had not yet been brought to complete safety, and that the attitude of the President would expose the whole country to new disaster. He listened to me with a scornful smile, but I persisted and told him that his action might well cause a recrudescence of all the troubles of the recent past and might serve as the spark to revive all the political quarrels I had sought to reconcile. He continued to smile; he said not a word; he would never speak to me again.

I left in despair. I knew he would dismiss me at the inaugural session of Parliament. On the eve of that session I dined with General Mobutu and Colonel Mulamba. The latter had just returned from Stanleyville and was feeling much disturbed about the situation in that area. When he learned of the President's attitude he declared: "Kasavubu must be mad! He must be informed immediately that if he dissolves the present Government the rebellion will be resumed with new courage. I have just returned from the interior. I know how the people feel. I know their sense of unrest. They

have placed all their hope on Tshombe. To deprive them of Tshombe is to invite catastrophe.”

Mobutu then decided to see Kasavubu and explain, as he told me, all the dangers of his plans. Mulamba suggested that he accompany the General, but Mobutu thought it preferable that he should go alone, which is what he did. Kasavubu had already retired, and left his bed to see the General. I do not know what passed between them, but several hours later Mobutu telephoned me to say that the President had obstinately refused to change his decision.

The following morning Mobutu, who feared possible trouble following the session, redoubled his measures of security and provided an armed escort to protect the President.

I was deeply disturbed when I arrived in Parliament that morning. My thoughts were in turmoil. Should I submit to the President's action, illegal though it was, or should I protest, since I was certain of my majority? I finally decided to accept the blow even though I knew that my friends would reproach me for allowing this to happen to me. I felt that this was the safer course. Resistance on my part might have led to the gravest complications, possibly even to civil war.

In dismissing me Kasavubu bestowed on Parliament an interminable address. He recognized the achievements of the Government. Then he changed his tone, and in a trembling voice pronounced the dissolution of the government. I forced myself to show not the least emotion; the other Members of Parliament were stupefied. Some hissed the President; others were silent, breathless with surprise. I felt all eyes upon me,

seeking to gauge my reaction. If, at that moment, I had protested, I am certain that I would have had all my friends behind me. But I had decided on silence and I said nothing.

That evening I attended President Kasavubu's reception on the opening of Parliament.

PART VII
IN OPPOSITION

VII

In Opposition.

It simply remained to watch developments. Kasavubu must name a new Prime Minister. He chose my former collaborator, Mr. Evariste Kimba, who, like me, comes from Katanga. No doubt he hoped in choosing Kimba to ease the shock to the people of Katanga. He had good reason to think of this, for Katanga is well known for its solidarity, and it deeply resented my dismissal.

It was not in the name of our old friendship that I reproached Mr. Kimba for having lent himself to this shady game. It was simply that he had allowed himself to fall into a trap. He was delighted to find himself Prime Minister; he did not see that he would find himself inevitably a pawn in the hands of Mr. Nendaka. That is precisely what happened.

There followed a period of utter lunacy. Kasavubu and Kimba formed a government in which they appointed ministers without prior consultation with the individuals involved. This was particularly noteworthy in the case of Mr. Kibwe, whom they made Minister of Finance, another sop to the people of Katanga. My supporters were astonished when they heard that Kibwe had joined the new government, but Mr. Kibwe was in Brussels and only learned of his nomination in a news broadcast on the Brussels radio. He promptly declared to a reporter of *La Libre Belgique* who interviewed him that he would remain loyal to his party and that he would not accept the appointment. He requested the reporter to state categorically that he refused to participate in the government of Kimba.

This was a serious jolt to the plans of Mr. Kimba. The pretense was made in Leopoldville that the report of Mr. Kibwe's refusal was false, but he returned to Leopoldville a few days later and confirmed his rejection of the post. Quite apart from his loyalty to his party, Mr. Kibwe was aware that this adventure in government would be short-lived.

I led the opposition in Parliament. There was some discussion on regulations to govern proceedings in the House, and I decided to test my majority. It held; it had actually increased a trifle. On the 5th of November I introduced a motion condemning the attitude of Kasavubu, demanding that he submit immediately the names of his ministers for the consideration of Parliament. However, the constitution permitted the President a period of one month; and Kasavubu, Kamitatu, and Nendaka took advantage of this delay to seek international recognition. The president and Kamitatu, Minis-

ter of Foreign Affairs of the "government" of Kimba, went to Accra where a meeting of the O.U.A. was being held. They received a warm welcome at the hands of Mr. Nkrumah. They announced the intention of the Congo to reconcile all the members of that body by dismissing the foreign volunteers from the national army. They were ready to surrender everything and in a few days they succeeded handsomely in producing a highly compromising situation.

Meanwhile, in Leopoldville, General Mobutu was deeply disturbed by the news from Accra, and he proclaimed flatly that there could be no question of discharging the foreign volunteers as long as he needed them. The President returned from Accra. He expected a triumphal reception, but he was greeted only with derision except at Dendale, a city in which he had formerly been burgomaster. The Congolese people did not approve; they were full of anxiety, fearing that the "pretender" government was leading them to new troubles. The people clung to me and begged me, wherever I went, to resume power. I sought to calm them as much as I could.

Finally President Kasavubu could delay no longer. He had to submit the names of his cabinet to the vote of Parliament. He resorted to tactics of surprise by convoking the assembly late on Saturday evening for the following Sunday morning, November 14th. It was clear that the followers of Nendaka and Kasavubu had been warned not to leave Leopoldville, whereas the members of my party had left town for their weekend rest. The leaders of my party pursued the absent ones and succeeded in bringing most of the Conaco members back in time. On the morrow the vote presented the President

with the snub of rejection. Confidence was refused by 134 against 121, with seven abstentions.

