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## Tshombe's Murder Plot

MOISE Tshombe, the Katanga President of the Belgians, could never make a successful writer of escape stories. He lacks the talent. The tale he has tried to weave around the triple murder of Patrice Lumumba and his two associates would strain the credulousness of a child of four. Certainly no adult can be persuaded to accept the explanation that so valuable a charge as Mr Lumumba was so casually guarded by a negligent band of 18 warders that he was able to tear down, unnoticed, a whole prison wall behind the protective noise of the first available thunderstorm, and deliver himself eagerly to unnamed villagers thirsting for his blood. The wall, we are asked to believe, was battered down by the luckless inmates with the assistance of heavy iron bars. To swallow this little morsel of fantasy, one must also be willing to swallow the somewhat larger fantasy that under the benevolent rule of the Tshombe Government, prized political prisoners are never housed in a jail without an adequate supply of powerful jail-breaking equipment.

That Mr Lumumba was murdered in cold blood at the end of a deeply laid conspiracy against his life, is not in question. What is not clear at this stage, and may not become clear for a long time to come, is when and how the foul deed was planned, and when and how it was finally perpetrated. Almost certainly, Lumumba was killed veil in advance of the callous and barbaric announcement, with which the Minister of the Interior admitted the murder. It was in all probability first conceived at the time when Mr Kasavubu, anxious to isolate the detained Prime Minister from as much of the country as possible, sought Mr Tshombe's participation in a round-table conference, The Katanga "President" — or, what is more likely, the Belgian "advisers" at his elbow — named the price for this participation. This price was the handing over of Lumumba to Katanga.

From the very beginning this had the appearance of a sinister bargain. Why should Tshombe want so awkward a prisoner when he was already the carefully guarded captive of his?, sworn enemies in Leopoldville? Messrs Kasavubu and Mobutu are certain to have asked this question; and they were no doubt told that the Katanga leaders could not risk the re-appearance of Lumumba on the country's political stage, and that the only guarantee that would satisfy them in this regard was the actual possession of his person. It seems unlikely that the thought of murdering Lumumba had occurred to Kasavubu or Mobutu himself: or if it had, it never really took root. Lumumba's genuine escape from his Leopoldville prison, and recapture without serious disaster, provide strong evidence of this. If either Mobutu or Kasavubu had really wanted him dead, that was their chance to kill him. They probably handed over Lumumba to Tshombe, not so much because they wanted him assassinated but rather because they did not seriously care what happened to him. The suspicion that he might be murdered must surely have risen in their minds; for they must have known that they were delivering their unfortunate captive into the hands of none other than the Belgians themselves. But they did not care. Indeed if Lumumba's assassination was for the political game of the Leopoldville tribalists, it was best that someone else wielded the butchers knife.

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Tshombe himself, of course, never had the slightest intention of joining the round-table conference, or rather his Belgian masters saw no profit in letting him embroil himself in a Congolese federation when the plum of Katanga was already separately in their control. They took Lumumba and turned their back on the conference. They saw the man as the last serious challenge to their machinations, and calculated that to get him out of the way would be the best means of removing the threat he posed. So they killed him.

But this is where they made their worst mistake. For Lumumba the martyr has risen from his grave a much stronger force than Lumumba the prisoner would ever have been. BY murdering Lumumba. Tshombe has put his own neck into the noose, and his own survival is now possible only if his sponsors and masters cast all pretence to the winds and come out physically and blatantly in his defence against the combined wrath of the rest of the world. That a blood-bath has not immediately fob

lowed the news of Lumumba's murder is a miracle which can only be explained by the possibility that a sense of shock has momentarily paralysed the limbs of the Congolese nationalists. The shock will wear off before long and then will set in the deluge. It is only the brief interval between now and then which is available to the United Nations to avert the catastrophe of a brutal civil war in the Congo. But will this opportunity be used to the best advantage?

