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Congo.

Mutinies broke out during the night of July 5-6 in the former Belgian Congo among  
the soldiers of the Congolese Force Publique at Thysville (south-west of  
Léopoldville) and in Camp Léopold II, outside Léopoldville, the Congolese capital.  
Despite immediate attempts by President Kasavubu and the Prime Minister, M.  
Lumumba, to restore order among the mutineers and satisfy their demands, it soon  
became apparent that in many respects the mutiny was turning into a general  
movement against Belgian and other European residents; at the same time the  
disorders spread from Léopoldville province to many parts of the country.

On July 7 Europeans began fleeing from the Léopoldville area to the (formerly  
French) Congo Republic across the Congo River, initiating a large-scale movement of  
refugees from all the six provinces into the neighbouring territories. The Belgian  
Government announced on the following day (July 8) that troop reinforcements  
were being sent to the Congo, and on July 10 Belgian forces went into action against  
Congolese soldiers in several places, notably in the Katanga province and in the  
ports of Matadi and Boma (near the mouth of the Congo River); the Belgian military  
action was subsequently extended to many other towns, including Léopoldville  
itself.

As the situation became hourly more confused, the Congolese Government on July  
11 appealed for assistance from the United Nations, while on the same day M.  
Tshombe, the Prime Minister of Katanga, proclaimed the independence of his  
province. The U.N. security Council passed a resolution on July 14 authorizing the  
immediate despatch of a U.N. military force to the Congo, and requesting Belgium to  
withdraw her troops; the first U.N. soldiers arrived in Léopoldville on July 15,  
building up by July 28 to a force of over 10,000 with units in all provinces except  
Katanga.

In response to the security Council's decision, the Belgian Government promised  
ultimately to withdraw the Belgian troops to their bases in the Congo, but insisted  
that this could not be done until the U.N. forces were in a position to ensure the  
safety of Europeans throughout the country. The Council then passed a second  
resolution on July 21, demanding the "speedy" withdrawal of the Belgian troops and

also calling on all countries to respect the territorial integrity of the Congo Republic as established on July 1.

The Congolese Government had meanwhile announced that it had broken off diplomatic relations with Belgium, and on July 25 denounced the still unratified Belgo-Congolese Treaty of June 29, on which Belgium based her right to retain her Congolese bases. M. Tshombe, on the other hand, insisted that the presence of Belgian troops in Katanga, at his Government's request, was essential for security, and declared that his own forces would resist any attempt by U.N. troops to enter Katanga. The U.N. Secretary-General, Dr. Hammarskjold, arrived in Léopoldville on July 28; during his journey from New York he had visited Brussels on July 27 for several hours' conversations with the Belgian Government.

Details of the events in the Congo up to July 28 are given below.

The outbreak of the military mutiny was preceded by disorders of various kinds in different parts of the country between July 1 and 5, mostly of a tribal character.

Fighting between Bakongo and Bayaka tribesmen broke out in Léopoldville on July 1, while on July 4 the employees of the Office des Transports du Congo (Otraco) went on strike in the capital and other towns along the river because they had not been paid an "independence bonus." In Coquilhatville (capital of Equator province) 10 people were killed by police action during riots on July 4 involving both Otraco and other workers, who were demanding immediate pay rises; a state of "military occupation" was decreed by the authorities. Tribal fighting began in Luluabourg (capital of Kasai) on July 3, after it had been reported that the Central Government had arrested the members of a rival provincial "government" set up by supporters of M. Albert Kalonji; although the report was denied by the Central authorities, fighting did not cease and a curfew was imposed on July 5. In Elisabethville (capital of Katanga) troops were used on July 3 to disperse a crowd of several hundred followers of M. Sendwe (leader of the local opposition Balubakat party), who had gathered in the belief that M. Sendwe was arriving from Léopoldville to take up his duties as Central Government Commissioner for the province. At no time during these incidents, however, was there any report of disaffection among the Belgian-officered Congolese forces.

The course of events from the start of the mutiny up to July 10, when Belgian forces first took action, is related below in daily sequence.

