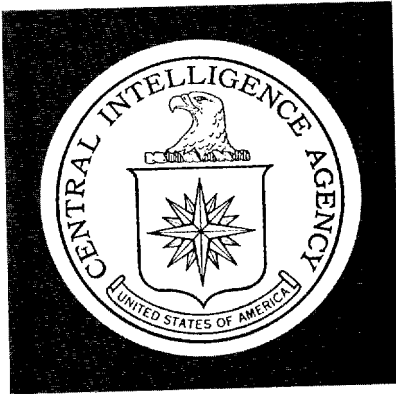


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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# *WEEKLY SUMMARY*

## *Special Report*

*USSR Steps Up Activity in African Labor Movement*

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**USSR STEPS UP ACTIVITY IN AFRICAN LABOR MOVEMENT**

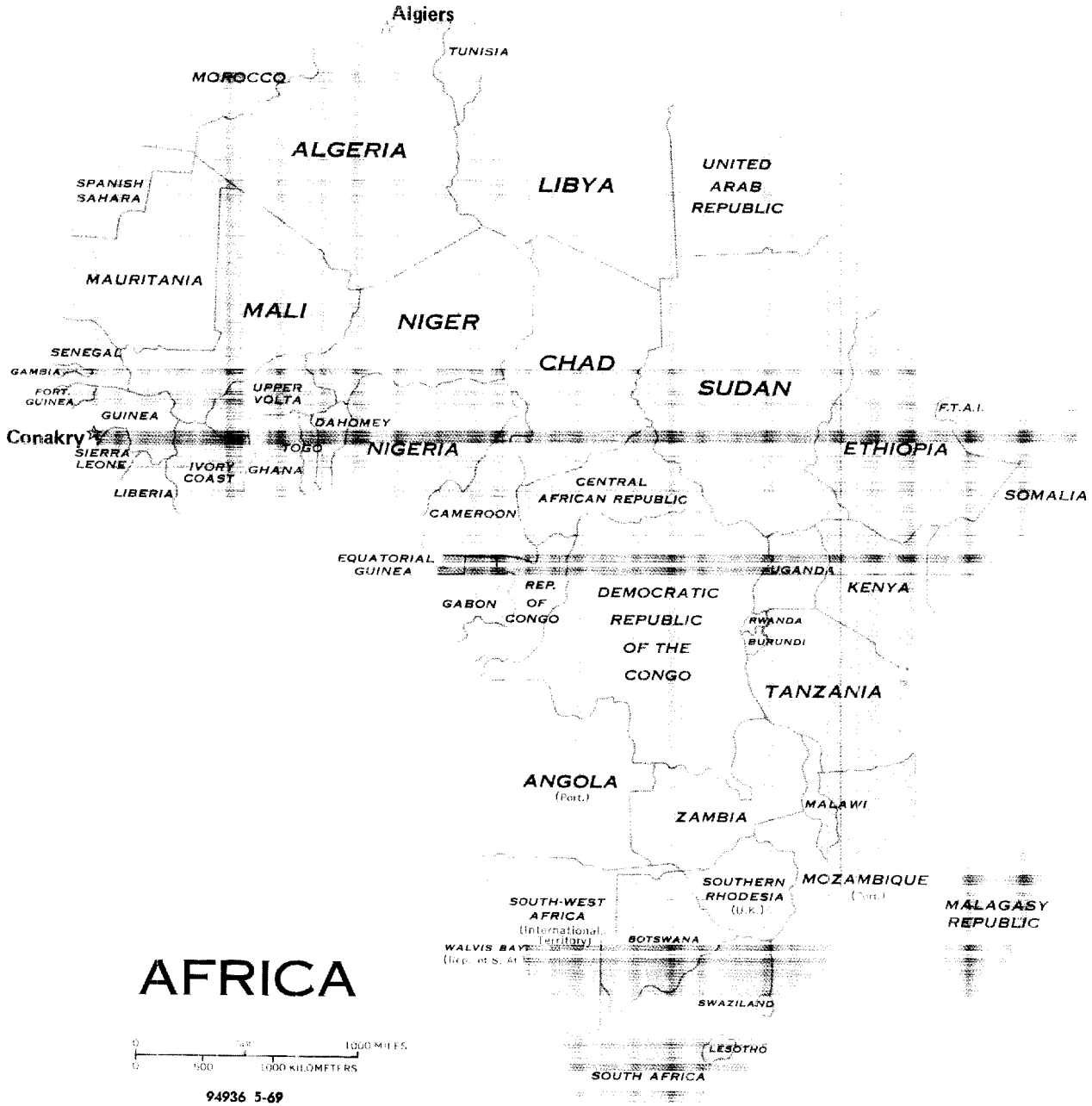
Open activity in Africa by the Communist-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and the USSR's All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, which has been increasing for nearly three years, is aimed at establishing a foothold in local labor unions. A recent flurry of Soviet activity in the African labor movement does not appear to portend a new offensive in this area, but rather seems to stem chiefly from the convening of two long-planned African labor conferences of considerable interest to Moscow.

