

CONGO (Léopoldville). — New Constitution in Government Forces' Successes against Rebels. — "People's Republic" established in Stanleyville. — Relations with Neighbouring Countries. — External Military Aid. — Extraordinary Session of O.A.U. Council of Ministers. — Meeting of O.A.U. Congo Conciliation Commission.

The referendum on the new Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo [see 20217 A] ended on July 10 and was reported to have resulted in approval by 92 per cent of the voters. When the new Constitution was promulgated in August, President Kasavubu said that while the *Constitutionnelle* had been drawn up "by alien hands" and was unsuited to Congolese conceptions and views, "the basic law had been evolved "by Congolese for Congolese" and had been accepted by all.

Munongo, the Minister of the Interior, announced on Sept. 12 that the country's first general elections, both for the Lower House of Parliament and for the 21 Provincial Assemblies, would be held between Feb. 1 and 15, 1965.

Michel Struelens (36), a Belgian and former Public Relations Officer in New York for M. Tshombe's Katanga Government, had been appointed on Aug. 3 personal adviser on foreign affairs to the Prime Minister, the Congolese Embassy in Washington, and the Congolese Permanent Delegation at the United Nations.

"People's Republic" established in Stanleyville.

The formation of a "People's Republic of the Congo" was announced in Stanleyville on Sept. 7, with M. Christophe Gbenye as "Prime Minister" and M. Gaston Soumialot as "Minister of Defence." In making this announcement M. Gbenye issued a warning that anarchy would prevent other countries from granting recognition to the new regime and that Catholic missionaries should not be attacked, saying that he himself was "a good Catholic." The appointment of Thomas R. Kanza, former Congolese Chargé d'Affaires in London, as "Foreign Minister" of the rebel Government was announced in Stanleyville on Sept. 15.

Despite an appeal by U Thant to allow the evacuation of Congolese from Stanleyville, the insurgent authorities, though given permission on Sept. 3 for a U.N. aircraft to land, later withdrew that permission. Following an appeal for the treatment of many persons wounded in the fighting early in August, a Swiss airliner chartered by the International Red Cross delivered four doctors and medical supplies to Stanleyville on Sept. 25.

Internal Security Measures in Léopoldville.

Antoine Gizenga, who had been released from detention on July 16 [see 20217 A], was placed under house arrest in Léopoldville on Oct. 2. He had previously announced on Sept. 28 the formation of a new party, the Unified Lumumbist Party, which he claimed had been joined by M. André Lubaya (Minister of Health). In his statement he had attacked the Tshombe's Government for using force against the rebels, and stated that "the present *de facto* Government has shown itself incapable of finding a political solution to the country's problems," and condemned "the military aggression of the U.S.A. and Belgium against our defenceless people."

The weekly journal *Jeune Afrique* was banned in Léopoldville on Sept. 18 after it had published the programme of the National Liberation Committee, because some of its articles were considered "liable to endanger public order and peace in the Congo."

Fighting between Government and Rebel Forces.

During the period August to early November the Tshombe Government succeeded in most areas of the country in containing the rebellion led by the National Liberation Committee; while the rebels occupied a few more towns, Government forces were able to reduce considerably the area controlled by the Committee, especially in North Katanga, where they recaptured almost all important centres.

The nature of the fighting, however, was such that the International Committee of the Red Cross appealed on Sept. 18 that combatants in the Congo to observe the humanitarian principles of the Geneva Conventions. Giving many authentic reports of brutality and murder, the International Committee pointed out in particular that the lives of combatants who surrendered must be spared, that the wounded must be cared for, that the civilian population should not be attacked, especially from the air, and that the taking of hostages, summary executions, and reprisals were prohibited.

The 150-man garrison at Paulis, about 300 miles north-east of Léopoldville, went over to the rebel side on Aug. 11. The rebels succeeded in capturing Boende, a town between Stanleyville and Léopoldville, on Sept. 5, but made little progress in their advance towards the latter town.

Early in August they attempted to take Bukavu, which had been surrounded by them since May, but after the intervention of two fighter aircraft allegedly flown by Cuban exiles, which had taken off from an aerodrome in Rwanda, the rebels did not advance further. They resumed the attack on Bukavu on Aug. 19-20, however; in fierce fighting Government troops led by Colonel Léonard Mulamba, later reinforced by 150 former Katangese gendarmes flown in, held the town and repulsed the rebels, who retreated westwards on Aug. 21. Casualties exceeded 300, including a number of Belgians, and much damage was inflicted on the city. Two French U.N. officials stationed at Bukavu, M. Jean Plicque of the I.L.O. and M. François Preziosi of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, were killed on Aug. 17 by Watutsi refugees (who had joined the Congolese rebels) while visiting a refugee camp at Kalonge.

