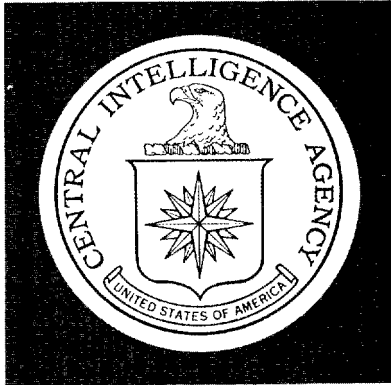


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WEEKLY SUMMARY

Special Report

Senegal: Senghor Regime Faces Further Unrest

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SENEGAL: SENGHOR REGIME FACES FURTHER UNREST

The serious student and labor agitation that shook Senegal a year ago marked the end of a relatively peaceful political era and the beginning of a period of domestic unrest. The degree of discontent revealed by strikes and demonstrations caught the moderate, pro-French government of President Leopold Sedar Senghor by surprise. During the past year, the government has dealt with student and labor turbulence on a crisis-to-crisis basis, unable to formulate a comprehensive approach to dealing with the country's ills.

Serious economic problems underlie both the popular grievances and the government's difficulty in coping with them. Senegal's agricultural economy is stagnant and shows little prospect for reviving. The government's already precarious budget has been further strained by the recent costs of trying to buy domestic tranquility, and even if Senghor were to attempt needed reforms, he would be handicapped by a severe lack of funds.

At this time, Senghor's opposition is still fragmented and pursuing divergent goals, and there is no discernible political alternative to his rule. The forces for change in Senegal are clearly growing more insistent, however, while the major props of the regime are eroding. In this volatile atmosphere, any spark could ignite an explosion, and Senghor can no longer fully count on French military support to bolster him.

BACKGROUND

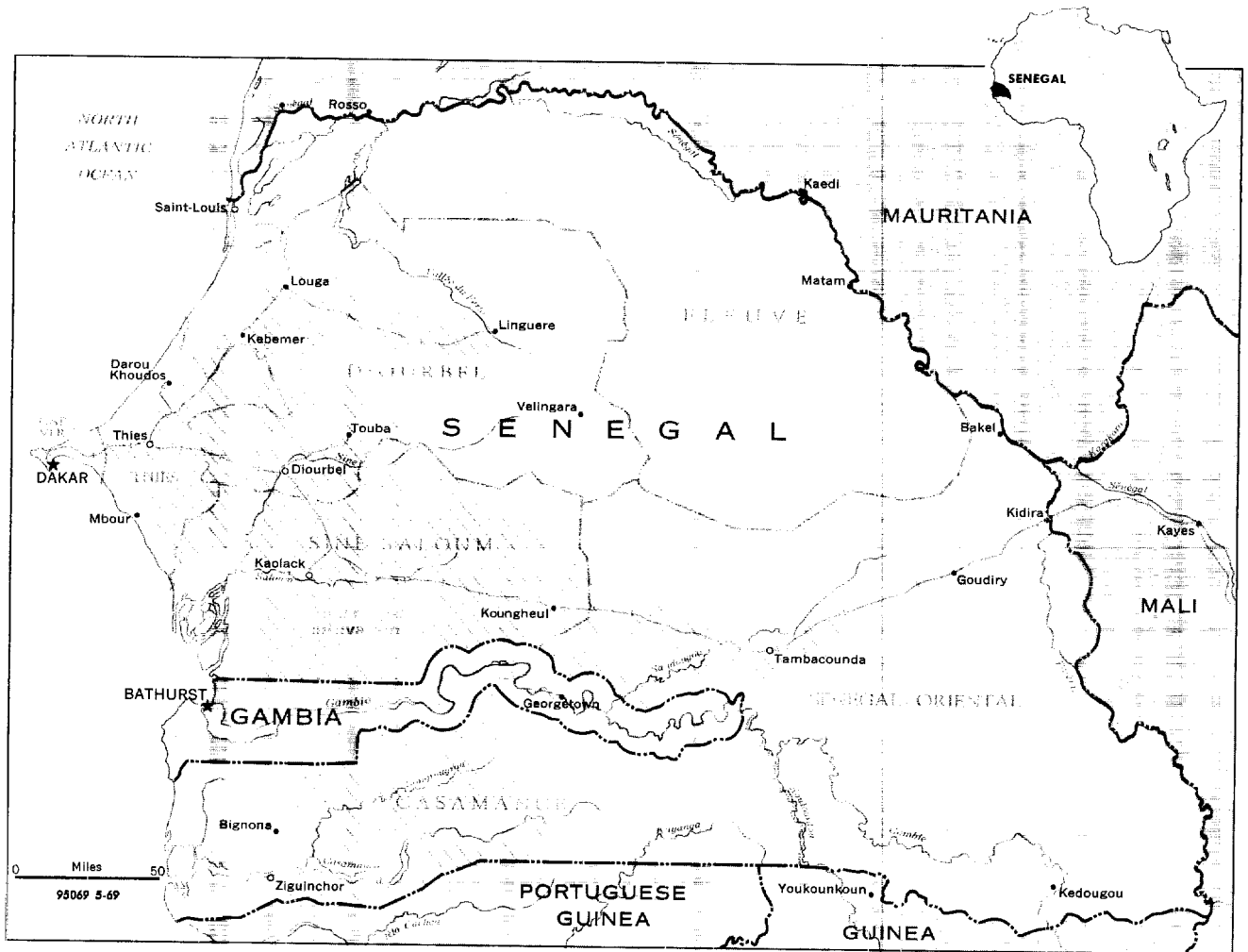
Senegal became independent in 1960 with better short-term prospects for stability than many of its African neighbors. During the lengthy colonial period, widespread dissemination of French culture coupled with extensive Islamization had blurred tribal lines and had helped to create a relatively homogeneous society. Senegal was the first foothold of the French in Africa, and its capital, Dakar, served for many years as the administrative, commercial, and economic center of France's West African colonial possessions. The country developed a sophisticated, Western-oriented political elite that easily assumed the reins of leadership upon independence. Moreover, with the breakup of the French West Africa Federation, Senegal inherited a trained, although inefficient and unnecessarily large, corps of functionaries to staff the new government bureaucracy.



