

AN INTERVIEW WITH MOISE TSHOMBE

On June 30, 1964, the Congo will have completed its fourth year as an independent state. This anniversary has particular significance this year, for on June 30, 1964 the Loi Fondamentale (Basic Law), which has been the legal foundation for the present Congolese government, expires. It is also the day on which the United Nations is scheduled to withdraw from the Congo. It takes little imagination, therefore, to realize that this summer will be as important for the Congo as was the fateful summer of 1960.

Many things have happened during these four years, not the least of which ^{has been} ~~was~~ the emergence of one of the most dynamic political personalities of ^{Africa} ~~our time~~, Dr. Moise Tshombe, President of the Province of Katanga. Few men have risen to world prominence as quickly and dramatically as President Tshombe, and certainly no other anti-Communist leader outside the United States has attracted as great and enthusiastic a following among anti-Communists ^{in this country.} ~~within the United States, as did Dr. Tshombe.~~ ^{as the Katangan President.}

It was with these thoughts in mind that this writer went to Madrid during the week of May 18th to interview ^{Pres. Tshombe} ~~the great man~~ and find out what he is now doing and what his role is likely to be during the Congo's new period of crisis.

The key to everything which has happened in the Congo since the UN's last assault on Katanga was Tshombe's acceptance of the U Thant Plan on December 2, 1962, which ended Katanga's secession. What was the U Thant Plan? It was a proposal put forth by the Secretary General of the United Nations, calling for the creation of a Federal system in the Congo whereby the Provinces would cede to the Leopoldville Government certain limited powers, retaining for themselves a good deal of local autonomy. The Plan-- which was to be guaranteed by the governments of Great Britain, Belgium and the United States in its ~~honest~~ honest implementation--had been sent to President Tshombe on August 24, 1962. U Thant had given Tshombe ten days in which to accept it. However, it wasn't until December 2, 1962 that Tshombe accepted the Plan. The reason for the delay? The Plan required Katanga to implement its side of the agreement (surrender of its sovereignty) ~~before~~ without any guarantee that the Central Government would honor its side of the bargain. Certainly, judging from past experience, the Katangans had no reason to put their trust in the United Nations or the Leopoldville Government which had already tried once to destroy them, but unsuccessfully. But Tshombe was subjected to unbelievable pressures from many sources to accept the Plan. Senator Dodd, Tshombe's most eloquent defender in the United States Senate, had surrendered to Pres. Kennedy's pressure and urged Tshombe to accept the Plan. Lord Home of Great Britain wrote to Tshombe assuring him that the Plan would be guaranteed by Her Majesty's Government. Tshombe's best friends in the United States, Belgium and England were ~~xx~~ enlisted by their respective governments to urge Tshombe to accept the Plan. And last but not least, our

own Pres. Kennedy ~~sent~~^h George McGee to Elizabethville with his own personal message assuring Tshombe that the United States Government would guarantee the ~~in~~ full and honest implementation of the U Thant Plan.

Thus, on December 2, 1962, President Tshombe accepted the U Thant Plan, ~~thereby~~^{thereby} ~~thus~~^{ally} formally ending Katanga's secession. However, Tshombe's implementation of the Plan was too slow for the United Nations, which then staged its final and bloodiest assault on Katanga during Christmas of 1962. This ruthless and brutal attack forced Tshombe to accept an immediate, unconditional implementation of all of the Plan's provisions with only a paper guarantee that the Central Government would uphold its side of the agreement. From then on, Katanga was virtually occupied territory. Conditions rapidly deteriorated, and the economic and social chaos which Tshombe and his government had struggled so hard to prevent from coming, spread throughout Katanga like a plague. Finally, Tshombe fell victim to a poisoning plot and was forced to fly to Europe to save his life. ¶ Months later, fully recovered, Tshombe is once more deeply involved in the political life of the Congo. Although his base is Madrid, where he maintains an office in a quiet residential area, he keeps in close touch with the day-by-day happenings in the Congo. As the Congo crisis deepens and the threat of Communist terrorism becomes more serious, Tshombe still offers the anti-Communists the leadership they need. No other political figure in the Congo enjoys his prestige or his popularity. But so far, the State Department has given every indication that it prefers chaos to anti-~~pro-Western~~ Communism. Will Tshombe be given the chance to form a new/government in Leopoldville? We shall know the answer to this question ~~in the next few months~~ fairly soon. *In the meanwhile, what follows are the questions asked by the writer and Pres. Tshombe's replies.*

Do you believe that ~~there will be a~~ it will be possible to reconstruct a free Katanga?

