

fore the sun rises on January 1st next', to affirm with much flourish that Indonesia had 'no patience left' and that the fate of Malaysia was to be put in the hands of twenty-one million Indonesian volunteers; and yet, with so much colourful verbiage, the President did turn to the essentially bourgeois and very boring politicking of summit talks.

Is it possible that Sukarno had been impressed by Subandrio's report in early May that Indonesia's foreign exchange reserves had by then fallen to US 50 million dollars and that the inflation was 'extraordinary'—the May 26 liberal pricing regulations were to be withdrawn since what was to have buttressed them, American aid of 400 million dollars, had not been forthcoming. Perhaps, he had been impressed by the damage confrontation had done to the economy, and reflected that more sympathy for a summit might encourage Washington to relent. Or perhaps he had his eye on the criticisms of the uncommitted nations, the potential members of any future Bandung Conference, or perhaps he was just tired of sustaining the charade. Certainly, at no stage did he give anything important away—the 'principle' amounted to some 32 guerillas trooping through the Thai inspection point on the Malaysia-Indonesia border, and no more.

Most of Indonesian State and politics is largely verbal, like that pretentious word 'confrontation' which means straightforward old-fashioned aggression, but that verbosity has succeeded in killing some 300 on either side since the campaign began seventeen months ago. This might be considered a small price for the relative stability there has been (if one is a politician and not a parent), but what is verbal for Sukarno at the moment can precipitate something more concrete if the President finds himself in a tight domestic corner or if he is replaced by tougher men who find Malaysia an even more valuable aid in Indonesia. The PKI, so critical of Dange for adulating Congress when it itself is even more devoted to that paper tiger, Sukarno, waits patiently in the wings. There would be much less compunction in converting the present cold confrontation into a hot one if the PKI came to power since this would certainly polarise the domestic scene (something Sukarno has tried very hard to avoid) and compel the adoption of policies most calculated to coerce loyalty. The danger has wide ramifications, not

least of which would be the indefinite postponement of the day when South and South-East Asia can defend itself — SEATO, the British in Malaysia and the Americans in Indo China, all would receive a gratuitous addition of support by the victory of Aidit.

As it is, Sukarno's irresponsibility keeps the British in Malaysia, and paralyses the natural political development of that country. There will probably not be another summit for some time now—the Tunku has relearned the old lesson, and Sukarno has had his holiday. Everything is back to normal: much wordage and a few more deaths for no good purpose.

Outs and Ins

BY the end of this month, the United Nations force in the Congo should be finally withdrawn. Its services, its contribution to the history of the Congo, will have to wait for the judicious assessment of the historians, but in the interim, the still very active problems of Congo demand continued attention. The UN force has been little more than symbolic for sometime — at its peak, it was some 20,000 men, but at the beginning of this month, it was only about 3,000, more than half of whom were stationed in Leopoldville. Yet, perhaps, having this dwindling foot in the door did curb the fierce forces of local and tribal schisms which have now asserted themselves with redoubled strength.

As everywhere in Africa, the strain is complex — being, at one end, little more than a personalised clash between different tribal leaders; at the other, the three or more way splits of the current Cold War. Consider, for example, the Ruzizi Valley, North of Lake Tanganyika in Eastern Congo. Here the struggle between rival leaders for the chieftainship of the Bafuleros tribe and the conflict between the administrative head of the area and the Kivu Provincial Government has provided an ideal opportunity for the National Liberation Committee, the loose focus of dissident ex-Lumumba-ites in Brazzaville, over the river (and border) from Leopoldville. The NLC set up a branch at Bujumbura, the capital of Burundi, incidentally making contact here with the staff of the newly-established Chinese Embassy who have given a little more discipline and coherence to the rebels, and directed Gaston Emile Soumialot to co-ordinate and direct the rash of incidents in Kivu. With Kashamura (an ex-Lumumba Minister) leading the 'Kivu Jeunesse', the attacking forces have had

extensive successes — the small town, of Uvira on Lake Tanganyika fell to them in, mid-May, and by now Martin Kossongo and the 'Revolutionary Government' of Eastern Congo, hold the entire Ruzizi Valley. The Central Government has declared an Emergency in Kivu and requested, UN troops to be sent in — the troops of the National Congo Army, said to be very demoralised, were either trounced, terrified or persuaded to desert (particularly from one unit, the Kivu-based Seventh Gendarmerie).

Not that this is by any means the sum of troubles Congo's present rulers have to face. The conflict between the Provincial Government of Kwilu and the Bapende and Babunda tribes has been skilfully knit with NLC aims through the agency of Pierre Mulele (an ex-Gizenga aide). Yet another rippling revolt has spread, seriously threatening provincial integrity, and apparently incapable of control by the 30,000 strong National Congo Army, despite the poor arms of the rebels. In late May, the sudden revolt in North Katanga, led by the recently appointed President of the North Katanga National Assembly has spread with great speed and rebels are believed by now to have captured Albertville (with very heavy Government losses). Separate revolts at Baudouinville and troubles of troop loyalty in even Leopoldville, and the ravages of ex-Tshombe-ite bandits in Katanga (5,000 are said to be under training in Portuguese Angola, with another 10,000 available in Katanga, ready to make the bid for secession once again). A curfew in four major cities, an Emergency in two provinces: the prospects for peaceable Congolese are not the brightest.