President Leopold Senghor

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President Senghor, a moderate pro-French intellectual who is internationally known as the poet-apostle of African and Negro dignity, established himself in the years before independence as Senegal's pre-eminent political leader. During this period, he founded the forerunner to the ruling Senegalese Progressive Union (UPS), building primarily on a rural base composed of the country's traditional aristocracy—local clan and Muslim religious leaders—and the peasants. He also gained the support of a coalition of middle-class and minority groups. In 1960, he became the country's first president.

An intraparty factional hassle in 1962-63 cost the party many of its most progressive members and left Senghor more dependent than ever on the most conservative elements of society. Aware that this dependence severely limited his options, he set out to broaden his base of support, and his new policy of national unity was at least superficially successful. By the end of 1967, the President had neutralized the country's small, illegal, Marxist-oriented parties and had gathered all significant opposition parties and factions under the UPS umbrella.

Senghor undoubtedly considered his unopposed re-election in February 1968 as a popular mandate to continue the policies of his administration. He was shocked, therefore, by the depth of discontent revealed in the student and labor demonstrations that shook his government only a few months later. There had been some signs of growing unhappiness—resurgence within the ranks of the labor movement and continuing agitation at the often-turbulent University of Dakar—but little indication that an antigovernment manifestation of such dimensions was brewing. Its outbreak at that time was primarily a result of the psychological impact of similar demonstrations in France, which has retained a dominant influence in Senegalese political, economic, and cultural affairs since independence.

The first clear-cut indication of cracks in Senegal's facade of national unity came on May Day, 1968, when the country's major labor organization, the National Union of Senegalese Workers, broke its shaky alliance with the government and party to stage an independent and strictly worker-oriented demonstration instead of its usual, government-sanctioned parade. The union's leaders, personally discouraged by their failure to secure nominations to the party slate for the February elections, were also responding to pressure from their constituents, whose purchasing power had steadily declined since independence. Several days later, the union presented a comprehensive list of grievances to the President.

