

The Congo May Be on Eve of Peace After Two Years

(Editor's Note: It has been two years since the former Belgian Congo gained its independence. In that time, the central African country has undergone a terrible internal strife which at times resulted in wholesale bloodletting. UPI Correspondent William Anderson reports that on this anniversary of independence the Congo has vast problems to overcome but the resource-rich nation no longer is "a hopeless mess.")

By WILLIAM ANDERSON
United Press International
Leopoldville—On the second anniversary of its independence—which it gained at midnight, June 30, 1960—the Congo may also be on the eve of peace.

The country has come a long way in its second year despite much severe fighting, a number of horrible massacres and continuing political uncertainty and confusion.

But with the second anniversary at hand, the United Nations mission chief in the Congo, Robert A. K. Gardiner of Ghana, is "cautiously optimistic" that the country is ready to put aside its hates and rivalries and become a nation.

Not Alone in Hope

Gardiner is not alone in his hope. The consensus of western diplomatic missions is that while 1961 was "a hopeless mess," the last 12 months have started the Congo back from political and economic chaos.

The long, hard road to placing the Congo, with its mighty potential, in its true place in Africa began last July when, after months of negotiation, the United Nations arranged for parliament to meet under UN protection at Lovanium University in Leopoldville.

From this meeting emerged a central government headed by Cyrille Adoula, a 41-year-old trade union leader and former bank clerk.

As parliament met for the first time in more than a year the Congo had hit its lowest point.

Secessionist State

Antoine Gizenga, a former schoolmaster and vice-premier in the government of Patrice



ON EVE OF PEACE?—On the second anniversary of its independence—which it gained at midnight June 30, 1960—the Congo may also be on the eve of peace. The country has come a long way in its second year despite much

severe fighting, a number of horrible massacres, and continuing political uncertainty and confusion. This picture shows a group of Congolese celebrating the country's independence July 1, 1960. (UPI)

Lumumba who was murdered in Katanga in February, 1961, had created a secessionist state around the Lumumba stronghold of Stanleyville. Nine Afro-Asian countries had accredited diplomatic missions in town.

In Katanga President Moïse Tshombe was sitting behind a mercenary-built military wall bolstered by fat revenues from the copper mines of his province.

Albert Kalonji, another secessionist, had himself crowned king, then emperor of South Kasai's diamond mines and ordered anyone who opposed him flogged in public.

The Hunting Ground

The Congo's "garden province" of Kivu which had previously provided an agricul-

tural surplus, was the hunting ground of rebellious troops, whose depredations reduced production with the thoroughness of a swarm of locusts.

The capital of Leopoldville, once a bustling African metropolis, was haunted by 100,000 unemployed threatening to explode into a mob of food-seeking looters.

Adoula was named premier in August, 1961, mainly because he commanded no large political group. He had started out as an ardent Lumumbist but along with many others, was soon appalled at the first premier's irresponsibility.

A Tough Minister

He had been a tough minister of interior in the provisional government headed

by Joseph Ileo. Most observers gave his government about one month to live. He had to include weak men in the cabinet to appease tribal and political groups.

Adoula decided the United Nations—until then operating ineffectually in a vacuum—could help him.

The UN twice has gone into armed conflict with the mercenary supported Katanga gendarmerie and, while not defeating the Katangans and forcing an end to their secessions, the majority of the mercenaries have been chased out and a measure of stability achieved.

Negotiating With Tshombe

Gardiner now is gingerly negotiating with Tshombe to end the secession of Katanga. The strong headed Tshombe,

who once signed an agreement to bring his breakaway province back into the Congo and then reneged, has twice been persuaded by Gardiner to renew talks concerning reunification.

There is no new agreement yet, but Gardiner, a long time international civil servant with the patience of a Bantu, remains cautiously optimistic.

The price of the struggle to end Katanga's secession has been high—in money and men. The dead include UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld whose plane crashed into the Southern Rhodesian wilderness while he was en route to a meeting with Tshombe.

Has Been Successful

Abdoula has been successful in ending the secessions of Gizenga in Oriental province and Kalonji in South Kasai. Gizenga has been arrested and stripped of his military power, cabinet post and parliamentary immunity. He faces charges of sedition and illegal shipment of gold. Kalonji, similarly dealt with, is imprisoned for flogging a political opponent.