Meetings of Congolese soldiers in Camp Léopold II began on the night of July 5, after it had been learnt that M. Lumumba, as Minister of Defence, had decided to appoint a number of Belgian officers to his staff. It was understood that the men resented not only these specific appointments but also the whole existing officer system, under which the highest rank open to a Congolese was that of warrant officer [although for some months a number of Congolese had been undergoing officers training in Belgium]. There were also serious grievances over pay and conditions,

exacerbated by the disparity between the soldiers' lot and that of the newly-installed Ministers and members of Parliament.

Early the following morning M. Lumumba and General Janssens, the Belgian C.-in-C. of the Force Publique, went to the camp, where the Prime Minister promised the troops that all Congolese soldiers would be promoted one rank, racial discrimination in the force would be abolished, and conditions of service improved. Groups of dissatisfied soldiers, however, followed M. Lumumba back into Léopoldville, molesting some Europeans on the way, and gathered round the Prime Minister's house (which was at one stage protected by Belgian troops) and the Parliament building. There was a scuffle between the mutineers, who were unarmed, and a section of the police (under a Belgian officer) outside Parliament, until the armed guard of gendarmes intervened to enable the police to escape. A part of the mutineers agreed to return to camp after M. Bomboko, the Foreign Minister, told them that the Cabinet had now met and decided that General Janssens and other senior officers would be replaced; others, however, continued to demand guarantees that these decisions would be carried into effect. During these incidents some soldiers stoned cars belonging to Cabinet Ministers.

Shortly after M. Bomboko's statement, M. Lumumba himself broadcast an appeal to the troops, reiterating that all ranks would be promoted, and announcing that the Government had decided that (a) a commission would be set up to study ways of Africanizing the officer corps; (b) measures would be taken against the Belgian officers and N.C.O.s who, he asserted, were responsible for the unrest; and (c) all Congolese soldiers under arrest would be freed at once. Later in the day General Janssens announced that he and his Chief of Staff had resigned their posts; the Government, however, maintained that the General had been dismissed, explaining that their decision to this effect had been taken before he had handed in his resignation.

Meanwhile Belgian forces throughout the country were placed in a state of alert, and some Belgian patrols were seen moving through Léopoldville. Later in the day the unrest spread to the Léopoldville police, and for a time a number of Belgian police commissioners were locked up by their own men.

The mutiny in Thysville also began during the night of July 5, the soldiers at Camp Hardy arresting their European officers and taking possession of the arms in the camp arsenal; it was officially stated in Léopoldville that the outbreak followed the arrival of emissaries from Camp Léopold II. Normal communications between Thysville and the rest of the country were interrupted throughout July 6, but in the evening M. Kasavubu and M. Lumumba visited the area in an attempt to restore order.

The situation in Léopoldville had become calmer by the morning, and it appeared that the men at Camp Léopold had been pacified by the Government's assurances about promotion and improved conditions. The strike of dock workers, on the other

hand, continued, and a number of the senior European staff of Otraco were manhandled by strikers. It was, moreover, reported that the European residents had been greatly perturbed by the departure of General Janssens, who had been regarded by them as providing the best guarantee of their safety.

In Thysville the mutineers remained in full control of the camp under the command of a Congolese sergeant-major, who stated that the revolt would continue until the men's demand for complete Africanization of the officer ranks had been met, although he added that some Belgian officers would be allowed to remain as advisers. At the same time it was learnt that the gendarmerie formations of the Force Publique in the area, who had taken no part in the first rising, had now joined the mutineers.

During the day the Belgian Embassy in Léopoldville began arrangements to evacuate Belgian women and children from the Thysville area, as the first news came in of the rape of European women by the Camp Hardy mutineers. [A detailed report on the mass rape of European women, and other atrocities against Europeans, was published by the Belgian Government on July 28— see below.] The first convoys of refugees reached the capital in the evening, their safe passage being due in large part to the efforts of M. Diomi (Vice-Premier of the Provincial Government and a leader of the Abako party); columns of refugees also began to arrive from other neighbouring centres, as the disorders spread throughout the Bas-Congo region. Meanwhile hundreds of local Belgian residents gathered outside the Belgian Embassy itself. As the night went on, the first boat-loads of Europeans crossed the river to Brazzaville, capital of the former French Congo, it being estimated that by the morning of July 8 some 3,000 people had reached safety there.