Anger choked the President but he did not surrender. He renamed Mr. Kimba to form a new government and secured a further delay of one month before it would be submitted to Parliament for approval. It was prodigiously ridiculous.

Dismay grew in Leopoldville over this unconscionable procedure and, as anxiety grew, the new government lost authority. On the radio of Leopoldville a violent campaign was launched against me and against Belgium. The foreign press of Leopoldville found itself the object of very definite threats. Several journalists were arrested and expelled. As for the official government journal of Leopoldville, *Le Progres*, it raged in a delirium of hate against me and my friends. A truly vigorous campaign was launched.

Mr. Nendaka invented a Belgian military plot to bring about the fall of Kasavubu. I felt a degree of anxiety for my own safety.

Throughout the Congo there was agitation; there was talk of revolt against the new government which appeared to the people as one favoring the capital as against the provinces. I had defended the interests of the provinces; I was the man of the provinces, and it was as such that I had brought so much new hope to the people.

Then, on the 25th of November, General Mobutu intervened. He relieved Kasavubu of his office and proclaimed himself President of the Republic "ad interim". The tension felt in Leopoldville immediately relaxed. There was a great sense of relief, and I felt it

myself. I congratulated the General and promised him my support towards a rapid return to our normal institutions. I urged my party to support him to this end.

What happened thereafter was most extraordinary, and no doubt it is too soon for me to be able to give all the details. But just as everybody thought that the General had made his coup d'état in order to revert to the legally established form of government and to organize a presidential election, it was suddenly announced that he had cancelled everything and had assumed the presidency for five years. All of a sudden this general, who had always said that he would never engage in politics, had developed a strange taste for it.

I hoped to be able to bring him back to reason. I argued that his regime could never be anything but a military dictatorship and that he would soon find himself confronted by immense difficulties. He knew that he still had need of me, for if at that moment I had opposed him I would have plunged my country into new seas of trouble.

For these reasons I urged my friends to pass a vote of confidence in Mulamba's government, but already the constitution had been profoundly modified by the unilateral decision of General Mobutu, and the Parliament had been reduced to impotence.

Immediately after the vote in Parliament the General moved away from me. I knew that his Belgian entourage approved of his attitude. Once again the Belgians had astonished me.

Constantly the Belgians send new representatives to deal with their interests, and always these new arrivals

have to go through the same apprenticeship in Africa before they learn that they have totally misconceived the realities of the land. But meanwhile the damage is done. And after these emissaries have finally learned to understand a little, they will be replaced by the newcomers who will unfailingly make the same mistakes.

EPILOGUE

Epilogue

Following the coup d'état of General Mobutu, there was nothing much for me to do in the Congo. My presence might even complicate the new situation which may perhaps give my country a new chance. Despite everything, I hope this may prove to be the case, but to tell the truth I have grave doubts as to the General's success. Although he has often shown great courage, his friends know that he can be both weak and impulsive. In his hands the Congo is in danger of new perils, but could I refuse him his chance?

My health had suffered as a result of fifteen months of intense activity and anxious strain, and so I decided to consult my physicians in Brussels and to take a few weeks' rest in Europe. My intention was to return to the Congo as soon as my health permitted, and to resume the leadership of my party, the Conaco, and my role in Parliament.

In the meantime General Mobutu passed an ordinance whereby he could ignore the Parliament, since it refused to follow him. However, the same Parliament, a few weeks later, voted supinely in favor of anything the President desired. In particular, it voted to deprive me of my seat in Parliament. The only way I can explain this change in Parliament is that it was obtained by terroristic compulsion. Actually, anybody who dared to criticize General Mobutu was in danger of death.

The people were given evidence that this was a very real danger, for Mobutu caused the public execution of four highly important political personages,—Messrs. Kimba, Mahamba, Bamba and Anany—after a mockery of a trial which shocked the whole civilized world.

I was deeply pained to see my country kneel before a military dictatorship. Every type of dictatorship is hateful to me, but a number of friends have told me that I was wrong in this detestation and wrong to have persevered in my policy, which was to be firm but also conciliatory when conciliation seemed possible. I have never wished to compel anybody to follow me. I would hate any terroristic policy. My policy was to govern while seeking to explain things to the masses, and gaining their support. I still regard this as the proper way to govern in Africa, and in this way it would be possible to create a real democracy of an authentic African type.

I do not believe that dictatorships will succeed in Africa. Everywhere they have resulted in bloodshed even when the original intentions of the dictators were benevolent. Do not all dictatorships start out with good intentions, only to end in the most frightful tragedies?

The dictatorship we see at work in Leopoldville already shows the beginnings of a horrible period for my country, which has surely suffered enough in the past five years.

The regime of General Mobutu cannot last. Law and order hang on the slenderest thread. It is by weakness that Mobutu has become a tyrant. He reigns by terror, his ultimate resource. It is inevitable that his regime must crumble before the rage of the people. All the newspaper reporters have testified to the fear that gripped the crowds during the executions in Leopoldville. They were all shocked; they all felt fear.

They will not always be afraid, and it seems to me to be inevitable that they will one day seek to liberate themselves.

Alas, the Congo which I had succeeded in rescuing from a lamentable situation now moves forward to new dramatic tragedy.

Ostend, March 1966.
Paris, June 1966.