Centres recaptured by Government forces included the rail junction of Kabalo (North Katanga), on Aug. 17; Kapora, about 60 miles west of Baudouinville, on Aug. 18; Albertville, on Aug. 30 [see below]; Manono and Mitwaba, south-west of Albertville, on Sept. 2; Kongolo, the last rebel stronghold in North Katanga, on Sept. 17; Lisala, the capital of Moyen-Congo, which had changed hands several times, on Sept. 15; Lodja, the capital of Sankuru Province, on Oct. 6; Lulimba, 120 miles north of Albertville, where 14 British missionaries were freed, also on Oct. 6; Uvira, in Central Kivu, on Oct. 7 [see below]; Lomela, north of Lodja, and Bumba, 300 miles west of Stanleyville, late in October; Kibombo, in Maniema Province, on Nov. 5; Kindu, the capital of Maniema and the principal town between Stanleyville and Albertville, as well as Kalima, about 90 miles east of Kindu, on Nov. 6; and Ikela, about 185 miles from Stanleyville, also on Nov. 6. The retreating rebels took with them as hostages 29 Austrian and German priests (including Martin Adolf Bormann, son of the former Nazi leader) as well as 15 European plantation workers.

In Albertville, which M. Soumialot and other rebel leaders had left on Aug. 17, chaotic conditions prevailed for about a fortnight. A first attempt to enter the city on Aug. 27 by a mercenary commando led by Major Michael Hoare failed, but after heavy fighting Government troops occupied Albertville on Aug. 30; twenty-eight European hostages were freed and many hundreds of rebels killed.

At Uvira the local rebel leader, Colonel Bidalira, appealed to the Organization of African Unity to take measures to stop the "bombardment of markets and factories in the area carried out since Aug. 26 by American aircraft taking off from Rwanda territory." The Bishop of Uvira, Mgr. Scarlati, sent an appeal to Burundi asking the U.S. and Belgian authorities "to cease immediately all bombardment in the Uvira region" to save the lives of Europeans, including himself, who were held as hostages and "maltreated." In mid-September the Bishop was escorted by rebel guards to Bujumbura to enable him to pursue his request and to save the lives of about 30 hostages, who were eventually freed when Government forces took Uvira.

The British Acting High Commissioner in Uganda, Mr. T. W. Ashton, advised all British missionaries in the Northern Congo on Aug. 23 to "move out of the danger areas" into Uganda "while there is still time." On Aug. 30 it was reported that all dependants of U.N. personnel, and also all U.N. technical missions at outlying provincial stations, were being withdrawn, while early in September 48 U.S. missionaries and technical assistants fled from Ubangi Province to the Central African Republic.

Despite instructions by rebel leaders that Europeans should not be harmed, many were threatened and injured, and some were killed by rebel troops. Seventy priests and missionaries, including Bishop Pierard of Beni, arrived in Kampala (Uganda) on Oct. 5 after Beni, a town in the Eastern Congo, had been taken by the rebels. A U.N. aircraft conveying U.N. experts from Luluabourg to Lodja was attacked on Oct. 9 by rebels, who killed a mechanic on board.

Tension with Congo-Brazzaville, Burundi, and Mali.

The tension already existing between the two Congo Republics [see page 20218] continued during the same period, while fresh differences arose between Congo-Léopoldville on the one side and Mali and Burundi on the other.

Late in July rebels operating from Brazzaville territory temporarily established a bridgehead across the Congo River at Bolobo, N.N.E. of Léopoldville. While President Massemba-Débat of Brazzaville accused M. Tshombe on Aug. 15 of "interference" in Brazzaville's internal affairs, the latter gave "a last warning" that he would take "extreme measures" unless Brazzaville ceased all aid to the rebels.

Mali was charged by M. Tshombe early in August with having issued a diplomatic passport to Colonel Prakassa, whom he accused of directing the insurrection from Brazzaville. The Malian Minister of the Interior, M. Ousman Ba (speaking for President Keita, who was absent in Algeria—see below), made it clear on Aug. 18 that Mali did not support the Tshombe Government,