While speaking in terms of a United Congo, Adoula is realistically preparing to split the country's present six provinces into 21. A bill to this effect is already drafted. The provinces will be established along linguistic and ethnic lines. Although out of step with a world tending toward integration, this federal principle seems the only way the Congo will run.

On a par with the Congo's political problems, and directly resulting from them, is a serious economic situation.

Running A Deficit

The once rich Belgium colony is running a deficit of about 1 billion francs (\$2 million) a month. It is practically living on U.S. handouts amounting to about \$6 million a month.

Much of the deficit is due to a swollen and often-inefficient civil service and, on paper,

the highest paid army in the world.

Too much money chasing too few goods has brought on inflation. This could bring civil strife. Recently Adoula jailed trade union leader Andre Bobolko on grounds he was fomenting "political" strikes by calling for strikes against the inflation. Only a tough government policy against the unions has so far prevented strikes.

But the situation is not hopeless.

Firmly Under Control

Apart from a few small units in Kivu rapidly being mopped up by the UN, the army is firmly under the control of Gen. Joseph Mobutu and his officers. The Katanga gendarmerie has always been disciplined.

Industrial production is almost back to normal. Textile production has exceeded pre-independence levels.

Plantations owned by big international companies were surprisingly untouched by the strife. But lack of transport and insecurity prevented their products reaching the markets for more than a year. Now, however, the river boats are penetrating most of the Congo's 5,000 miles of navigable mainstream and tributaries and bringing goods downriver.

Belgians Now Returning

Technically qualified Bel-

gians are returning to the interior. Recently the first Belgian since independence returned to the cotton growing area of North Katanga.

The first new trucks imported since independence have arrived and are going to the interior to bring the crops to the river ports.

Agriculture remains badly disrupted. The inflation gives the small farmer no incentive to do more than produce at subsistence level.

Smuggling of cotton, ivory and diamonds along the northern frontier is a drain on the national revenue. However, this hinges directly on pacification and restoration of order in the outlying regions.

Repairing Damaged Bridge

Work is under way to repair the vital Lubilash river bridge in Katanga, which was destroyed during fighting in July.

The Tshombe-Adoula agreement will mean Katanga's ores move once again over this bridge through the rest of the Congo to Port Francqui and Matadi. This will alleviate unemployment along the river route and revitalize the economy.

The Belgian embassy, staffed by men with no colonial stigma, is preparing a vast technical assistance program which, with Congolese agreement, will place experienced men at key posts in the interior.

They will complement the UN's 400 technical assistants who, although hard working and conscientious, can solve only a fraction of the Congo's technical problems.

The Congo still has its troubles—lots of them. But on its second anniversary it does seem to be moving in the right direction.

Jumper Training Nears Completion

Portland—Four-week training of smokejumpers who will help combat forest fires this summer is nearing completion at aerial project bases at Winthrop, Wash. and Cave Junction, Ore. J. Herbert Stone, regional forester, forest service, has announced.

About 80 young men are undergoing tough physical training and receiving instruction in first aid and all phases of fire control.

The Pacific Northwest Region employed about 70 jumpers in 1961. During the fire season they were stationed at the main bases at Winthrop and Cave Junction and at satellite bases at La Grande and Redmond.

Ten additional jumpers are being trained this year to form a nucleus for the 25 jumpers who will be stationed at Redmond in 1963 as the start of the planned Redmond Air Center at Roberts Field.

Use of smokejumpers in the Pacific Northwest Region set an all-time record in 1961. Smokejumpers from the region made 648 individual jumps on 268 fires. In addition, smokejumpers from other regions jumped on another 45 fires in Oregon and Washington. Smokejumpers continue to be a prime factor in fast initial action on fires, Stone pointed out.

Four jumpers from this region are now in the Southwestern Region to assist in that region's early fire season. They will return to their bases in the Pacific Northwest about the time training is completed at Winthrop and Cave Junction.

The highest altitude in the United States is Mount McKinley in Alaska at 29,269 feet. The lowest depth in the country is a point in Death Valley, Inyo County, Calif., where it is 280 feet below sea level.



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