I have always been for a Federal form of government, as exemplified by the United States. Besides, ~~the~~ Article 1 of the Constitution of Katanga foresaw a Federation with the other states of the Congo. Since the U Thant Plan envisaged a Federal Constitution for the entire Congo, Katanga, by my declaration of January 14, 1963, accepted the complete application of this Plan, and since then our goal has been well defined: to see realized the reconstruction of a Federal ~~state~~ state in the Congo in which Katanga will find its place.

1. IS THE SECESSION OF KATANGA NOW A CLOSED CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF THE CONGO?

On numerous occasions, I have solemnly declared that the secession of Katanga is a closed affair. It no longer exists.

The Congo, by way of the U.N. which used a gigantic war machine in Katanga, has obtained what it wanted: not so much to get rid of a "secession" (which was purely a political problem) but to reduce Katanga and all of its inhabitants to the moral and material level of misery which is now ~~the~~ ^{the rule} ~~known~~ throughout all of the regions of the former Belgian Congo. The U Thant Plan was only an instrument to accelerate and justify the ultimate ~~trial~~ trial of force in Katanga and the destruction of the entire economic-social structure of Katanga. It is therefore a closed chapter of history. What we must concern ourselves with today--and all of my efforts are directed toward that end--is the reconstruction of the entire Congo, ~~not only Katanga.~~ ^{not only}

2. WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE U THANT PLAN?

The U Thant Plan, like every project or law for the Congo which has ^{had its} ~~originated~~ ^{origin} ~~had its origin~~ outside the Congo, ^{is} ~~will be~~ destined to failure. Since the failure of the ~~provisional~~ ^(to fundamental) ~~provisional~~ ^{fundamental} basic law drawn up by our former colonizer, it has been demonstrated that only an agreement ^{among} ~~between~~ the Congolese themselves is possible. The proof of this is that all of the Congolese leaders who got together at Brazzaville succeeded in arriving at an understanding with one another. Foreign influences subsequently intervened, thus destroying the first results of a genuine reconciliation. At the present moment, the U Thant Plan has been forgotten. Leopoldville uses it only in rare instances when it wants to justify its policy toward Katanga.

3. WHY HAVEN'T THE UNITED NATIONS INSISTED THAT THE LEOPOLDVILLE GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENT THE U THANT PLAN?

The United Nations have much too often demonstrated that they were completely at the disposition of the Congolese Central Government. Besides, I am convinced that if certain elements within the United Nations had dared to loyally implement the plan in its entirety, there would have been an immediate opposing reaction from the Afro-Asian bloc. In short, the UN has put itself entirely at the service of the Congolese government, carries out its orders and, paradoxically, declares that it cannot interfere in the internal affairs of the Congo when it is a matter of implementing and respecting the proposals of the Plan.

4. WHY HAVEN'T THE GUARANTEEING POWERS**GREAT BRITAIN, THE UNITED STATES AND BELGIUM--SEEN TO IT THAT THE PLAN WAS IMPLEMENTED?

In the rare instances when the governments of these three nations have protested the non-application of the Thant Plan, they have come up against the opposition of the Central Government. In addition, one must not overlook that very powerful economic interests are ^{involved} ~~at stake~~. I assume therefore quite simply, but with great bitterness, that justice and honesty are scuttled when financial interest becomes primordial.

DO YOU THINK THAT THE U THANT PLAN WAS SIMPLY ONE OF MANY CYNICAL MEASURES TAKESⁿ TO HELP YOUR ENEMIES TAKE CONTROL OF KATANGA?

5. I believe that the U Thant Plan, in the eyes of those who conceived it and guaranteed it, constituted simply a ~~trial~~ trial balloon, a means of attempting to impose an agreement.

But, in order for ~~there to be~~ a reconciliation of any kind, the parties involved must have some notion of fair play. This, ^{to be just, etc.} ~~is certainly~~ ~~not~~ was not the case in respect to certain Congolese authorities who openly declared their intention of taking control of Katanga using whatever means they could.

6 HAS THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT RESPECTED THE AMNESTY PROMISED TO POLITICAL PRISONERS IN JANUARY 1963?

The general amnesty, which was included in the Thant Plan, has never been put into practice. Thousands of Congolese are still suffering because of this. Many have had to leave the country, and many ~~of these~~ others who have wanted to leave have not been able to obtain passports, which was one of their rights under the amnesty.

7 WILL THE UNITED NATIONS TROOPS LEAVE THE CONGO IN JUNE 1964? IF SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL BE THE RESULTS?

I have hopes that this withdrawal will ~~permit~~ create a situation in which we Africans will be left to resolve ~~our~~ problems among ~~ourselves~~ ourselves. At the same time, ~~(je redoute)~~ ^{few then} I expect some social adjustments will take place and I agree with General Mobutu who has declared that the withdrawal of the UN might cause some eruptions of violence. However, I want to emphasize that the intervention of the UN in the Congo has been a complete failure, financially, politically, and most serious of all from the human point of ~~our~~ view, and this has been true all over the Congo. Besides, the maintenance of these troops on our soil has only added to the degradation of our country. Even with the presence of ~~the~~ UN forces, tribal warfare has broken out, and insurrectional movements have ^{arisen} ~~been born~~ and are imposing their reign of terror from one end of the Congo to the other.