Current Soviet efforts appear to focus on encouraging the formation of a pan-African labor federation susceptible to WFTU influence, expanding direct ties between individual African unions and the WFTU, and garnering African support for major organizational changes in the United Nations' International Labor Organization. Labor schools in the USSR and Eastern Europe are continuing to train Africans, some of whom will presumably receive responsible positions in their own countries and may possibly prove sympathetic to the Soviet Union. Soviet influence will be severely limited, however, by strong African nationalism in nearly all unions and by anti-Communist hostility in many of them. Strict supervision by local governments will also be a factor. Nevertheless, Moscow's activity among African trade unions and its encouragement of the socialist economic practices that they favor are likely to give the USSR more influence than any other foreign power in the African labor movement.

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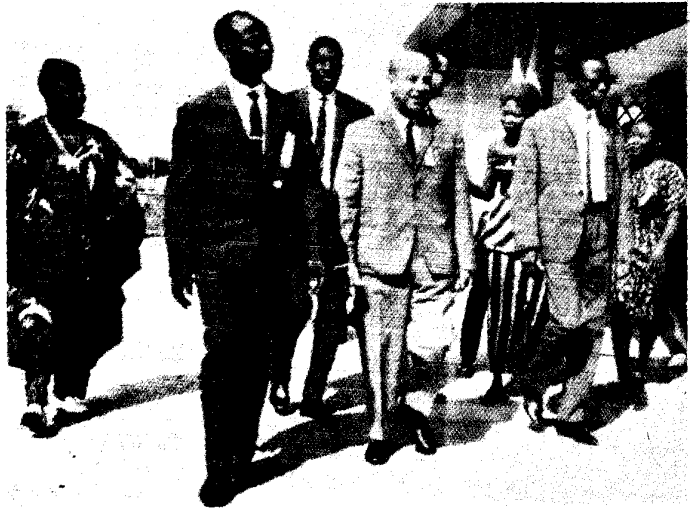
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### SOVIET OBJECTIVES

The considerable aid and attention given African trade unions by the USSR seems at first glance a useless investment in view of the minuscule size of the continent's organized labor force. The African unions claim a total membership of about five million, however, and are a strong locus of power in many countries. They are highly political compared with economically oriented Western unions and, as such, are often closely tied to or dominated by political parties. Furthermore, many labor leaders have been recruited for government service because of their hard-to-find executive, organizational, and administrative experience. Among those who have risen to high government office through the trade union movement are Sekou Toure, President of Guinea; Cyrille Adoula, former prime minister of the Congo; Maurice Yameogo, former president of Upper Volta; and Tom Mboya, minister for cooperatives and economic developments in Kenya.

The long-term objectives of Soviet efforts in the African labor movement are to inculcate a preference for socialist economic practices, to weaken or eliminate political and economic ties between the West and African countries, and to promote government policies favorable to the USSR. Among Moscow's more immediate objectives is the securing of African support for far-reaching structural changes in the UN's International Labor Organization (ILO). The trade unions are a valuable means to these ends in that they can influence governments to adopt policies consonant with Soviet goals and promote state-to-state relations with the Soviet Union. Soviet opportunities are also advanced by many African labor leaders' eagerness for a strongly centralized government and economy. Over all, the Soviets appear to understand, support, and exploit the basically political nature of the labor movement in Africa.

WFTU Delegation Visits Leaders of Dahomey's General Union of Workers



### SOVIET ACTIVITY 1957-1966

Moscow's early appreciation of the important role of labor organizations in Africa and their political potential stands out against its otherwise poor record of political acuity between 1957-1966. During this period, the USSR gave considerable effort to cultivating African trade union organizations and extending bloc influence among them, but the field was crowded with international organizations bidding for the loyalty of the African unions. Competition from non-Communist metropole unions—gradually superseded in many states during the 1950s by the Western-oriented International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)—was particularly stiff. These organizations, the hostility of some governments, and the instability of others all stood in the way of Soviet inroads into the African labor movement.