Student troubles erupted at the end of May when a radical student group's month-long campaign against changes in government scholarship policy culminated in a general strike at the university, and sympathy strikes in many secondary schools. The union was initially reluctant to join the students because of Senghor's promise to consider labor demands, but it called a general strike several days later when security forces intervened to quell the student disorders. The strikers were also joined by youths from Senegal's large body of unemployed, which numbers some 50,000 in Dakar alone. Senegalese troops were deployed to quell the looting and rioting that accompanied the strike, and troops from the 1,200-man French Army garrison in Dakar were deployed to guard strategic facilities. By the time order had been restored, a number of students, as well as many prominent labor leaders, had been arrested.

This crisis sharply illustrated Senghor's continuing failure to satisfy the more progressive, urban elements of society. The concessions that the government has since been forced to grant the dissidents, in order to gain time to deal with the country's other pressing problems, have also tended to demonstrate the benefits of militancy to other, less-politicized elements of society.

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Moreover, the crisis has pointed up the bankruptcy of the party structure, particularly in urban areas.

THE DISSIDENTS

Labor: The events of May and June served as a rallying point for the labor movement, which throughout most of its brief history has been badly fragmented by factional, ideologically influenced conflict. There were some refusals to heed the strike call by moderate leaders outside of Dakar, the locus of union power and the leftist stronghold, but the strike was fairly effective. In the wake of the crisis, Senghor, more sympathetic to the grievances of the laborers than of the students, quickly negotiated an agreement that satisfied several significant union demands, and he agreed to consider others.

Senghor's concern over the new-found unity of the labor movement was probably heightened by the realization that the unions might be able to step in to replace the party as the locus of urban power. To reduce labor's potential as an autonomous political force, Senghor gave tacit support to leaders who had opposed the general strike, and he worked within the ranks of the more militant leaders to win their cooperation. In November, he proposed that the union renew relations with the party in exchange for ministerial and other top government posts. The union leadership, probably aware of the difficulty of maintaining its independent posture when the government was going out of its way to satisfy worker demands, opted for the political spoils and agreed in principle to the proposal.

The formula for participation in the government and party that has been officially endorsed by all factions of the union follows the general format outlined by Senghor, although at least for bargaining purposes it calls for greater union control of its representatives than the President in-

tended. The major stumbling block to final agreement on participation has been Senghor's insistence that the union first hold a national congress. Labor leaders are certain that Senghor will try to manipulate such a congress to ensure the election of progovernment leaders, and that this would lead to a resplintering of the movement. They are therefore anxious to have an agreement in hand to present to the congress for ratification. The congress, which had been tentatively scheduled for June 1969, apparently has now been postponed.

Despite their present limited detente, another rupture between government and labor is possible. There have been indications of militant leftist opposition within labor to the cooperation proposal. In addition, differences between moderates and leftists have also reappeared in connection with the current student unrest, in which the union has thus far participated only as a mediator. Any violence by the government in dealing with the volatile student situation could force the union moderates to heed leftist calls for greater support to the students.

During the past few months, moreover, rank-and-file union members have begun to doubt whether the government will meet its commitments to them and to fear that only the union leadership will benefit by participation in the government and party. In recognition of this disaffection, students have recently begun to direct their appeals for support directly to the workers. If plans for the national congress do eventually go forward, union leaders may increasingly feel the need to resume their militant, antigovernment posture to assure their re-election at the congress.

Students: Senghor has had more difficulty in making peace with the students than with the union. Although last year's strikes were tied to the issue of government scholarship policy, they were more accurately a condemnation of the