8 ARE POLITICAL ARRESTS STILL TAKING PLACE IN THE CONGO?

Such arrests take place daily in the Congo. The ~~smallest~~^{slightest} pretext is used to deprive those of liberty who hold views different from those imposed by the Central Government. For example, I know that several members of my household have been arrested for the sole reason that they ~~worked for~~^{were close to} me. I have received no news at all from some of them. And what is happening among those close to me is happening to many others in every region of the Congo. In Leopoldville, notably, they have ^{even} arrested and imprisoned ~~even~~ those newspaper editors who have dared publish the truth concerning the present situation. Freedom of opinion no longer exists; it is stifled by the fear of arrest, and even the fear of violence and murder. Everyday we hear of arrests of political leaders. Only a few days ago we learned of the murder of ~~xxx~~ several political personalities in North Katanga by the so-called forces of order.

9 WILL GENERAL ELECTIONS BE HELD IN THE CONGO AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF UNITED NATIONS FORCES?

According to the provisions of the new Constitution which was drawn up at Luluabourg, general elections are theoretically supposed to take place. They have been promised several times by the Central Government. In the climate which now prevails in the Congo, I doubt that these elections will take place freely.

IS THERE ANY POSSIBILITY THAT THESE ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE IN AN
ATMOSPHERE OF FREEDOM?

It is difficult to conceive ~~at the circumstances~~ of free and legal elections at a time when the government itself is acting outside of legality. All of our people are moved by one desire: to live in peace, and before sending them to the polls, it is absolutely necessary that ~~several~~ ^{valid} political figures the few valid political figures who still remain in the Congo come to some agreement among themselves. Only on such a basis will it be possible to recreate a valuable and solid political system which will be able to create confidence in the people and enabled them to once more lead normal lives.

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WHAT WERE THE RESULTS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION'S WORK IN LULUABOURG?

I do not have great confidence in the ~~new~~ Constitution which was drawn up in Luluabourg. In the first place, the conditions under which the Constitution was put together astound me: they were not democratic and the men who were involved did not represent the country. In the second place, one must ask oneself this: ^{since} the Congolese authorities have never respected anything, neither the ~~1st~~ ^{fundamental} ~~Law~~ ^{Basic Law}, ~~nor~~ ^{neither} the agreements of Brazzaville, of Tananarive and of Coquilhatville, nor the U Thant Plan; what chance is there that they will respect the decrees of the Constitution which ^{sets up} ~~(preconceive)~~ a presidential regime which ^{severely} ~~limits~~ ~~(a-outrance)~~ ^{preside} parliamentary powers? ~~Even more~~, such a solution is not a formula appropriate to the aspirations of our people and does not serve in the interests of the country.

10 WILL THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION BE IMPLEMENTED? ^{adopted}

Theoretically, ~~any~~ everything is possible. But above all, it is necessary for the people to ratify the Constitution in the course of a referendum. ^{even} I know what the Congolese cannot be in accord ^a with the principles of ~~the~~ Constitution which goes so clearly against ~~their~~ our way of thinking and the democratic ideas which we have acquired.

I find it difficult to see how such a regime ^{satisfactorily} can replace ~~with~~ ~~satisfaction~~ the ~~1st~~ ^{fundamental} ^{law} (Basic Law) which, ^{although} ~~was~~ of a provisional nature, ~~but which~~ had been drawn up on the basis of reality and long experience for the whole of the Congolese territory with a view to satisfying all the people.

11. WHY DID THE UNITED NATIONS DIVIDE UP THE PROVINCES OF THE CONGO INTO SMALLER PROVINCES AFTER THE ATTACK AGAINST KATANGA?

The United Nations only had a ~~passive~~ passive responsibility in this affair. The Government in Leopoldville decided to divide up the ^Provinces into 24 smaller provinces in order to get rid of certain Parliamentarians who ~~were~~ ^{opposed} ~~bothered~~ them in the two legislative chambers and also in order to take on powers wider than those given to them by the ~~1st~~ ^{F^U} ~~fundamental~~ ^{law} (basic law) voted by the Belgian Parliament.

As far as Katanga was concerned, this maneuver constituted (1) an incontestable violation of the U Thant Plan, (2) a move against my popularity, and (3) a disorganization of the Administration which permitted the Central Government to illegally assume special powers, such as sending Resident Minister ILEO to Elizabethville.