The WFTU has served since World War II as the chief vehicle for Moscow's efforts to expand Soviet influence in the world labor movement. Since the mid-1950s, however, many African

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Veteran Soviet Labor Officials Piotr Pimenov (right) and Dimitri Turtchaninov (left) Meet With African Colleagues.

states and trade unions have preferred neutrality between East and West, choosing not to bind themselves to one bloc or the other. The Soviets, stealing a march on the West, accepted this neutrality and stopped pressing African unions to affiliate with WFTU. Instead, Moscow encouraged regional organizations, hoping that these would undercut the ICFTU and encourage the severance of ties with the West. As an example, the Soviets and WFTU actively collaborated with Sekou Toure's regional labor federation, the Union Generale des Travailleurs d'Afrique Noire, formed in 1957. Toure's break with France in 1958 and his anti-Western policies, however, created widespread suspicion that his organization served as a channel for Guinean-inspired, pro-Communist subversion. Its credibility as a potential pan-African union rapidly waned.

A new organization was needed and, in October 1959, initial steps were taken to organize a broader pan-African federation. With WFTU support and financial aid, the All Africa Trade Union Federation (AATUF) was formed in May 1961 by the Casablanca powers (Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, the UAR, and the Algerian rebel regime).

From the Soviet viewpoint, AATUF was a means of dislodging the pro-Western ICFTU in Africa and also a more effective means of influencing African unions. As a precondition for membership, for example, AATUF required disaffiliation from all other international federations; this has generally been viewed as a device for weakening the influence of the ICFTU and other Western labor organizations. AATUF has gained few new members since its founding, however, and has proven a rather weak exponent of the radical labor movement. One of its greatest setbacks was Ghana's assumption of virtual control of the organization between 1964 and 1966.

In an effort to counteract the potential threat of AATUF to Western trade unionism, the African Trade Union Confederation (ATUC) was established in 1962 by Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, and the French-speaking black African states—with the active support of the ICFTU. Although rivalry between AATUF and ATUC was inevitable, their failure to destroy one another has led to several attempts at unification. The AATUF rule on affiliation with other international organizations, however, has continued to be a major stumbling block to a merger.

Nevertheless, in the early 1960s Moscow, not putting all its eggs in AATUF's basket, made direct but low-level approaches to African unions. In many cases, these were through the Soviet Union's own labor organization, the All Union Central Council of Trade Unions (AUCCTU), and its East European allies, rather than WFTU. A major area of activity was—and remains—the training of African labor cadres, who account for almost 75 percent of all labor trainees schooled in the Soviet bloc since 1958. In addition, by 1965 the USSR had channeled over 1,000 academic and vocational training scholarships through the African labor unions. Soviet labor advisers have also been sent to African countries on educational

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assignments, mostly having to do with the establishment of labor leadership training centers. Such centers have been organized in Guinea, Mali, Algeria, and Nigeria.

#### THE DIRECT SOVIET APPROACH

By 1966, AATUF had become chiefly a vehicle for the pursuit of Ghanaian ambitions in Africa, and the overthrow of President Nkrumah dealt the organization a serious blow from which it has not yet recovered. One consequence of AATUF's dramatic decline apparently was a decision by the Soviets in mid-1966 that WFTU should assume a more open and active role in African labor affairs in its own name. Greater emphasis was also given to the expansion of Soviet AUCCTU activity.

Both organizations sought to enhance their position in Africa between 1966 and 1968 by sending numerous delegations to Africa and by routing funds to unions more directly. WFTU was successful in acquiring new affiliates in Dahomey, Gambia, Reunion, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, and Somalia. Several of these new affiliates, however, as well as many other unions leaning toward WFTU, are weak and in disfavor with their home governments. WFTU also increased its training programs during this period and offered assistance to any union seeking advice, materials, or lecturers. In May 1968, WFTU announced plans to collaborate openly with AATUF. Delegations from both groups met in Prague to plan a joint meeting for early 1969.