It is tragic that there is little sign of that happening as yet. The same interminable wrangles which made the already extra-cautious Secretary-General largely ineffective all along, are once again in evidence. There is only one way in which the situation can be brought under control; and that, as Pandit Nehru among others has emphasised, is to disarm all the armed bands in the Congo and reactivate parliament. But this task, fairly simple at one stage, is now fraught with the greatest difficulties. If the U N is serious, it will have to be ready to fight each

and every of the factions in the field. This will need a much clearer mandate from the Security Council than there seems any possibility of getting; and it will also need a massive concentration of physical power in the hands of the U N mission in the Congo, the prospect of which, too, is at present dim. The great Powers are still intent upon scoring political points in their cold war instead of rushing sincerely to the aid of the Congolese people. The debate which centres on the head of Mr Hammarskjöld should instead centre on the Belgians and their henchmen in Leopoldville and Elizabethville. Their expulsion is far more to the point than the Secretary-General's, whatever his errors and defaults.

The situation in the Congo is now at its most complex and critical; and unless the United Nations can find some quick way of tackling it boldly, it will almost certainly wreck the U N itself. That is the true enormity of the crisis. Lumumba's death has spread the Congolese chaos to the globe.

## The Railway Budget

SHRI Jagjiwan Rams decision to leave passenger fares and freight rates untouched in his budget estimates for 1961-62 comes as a surprise in view of the recommendations of the Parliamentary Railway Convention Committee, 1960. The Committee had recommended, *inter alia*, that the rate of dividend payable by the Railways on their capital-at-charge to the General Revenues be raised from 4 per cent to 4.25 per cent and that the aggregate contribution from Railway revenues to the Depreciation Reserve Fund during the quinquennium 1961-66 be increased to Rs 350 crores, with an appropriation of Rs 65 crores in 1961-62 increasing by steps in each following year to Rs 75 crores in 1965-66.

The revised estimates for the year 1960-61 show traffic receipts down by Rs 6.50 crores at Rs 458 crores compared to the budget estimate of Rs 464.50 crores. The reduction is due entirely to the fall in goods earnings which was, however, compensated to a substantial extent by the increase over budget estimates of passenger earnings and other coaching and sundry earnings.

Goods traffic earnings fell short of budget estimates by Rs 15.41 crores. The expected short-lead movement of raw materials for the steel plants did not materialise. Their average lead actually increased as these materials had to be moved from distant sources. The average lead of coal movement also increased due to the increase in movements from coalfields in Bengal and Bihar.

The total originating traffic at the end of 1960-61 is expected to be about 154 million tons which is considerably lower than the Second Plan target of 162 million tons. The Railways have, however, fully pushed through their investment programme which was geared to a freight demand of 162 million tons. In his budget speech last year the Railway Minister tacitly admitted the existence of idle capacity in the Railways and the revised estimates of goods movements for 1960-61 appear to confirm that the situation has not improved substantially. The question of securing higher returns in the Railways from existing capital stock instead of installing fresh equipment was glossed over at the time of framing the Second Plan

but this is a mistake we cannot afford to repeat in the Third Plan.

The revised estimates of passenger earnings is fixed at Rs 130.97 crores, an increase of Rs 5.47 crores over the budget estimates and Rs 5.36 crores over the actuals for 1959-60. The revised estimate of gross working expenses at Rs 375.61 are nominally higher than the budget estimates while net working expenses are nominally lower. The revised estimate of dividend to General Revenues is placed at Rs 5.36 crores over the actuals for Rs 14.03 crores against Rs 18/13 crores in the budget estimates.

The budget estimates for 1961-62 are based on the tentative financial forecast for the five years 1961-66 considered by the Railway Convention Committee last year. Goods earnings for 1961-62 have been budgeted for on the anticipation of an increase in traffic of about 15 million tons over 1960-61. This has been done keeping in view a total increase of about 90 million tons in the Third Plan period but allowing for a more than proportionate increase of low-rated traffic which will raise the proportion of working expenses to gross earnings.