12. WHAT IS THE PRESENT POLITICAL SYSTEM IN THE CONGO?

The Congo, until the next Referendum, has no political system at all. The Fundamental Law is used whenever it serves the interests of the Central government; when it doesn't serve them, it is violated.

13. WHAT IS THE PRESENT SITUATION IN THE ^{Katanga} CONGO?

The present situation in Katanga is catastrophic on every level: politically, economically, financially and socially. The purchasing power of the African has ^{declined} ~~dropped~~ 60% since January 1963. Because ~~is now~~ ^{up} Katanga has been divided into three new provinces, the local Administration has been completely ^{up} disorganized, roads are no longer maintained, and several regions are actually isolated. Basic necessities are constantly lacking, and the devaluation of the Congolese franc has only aggravated the situation. Doctors are becoming more and more scarce, to the point where only 12 out of 46 doctors in Elizabethville remain. These 12 must serve a population of 300,000 people. In the interior, there are ^e ~~practically~~ [^] no doctors, and medicines are equally lacking. Young girls are now obliged to become prostitutes in order to support their families. As far as justice is concerned, out of 45 magistrates, only 7 remain, and everything is arbitrary.

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DO THE PEOPLE OF KATANGA STILL SUPPORT YOU?

Not only the people of Katanga support me, but the majority of the entire Congolese population supports me completely. I have become in their eyes a symbol of peace and prosperity.

next to
 law
 15

IF YOU RETURNED TO THE CONGO AT PRESENT WOULD YOUR FREEDOM BE ENDANGERED?

Since

/ The Congolese government has not kept its word in implementing a general amnesty, I do not believe that I would be able to enjoy freedom of movement if I were there now, particularly with the situation being what it is.

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14 HOW DO YOU SEE THE SITUATION IN THE CONGO FROM YOUR VANTAGE POINT IN MADRID?

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I am/informed day by day as to what is going on in the entire Congo, and there is no doubt that the people have no confidence in the authorities. The people are particularly angry at those foreign governments who support Adoula who has set himself up as ^a dictator, having violated all legality by suspending the two houses of Parliament on September 29, 1963. This was a clear violation of the ~~Law~~ ^u Fundamental ^{Law} (Basic Law). Those Parliamentarians who protested were arrested or fled to Brazzaville where they have created a National Committee of Liberation completely controlled by the Communists.

16 WOULD YOU LIKE TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES?

Natrually! ^{But} ~~is~~ the American government ^{was} granted me a visa. My greatest desire ~~was~~ is to go to the United States where I have many, many friends, particularly because I was brought up by Methodist ~~Missionaries~~ ~~was~~ at a time when all the ~~Missionaries~~ were Americans. For 18 years I was an active member of the Conference of Methodist Missions. I am, as you know, a Methodist. In fact, in 1935, after ^{concluding} ~~having concluded~~ my Biblical studies I was offered a scholarship in the United States, but the Belgian authorities were categorically against the idea. The Belgians ~~were~~ always particularly suspicious of me because of my attachment to the Americans. I did visit the United States in 1960 and retain ~~my~~ pleasant memories of that trip.

ARE POLITICAL ARRESTS STILL TAKEING PLACE IN THE CONGO?

Several thousands of Congolese are still in prison without trial. Journalists who dare say the truth, if they are Congolese, are arrested, if foreigners, expelled. Several newspapers have simply been suppressed, notably LA VOIX DU KATANGA, LA SEMAINE, NOTRE AFRIQUE and many others. The trade unionists also are not escaping this fate. In North Katanga, they have just murdered several political figures, the most important of whom was M. Mwamba Ilunga Proper, President of the Provincial Assembly of North Katanga.

15 DOES MR. ADOULA ASPIRE TO BECOME ^{the} DICTATOR OF THE CONGO?

He is ^{one} ~~is~~ already.

During the course of the interview with President Tshombe I was able to observe a man who had been through the ^{very} worst that any political leader could go through, yet who, despite all of this, retained an optimism, a charm and an affability to marvel at. During the less formal moments of our conversation; President Tshombe related ~~xxxx~~ events of the Katanga war as only he, who was in the center of it all, could ~~relates~~ related them: with humor, with detail, with a sense of tragedy. He was bewildered by an American ~~x~~ which contradicted everything he had been taught by the American missionaries, bewildered like so many others ^{over friends} all over the world who have tried to fathom the minds of Dean Rusk, Averell; Harriman and Jack Kennedy. The ~~tragedy~~ real tragedy, ^{is} ~~was~~ that Tshombe ^{became} ~~had become~~ what every American missionary hopes his pupil will become, a guardian and upholder of Christian; values, It is ironic that these very values

It is said as well as ironic that it is these very Christian values which Tshombe gleaned from his American teachers should be what
and that it, ^{the very} ~~was these~~ values ^{that have on} ~~which~~ made him anathema to our State Department.