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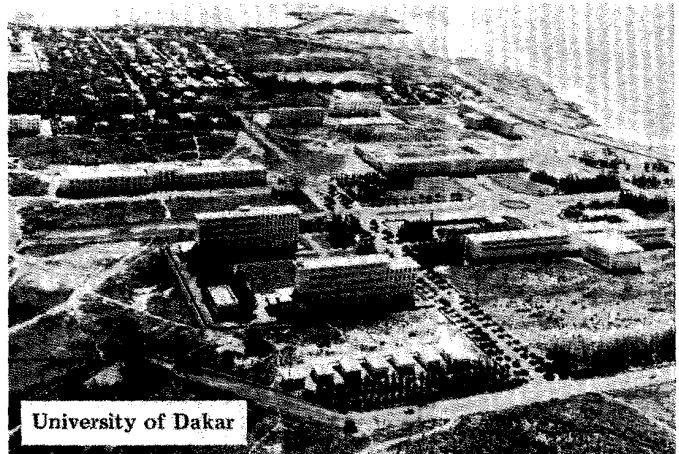
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whole French-structured educational system and of the spreading political and economic malaise that educated Senegalese youth identify with Senghorism. Youth has generally looked to government and politics as the only avenues for transforming the country. Students find, however, an inflated government bureaucracy and a system in which political activity is effectively stifled by the existence of only one legal party directed by long-time, firmly entrenched political hacks. Thus, the students are apt to believe, with reason, that there is little room for them in political circles. Senghor has been unable to convince them that they can play a significant role in their country's future.

Senghor has displayed little sympathy toward student dissidence. Generous university scholarships afford the students a comfortable life, and Senghor apparently has been annoyed by the intransigence displayed by this privileged elite. During the disorders in May, 1968, he used force to end the strike after the university students reportedly rejected an offer to negotiate with the government. His announcement the following month that the university would remain closed for a year so that reform could be accomplished may have been intended as a punishment as much as a concession to the students.

Continued student agitation, new expressions of support for the students by labor leaders, and pressure from the French, who have provided between 80 and 90 percent of the university's funds, forced Senghor to back away gradually from his adamant position. In September, he negotiated an agreement with the hitherto unrecognized leftist student group that had instigated the spring disorders. In return for a promise of student peace, the agreement provided for the reopening of most of the university, abandonment of the government's controversial new scholarship policy, and student-government negotiation over future educational reform.



Student agitation resumed in March of this year, however, when secondary school students went on strike to protest a disciplinary action at an agricultural school and an alleged government failure to meet scholarship payments. Despite their agreement with Senghor, the university students quickly gave their support to the protest. Union leaders have thus far refused to back up the students, and, in the absence of labor support, the strikes have not been fully effective. At present, the government appears to maintain the upper hand.

Although a commission on university reform was set up in January, it has not yet sent its recommendations to the government. It has been unable to overcome differences on the degree to which Africanization should be undertaken to replace French educational methods, and may not have met since March. The leaders of the drive for basic educational reform include the university's French rector and many French faculty members as well as several liberal Senegalese officials. Opposed to this reform group have been the students, their parents, and the union, who claim that any reform under such auspices will merely be a cover for continued French hegemony. Another segment of opinion is made up of proponents of the status quo, including many of

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the African professors at the university, who fear the loss of their present privileges, under the French university system and conservative French Government interests. Senghor reportedly has stated that if an agreed reform program is not presented by July, which seems unlikely at this point, he will impose his own ideas.

OTHER DISSATISFIED ELEMENTS

The discontent with French domination of Senegalese life that has been evident in both the labor and student unrest has been an underlying theme of dissatisfaction in other elements of society. For example, Senegalese small businessmen met in June 1968, under the patronage of President Senghor, to form an organization dedicated to pursuing their interests. It quickly became evident that the primary goal of the new group would be to seek Africanization of the economy and that the organization was too anti-French and, by open implication, too anti-Senghor to suit the President. Two months later, Senghor sponsored the formation of a rival organization of more moderate hue, the Federal Council of Senegalese Economic Groups (COFEGES). With the support of the government, and—at Senghor's behest—the French business community, COFEGES has since absorbed most of the members of the initial group. Despite Senghor's efforts, however, the businessmen have recently begun to demand again the rapid Africanization of the private sector of the economy.