Central Government action has been desultory — either because action is impossible with the shaky administrative structure available, or because Ministers feel that the good things of high position must be enjoyed before the final deluge breaks, or that, if enough blood flows, the UN will be blackmailed back into defending the shaky Central Government from further depredations. In mid-June, with the house coming down round their ears, the main Central leaders were enjoying leisurely tours in Europe. Adoula's main contribution on returning is the formation of a new political party under his Presidency, the Assembly of Congolese Democrats, founded on the somewhat new doctrine of 'Banto Socialism'. The new post-Independence bourgeoisie against which the many outs are fighting to secure the high

promise of Independence, lives well and cosily, despite its apparent insecurity.

The Government has also diverted some attention by criticising the many countries that find it useful to dabble in the Congo; pot—the United Arab Republic and Algeria have been 'warned' after the recent series of bomb incidents in Leopoldville for which they were blamed. Relations are naturally strained with Brazzaville and

Burundi, since they support the rebel National Liberation Committee. Russia and China are no doubt competing to command the motley directions the Widely different bands of rebels propose to travel — there is some advantage in the politics of market competition, insofar as it neutralises the activities of all. The West, for its part, is busy shoring up Adoula. To the blindest Maoist, the tribal revolts of Congo might seem a repetition of pre-

Communist China's troubles, and as such a further test-case for the proposition that creeping ill-armed revolt can defeat the mighty machinations of the imperialists. Since Congo politicians are more adept at riding the shifting tides of international politics than of their own people, the foreign element may again prove important. Which is, again, very sad both for the peace and the viability of independent Congo.

Letter from Punjab

Kairon Goes, but...

AT last Kairon's political sands have run out, and though he promises to continue serving the people in any capacity they want him to, his political rehabilitation should be out of the question, immediately at least. The publication of the Das Report, with the contents of which he had been officially acquainted much earlier, has considerably dampened his spirits. Earlier the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee and the Congress Assembly Party had passed resolutions eulogising Kairon, in utter disregard of the findings of Mr Justice Das. The President of Punjab Congress, Shri Bhagwat Dyal Sharma, a devoted Kaironite, declared that, "Das Commission or no Das Commission. Mr Kairon our leader. He is our friend, philosopher and general and will have to be listened to."

The general and his cohorts were evidently putting up this show of strength and issuing threats with a view to browbeating the Congress High Command into nominating someone acceptable to them as the next Chief Minister. Kairon is too much of a political realist, to have bothered about the resolutions praising him in extravagant terms. His main purpose in organising the whole show must have been to show to the High Command that he was still a power in Punjab. Without mincing words, he let it be known that only a person acceptable to his group would be allowed to function in Punjab as Chief Minister. Soon after resigning his post he announced that the Congress Party in the Assembly be allowed to exercise its 'democratic right' and that its natural choice would be Pandit Mohanlal who was 'a man of the masses'. But it soon became known that this man of Kairon had himself been implicated by the Das Commission. The Commission's Report says that "Mr Mohanlal ...

passed orders that the Government's approval be sent direct to the Municipal Committee" to allow the Chief Minister's son to build a cold storage in a prohibited area in Amritsar. As a result, Pandit Mohanlal soon dropped out of the race. Then Kairon started talking of a compromise candidate, saying, "It is my democratic right to influence the choice of my successor". Keeping in view the circumstances in which the need to appoint a successor has arisen, one need not comment on the validity of this democratic right!

The Humble Kairon

It is not known why the central leadership kept giving Kairon so much rope even after the Das Report had been made available to it. But the decision to publish the Report seems to have been ultimately taken to cut him down to size. Immediately he was relieved of his caretaker's job. In his place, Dr Gopichand Bhargawa took over on June 21. The date is significant as exactly 12 years ago to the day, he had himself been obliged to resign as Chief Minister.

No sooner was the Das Report published than the fighter in Kairon collapsed. At once he became a picture of humility itself and, perhaps, for the first time, owned up the misdoings of his sons. Accepting the verdict of Mr Justice Das in "all humility", he said, "I publicly dissociate myself from all the activities of my sons ... It is mainly for the doings of my sons that I have come to suffer. My two sons have amassed wealth in different ways and in so doing they have sometimes (*sic!*) exploited my name and the official machinery".

He has cleverly omitted to mention his own direct role in the affair. The Das Commission has held him personally and directly guilty in at least one

case of having misused his power and influencing *for his own benefit* and in three other cases to benefit his close relatives. The latter have been enterprising themselves and have exploited his position in five other cases. To quote from the Commission's report: "Such exploitation cannot possibly be a legitimate business and the father's influence and power cannot be permitted to be traded in." But in respect of the acquisition of some properties by his sons like the Nandan Cinema and Punjab Cold Storage, the Commission has gone further and observed that even if Kairon did not himself commit the irregularities or illegalities, "he was certainly privy to their commission". Similarly, the Government purchasing the surplus lands of his relatives "adds to the gravity of the misdeeds" and the manner in which the ban on purchasing land belonging to Ministers' relatives was removed leaves the disagreeable impression of "insidious design carefully prepared and carried out." He let these things proceed with such callous disregard of public outcry that "he must be held to have connived". So this time he is not being accused of an amorphous 'constructive responsibility' for the misdoings of his sons, but of direct participation therein. As the Report says, "The allegations stared him in the face, he paid no heed to them. He cannot now plead ignorance of facts".

However, strange as it may seem to an outsider, all this was well known. The Das Report has not brought many new facts to light, but has judicially confirmed what was common knowledge in Punjab and elsewhere in this country. Consequently, the Congress High Command having refused to listen to the charges against Kairon all these years, may be in the words of *The Statesman*, the only surprised body of men in the country today.