

A Damning Report

THE report of the United Nations Commission — composed of the representatives of Burma, Mexico, Ethiopia and Togo which was appointed earlier this year to investigate the murder of the former Congolese Premier, Mr Patrice Lumumba and his two principal associates, Mr Okito and Mr Mpolo, is a remarkable document deserving the widest publicity. The report highlights one of the methods by which the colonialists are seeking to continue their stranglehold over the emerging nations in the second largest continent of the world. Nobody had believed, nor was anybody expected to believe, the story dished out in February of this year that Mr Lumumba and his aides had been killed in the process of their attempted escape. Within a few days of the murder the broad facts were established beyond any shadow of doubt. It was evident that Premier Lumumba had fallen a victim to the machinations of the Western Powers in the Congo, who had all along backed the secessionists in Katanga against the Central Government in Leopoldville and had encouraged and helped the capitulationist in Leopoldville headed by the Mohutu-Kasavubu clique against the nationalists in the Central Government headed by Mr Lumumba. To these elements no means were too dirty so long as they were calculated to lead to the ouster of Lumumba and his friends. This was achieved in a characteristic *coup d'etat* led by Col (now General) Mobutu, who was directed and financed by the Western Powers and — if only for a brief spell — by the representatives of the United Nations in the Congo as well.

While the U N report has brought to light no new facts about the circumstances of Mr Lumumba's murder, it provides the explanation for the continued failure to restore peace and unity in that unfortunate country. Thus it also exposes the inadequacies and half-heartedness of the measures that have so far been taken by the United Nations, on which the primary responsibility for the restoration of law and order in the Congo now vests. Unlike some of the earlier U N pronouncements on events in

the Congo, the report is candid and does not mince words in fixing the responsibility—at least of the Congolese participants—for one of the most heinous political murders in history. Besides indicting the Tshombe-Muonongo gang of Katanga, which is still in office propped by the finances of the Belgium owned *Union Miniere* and the political support of the British and some other European Governments, it has squarely defined President Kasavubu's share of the crime and has demanded that he and his aides "should not escape the responsibility for the death of Mr Lumumba. Mr Okito and Mr Mpolo".

The Commission confirms that President Kasavubu and his aides had handed over the Premier and his colleagues, to the Tshombe clique. To quote from the report, "knowing full well, in doing so, that they were throwing them into the hands of their bitterest political enemies, The Government of the Province of Katanga in turn not only failed to safeguard the lives of the three prisoners, but also had by its action, contributed to the murder of the prisoners. The record of the Commission's work bristles with evidence indicative of the extensive role played by Mr Muonongo, the Katanga Minister of the Interior, in the entire plot leading to the murder of Mr Lumumba. Mr Okito and Mr Mpolo",

In so far as Tshombe's role as a betrayer of national interest was never in question ever since the Congolese crisis burst into the open, a greater attention is claimed by that part of the Commission's report which unmasks the perfidious duplicity of the Kasavubu-clique which did not allow, despite earlier assurances, the U N Conciliation Commission or the representatives of the International Red Cross to visit Mr Lumumba in prison. The Commission described as "significant" the fact that the alleged escape of Mr Lumumba and his two fellow prisoners had been made public on the very day on which President Kasavubu had promised to inform the U N Conciliation Commission of the date on which it could see the prisoners.

The findings of the report have wider international significance, Now that the guilty have been named by an independent international body, what steps are the United Nations going to take to bring the guilty men and their patrons to book?

Aviation Policy Reversed ?

THE decision to nationalise the air services taken some years ago was as much ideological as pragmatic. Apart from ideology, the decision was also forced on the Government by the tremendous imbalance in the economies of the air services at the time. A few of the services were paying; most were not. Main of the companies had started with small initial capital and with second-hand Dakota planes bought from Army Disposals and they had not been earning even the depreciation on their old aircraft, not to speak of being able to build up reserves to replace them by more efficient up-to-date aeroplanes. The Government was interested in maintaining a reasonably efficient service connecting all the important towns and cities, and this meant that some of the routes would not pay. The All Transport Licensing Board had not succeeded in allotting the routes in a manner which could bring some order out of this chaos.

The nationalisation decree wiped out all the airlines—those which could not run the services allotted to them at a profit as also a few others which perhaps could. Among tin casualties were the two Calcutta operators, the enterprising Airways (India) which was meeting and thriving on the keenly-felt demand for air transportation to Assam, and the colourful, for a different reason, Kalinga Airlines,

The Indian Airlines supplied what the Government wanted—a network of services to meet the essential needs of air transportation; and in tin-eight years of its existence, it has constantly expanded its field of operations. All these years, private operators have been debarred from running scheduled flights. There are still some of them, struggling and trying to survive by running chartered flights. Though the Indian Airlines have vastly expanded, one

cannot still claim that all the stations in India which need a regular air service have been adequately covered.

The 'nationalisation of air services was an important, almost a solemn derision, in consonance with the Government's Industrial Policy statement and the basic aim of socialisation to which the Government is committed. The Industrial Policy statement, however covers a lot of things. In fact, it has room for marginal adjustments and, under tin pressure of necessity, some minor adjustments have been made which, it has been explained, do not compromise the principle. The policy of nationalisation of airlines does not admit of any such modification, nor even of minor adjustments. Had it not been so then, at the time when Indian Airlines Corporation was set up, exceptions would and should have been made for the airlines then in operation which were running successfully at the time, the most outstanding of which was irways-India).

In the circumstances, the permission given behind the scenes, to Kalinga Airways to run a daily service from Bombay to Baroda comes as a surprise. There is no question that Baroda needs a regular air service. But to allow a private operator to come on the scene after eight years of rigid prohibition of any such service is not a minor deviation or adjustment, but a scandalous discrimination against the others and an abandonment of the principle, by which the Government has sworn all these years. That the exception has been made for Kalinga Airways, behind which is the colourful figure of Shri Bijoyananda Patnaik, makes it all the more intriguing. The adventurous aviator, who came into prominence in the days of the August Movement, has since appeared as a meteor on the political firmament, with his sensational success in Orissa elections. The compromise with the policy of nationalisation made by the permission given to the Kalinga Airways is, therefore, doubly damned, because of its obvious political implications. It does not help to improve the morale, of the people, when such rank political favouritism is blessed by political bigwigs—as in the public celebrations to inaugurate the service in Bombay and Baroda.

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