#### CURRENT SOVIET ROLE

The Soviets have been particularly busy on the African labor scene during the last four months. The African labor ministers' conference in Algiers (12-17 March)

[redacted] adopted several resolutions that were undoubtedly gratifying to

the Soviets, the most important of which was in support of a joint AATUF-ATUC decision to seek a merger into a new pan-African organization. Moscow probably favors such a new organization because of AATUF's general ineffectiveness and the fact that both the ICFTU and ATUC are now very weak. The Soviets presumably hope that a unified organization would be susceptible to their influence.

To encourage formation of a new organization, Soviet trade union officials on a recent African tour urged AATUF members to drop their rule forbidding dual affiliation. Such a move would also clear the way for WFTU to recruit new African affiliates for itself. The Soviets apparently hope that in return for their assistance, a united African labor organization would be willing to work hand-in-glove for structural changes in the ILO that would increase both Communist and African representation on the governing board.

AATUF Vice President W. O. Goodluck Presents Token of Close Ties to WFTU Leadership.

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**MAHJOUR BEN SEDDIK**  
President of AATUF



**MAMADI KABA**  
Guinean Labor Leader

**SEKOU TOURE**  
President of Guinea



**A. C. A. TANDAU**  
Tanzanian Labor Leader

Nevertheless, there are numerous obstacles both to the formation of a pan-African labor federation and to Communist influence over it. As with past efforts to form such an organization, regional jealousies and other purely African problems are major hindrances. Even if a new federation could be created, Soviet efforts to influence it would face formidable hurdles. Soviet influence would presumably have to be exercised through one-union, one-party states such as Algeria and Guinea, and even these would be unlikely to accept Soviet control. Furthermore, some trade union organizations in Africa are extremely suspicious, if not openly hostile, to anything that smacks of Communist influence and would be sure to oppose a Soviet-oriented federation. Two such groups are Tanzania's National Union of Tanganyikan Workers and the Kenyan Central Organization of Trade Unions. In addition, there is some residual French and British trade union interest in Africa, and Moscow would probably have to compete against both to establish a position in a new organization—an unseemly competition that would risk an antiforeign reaction against all three countries.

Apparently aware of the unfavorable prospects for either AATUF or a pan-African federation, WFTU and the AUCCTU have continued to increase their own activity in Africa. WFTU's joint sponsorship of the Conakry Conference of African and European Unionists (18-21 March) is an example of that activity. Prior to the conference, a trio of veteran Soviet labor leaders made an extensive trip through west and central Africa, pressing for closer local ties with WFTU and seeking aid in reorganizing the ILO governing board. They also encouraged attendance at the Conakry conference, billing it as a major African trade union event. The conference itself was probably intended to revitalize the AATUF, increase WFTU contacts among the unions, and neutralize remaining ICFTU influence in Africa. Though

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concrete results were few, Moscow was surely gratified—as witnessed by extensive coverage in the Soviet press—by conference resolutions on Vietnam, the Middle East, and West Germany.

#### OUTLOOK

The high visibility of recent Soviet labor activity in Africa has aroused some concern about a “new” Soviet labor offensive on the continent. It seems more plausible, however, that these activities are an outgrowth of Moscow’s presumed decision after the fall of Nkrumah to emphasize WFTU-AUCCTU initiatives in Africa. Although not yet prepared to abandon AATUF, the Soviets have more and more tended to bypass it, apparently considering that direct contact with the African unions will be more fruitful and easier to manage. Support for a pan-African organization is probably based not only on the hope of eradicating what is left of ICFTU and AFL-CIO influence, but also in the expectation of possible use in restructuring the ILO. Moscow can probably expect some limited successes in the trade union movement in north, central, and west Africa, but east Africa—judging from past experience—will continue to be inhospitable to Soviet efforts.

The young and growing African labor movement offers a fertile field for Soviet cultivation, but Moscow’s progress is likely to be slow and dependent in no small way on the intensity of African xenophobia. Many union officials trained in the USSR will presumably rise to positions of power in their home countries, a process likely to favor the Soviet Union in the long run. Moreover, the growing preference in Africa for centralized economies, governmental planning, and the growth of strong public sectors will also enhance the popularity of those advancing a socialist approach. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily portend a corresponding rise in Soviet influence. The forces of nationalism in Africa are growing and both trade unionism and socialism appear likely to assume a distinctively African cast. Allowing for this limitation, however, it seems likely that the extent of Moscow’s involvement in the labor field, as well as its encouragement of socialist economic policies, will make the USSR the most influential foreign power in the African labor movement in the future.

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