The situation in Léopoldville worsened abruptly in the morning, the city being virtually taken over by mutineers, now heavily armed, from Camp Léopold. According to a subsequent statement by M. Bomboko, this development had begun with a rumour that Russians were landing at the airport with Belgian assistance; a group of soldiers who had gone to the airport to look for them returned to the city and started holding up cars and searching Europeans for arms. By 9.30 a.m. soldiers had closed the port, preventing refugees from crossing to Brazzaville, while others occupied the telephone exchange and blocked the road to the airport. Soldiers on foot and in vehicles went through the streets apparently searching for Belgian officers, while a number entered two of the main hotels; at one of them Dr. Ralph Bunche, the U.N. Under-Secretary, who had remained in the Congo after the independence celebrations, was threatened by two armed soldiers as he watched from a balcony. M. Bomboko immediately intervened at the hotels, assuring guests that they would not be molested. In the early afternoon two soldiers tried to enter the U.S. Embassy, where a number of American families had taken refuge, but were turned away by the Ambassador, Mr. C. H. Timberlake. Later the troops moved out of the central areas, apparently on orders, but the streets remained empty of Europeans.

During these incidents President Kasavubu, M. Lumumba, and other Ministers were negotiating with the troops' leaders on the outskirts of the city, and in the evening it was officially announced that agreement had been reached and approved by the Government. The communiqué also stated that a group of Europeans who were alleged to have tried to make an attempt on M. Lumumba's life had been arrested.

The principal points of the agreement were: (a) the Force Publique would become a truly national Army, with a Congolese commander and officers; (b) the President would become Supreme Commander of the Army, and M. Lumumba would remain Defence Minister; (c) Belgian officers remaining with the Army would serve only as civilian advisers; and (d) the same conditions of Africanization would apply to the gendarmerie sections of the former Force Publique and to the police.

After the announcement of this agreement, tension relaxed and Europeans reappeared in the streets; nevertheless, with the reopening of the ferry the flow of refugees to Brazzaville started again, and the Belgian Sabena airline announced that an airlift to Belgium would be started. The first refugees arrived in Brussels the next day, July 9.

In Brussels the Belgian Cabinet met during the day to discuss the situation, and it was announced that King Baudouin, who had gone on holiday to France immediately after his visit to the independence ceremony in Léopoldville, was returning to Belgium at once. The Cabinet decided that two companies of troops stationed in Germany, totalling 240 men, would be flown to the Congo immediately; it was also stated that arrangements were under way for the evacuation of refugees, and that the Government was taking steps "to ensure the safety of persons now in Léopoldville."

The situation in Léopoldville was reported to be relatively calm, although the flight of Europeans from the city continued; a night curfew after 6.0 p.m. was strictly enforced.

In a statement on the preceding days' happenings, M. Lumumba asserted that the whole blame lay with General Janssens and certain other officers "who had not realized the need for reforms"; the General had "set himself up against the Government," despite M. Lumumba's attempts "to reason with him." The Prime Minister denied that the subsequent events had been in any way directed against the European population, but stated that a number of armed Europeans had been arrested in addition to those accused of the assassination attempt, alleging that there had been a "concerted plot... by a group of Fascists who wish to sabotage our independence and... harm the international prestige of the Government."

During the evening a mutiny broke out in Elisabethville and other parts of Katanga. Many of the European residents of the provincial capital gathered for safety in the building of a Roman Catholic college; some Europeans, however, were killed, including the Italian vice-consul, who was dragged from his car and shot by

mutineers. The first reports also came in of an outbreak during the evening in Luluabourg, it being learned later that after a European had been shot other Europeans had taken refuge in a block of flats, where they were besieged by soldiers, who also opened heavy fire on the hospital. An effort by the president of the Kasai Provincial Assembly to arrange a cease-fire was unsuccessful as the Belgian civilians refused to surrender their arms, considering the assurances for their safety to be inadequate.

M. Eyskens, the Belgian Prime Minister, announced in Brussels that more reinforcements were being sent out, and that M. de Schryver (Minister for African Affairs) and M. Ganshof van der Meersch (Minister for General Affairs in Africa) were going at once to the Congo to try to establish "direct contact" with the Congolese Government. M. Eyskens stated that, according to information from M. van den Bosch, the Belgian Ambassador in Léopoldville, the Congolese forces were now in full revolt throughout the country.

Belgian troops went into action for the first time, when men from the Kamina base in Katanga moved into Elisabethville in the early morning, disarming the mutineers and restoring order within a few hours. After the Belgian occupation of the city European women and children began to be evacuated to Rhodesia, while the flight of Europeans from many other parts of Katanga was also under way.

Meanwhile there were persistent reports that a declaration of Katanga's independence by M. Tshombe was imminent (M. Tshombe himself had returned to Elisabethville on July 9, after a visit to Léopoldville). In the evening M. Tshombe asked the British Government (through the British consul) to pass on to the Government of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland his request for the despatch of Federation troops to Katanga to help maintain order in the province. The Federation Prime Minister, Sir Roy Welensky, stated later in the evening, in Salisbury, that he had not yet received any appeal from Katanga, and denied reports that Rhodesian forces had already entered the province.

Belgian parachutists were dropped into Luluabourg during the evening to assist the besieged Europeans there; at the same time it was learnt that the tribal warfare in Kasai province was becoming increasingly savage. Belgian forces also intervened in Boma and Matadi; in the latter place the mutineers had been trying to prevent the embarkation of refugees on to Belgian naval craft, despite the personal intervention of M. Kasavubu and M. Lumumba. Many reports of the rape of European women here and throughout the Bas-Congo region were coming in.

Although the situation in Léopoldville itself remained relatively quiet, there was extreme confusion in Government circles. M. Bomboko announced that the intervention of Belgian troops had taken place at his request, but M. Lumumba declared in a broadcast that any intervention by Belgium without the approval of the Congolese Government, and specifically of the Defence Minister (i.e. himself), would be a violation of the country's sovereignty and of the treaty with Belgium, and

he protested “most energetically” against the Belgian action in sending reinforcements to the Congo.

It had been announced overnight that M. Victor Lundula had been appointed Commander of the Army, with the rank of general, and that M. Joseph Mobutu (the State Secretary for Defence) would be Chief of Staff, with the rank of colonel. General Lundula, burgomaster of a commune at Jadotville (Katanga), had served in the Force Publique during World War II, reaching the rank of sergeant-major; Colonel Mobutu was a former sergeant-major in the accountancy department. Other promotions to colonel included that of a sergeant-major who was now commanding Camp Léopold.

A statement was also issued during the day by Colonel Heniquiaux, who had become head of a Belgian assistance mission set up in Léopoldville in agreement with the Congolese Government; he appealed to all Belgian officers who were willing to remain to join with him in serving the Congo loyally as advisers, and asked Congolese to draw up lists of unwanted Belgian officers and civilians, who would be sent out of the country immediately.

As the flow of Belgian refugees from all parts of the Congo increased, large numbers were now arriving in Brussels by air, the Sabena airline having cancelled all its other long-distance services to concentrate on this airlift. The refugees highly praised the work of the authorities in Brazzaville, and also paid tribute to the personal efforts of M. Bomboko to protect Europeans in Léopoldville. A protest demonstration against the Belgian Government, however, was supported by some 20,000 people, who marched through Brussels demanding the immediate reinstatement of General Janssens and shouting such slogans as “Mme. Eyskens to Thysville”; they were prevented from reaching the Royal Palace by a police cordon, but the Prime Minister received a deputation of members of colonist organizations. Meanwhile the Government announced that 10 more companies of troops (about 1,500 men) were being flown to the Congo, and numbers of parachutist reservists were recalled to the colours.

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