In recent months, discontent has also been expressed by other, usually neutral forces in the Senegalese political equation. Members of the generally complacent government bureaucracy are becoming more dissatisfied over their inability to find jobs in the administration for their relatives. More important, high-level civil servants who owe their positions to Senghor have openly indicated that they think the President is losing his grip on the country. Senghor recently blessed the forma-

tion of a new group, the Nation and Development Club, composed of members of the intellectual and governing elite. The organization, which has been nicknamed "the civil servants' COFEGES," is to discuss national problems and recommend solutions to the President. Although Senghor apparently had hoped that it would provide a constructive outlet for the frustrations of the Senegalese officials, the club has already taken an aggressive nationalistic and anti-French stance, and there are indications that Senghor is now attempting to dilute its growing influence.

SENGHOR'S SUPPORTERS

Throughout the difficulties of the past year, Senghor has found it increasingly hard to number his supporters. His political party proved completely ineffective in countering the crisis last year, and Senghor's recent efforts to revitalize it have been unsuccessful. The party's decline in vigor since independence has probably been accelerated by a lack of competition, internal divisions, and, more recently, by a growing awareness among local clan leaders of Senghor's decreasing ability to dispense the spoils that they have come to expect in return for their support. Moreover, there have been recurring, although unconfirmed rumors of renewed opposition activity, possibly including support for student dissidents, by members of the former African Regroupment Party-Senegal (PRA), a once-legal opposition group absorbed by the ruling party in 1966. At least partially in response to these rumors, Senghor made a goodwill visit in March to the traditionally restive Casamance region, which is a former stronghold of the PRA as well as the most isolated and economically neglected area of the country.

At present, Senghor appears to rely most heavily on three props: the army, the French, and marabouts—powerful traditional religious leaders.

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The army has been generally apolitical and committed to upholding the legal government. Although there have been indications of friction between Senghor and the armed forces commander, General Diallo, over the past year, Senghor reportedly is making an effort to accommodate Diallo's complaints. The general, who discounts the political ambitions sometimes attributed to him, can probably be counted on to support Senghor. There have been reports of dissent among the ranks of the junior army officers, particularly over the government's failure to deal more forcefully with the dissident students, but this has not yet reached such proportions as to cast doubt on the army's loyalty. The army might be reluctant, however, to intervene on Senghor's behalf in a general political upheaval.

Senghor's relations with the marabouts are less certain than they were a year ago. The marabouts, leaders of the economically and politically powerful Muslim brotherhoods to which some two thirds of the Senegalese population belong, exert an enormous influence on the social behavior and mores of their followers and are thus probably the most politically powerful figures in Senegal. The two major brotherhoods, the Mourides and the Tidianes, have competed for political influence and financial support from the government, and much of Senegalese post-independence politics has hinged on the activities and rivalries of these brotherhoods.

During the 1968 student-labor crisis, Senghor was able to call upon the leader of the Mourides to provide visible and effective support to his government. Since then, however, that leader has died and the loyalty of his successor is open to question. The Tidiane leaders, who have been less favored with handouts, have generally been willing to provide lip service rather than active support.

Although Senghor has attempted, apparently with some success, to mend his fences with the brotherhoods, he is handicapped by his decreasing ability to give the leaders the favors that have secured their support in the past. Furthermore, the marabouts are coming under increased pressure from their followers, who have just had their worst crop in years and are beginning to wonder if Dakar, rather than Allah, is responsible for their troubles. A severe drought-caused food shortage has contributed to peasant unrest.

The resignation of French President De Gaulle places some doubt on the extent to which France can be counted on to bail Senghor out of his troubles. France's official relations with Senegal have been closely bound up with the personal ties between the two leaders, and Senghor has exhibited nervousness about his relations with a France minus De Gaulle. It seems unlikely that the change in Paris will result in an early French military or economic disengagement, but it could well mean a decrease in French willingness to support Senghor in the face of a concerted domestic challenge.

THE STAGNANT ECONOMY

Underlying most of Senegal's ills are economic problems for which no easy solution is evident. The economy is dependent on the fortunes of a single crop, peanuts, which accounts for 78 percent of Senegal's exports. Peanut production had been artificially encouraged and supported by French subsidies until December 1967, when France's preferential price system was terminated under the provisions of association between the EEC and 18 African states. Although the loss of the subsidies has been partially offset by the European Development Fund of the EEC, revenues from the crop have also been affected by a sharp decline in the world market price for peanut oil and by a third consecutive poor harvest.

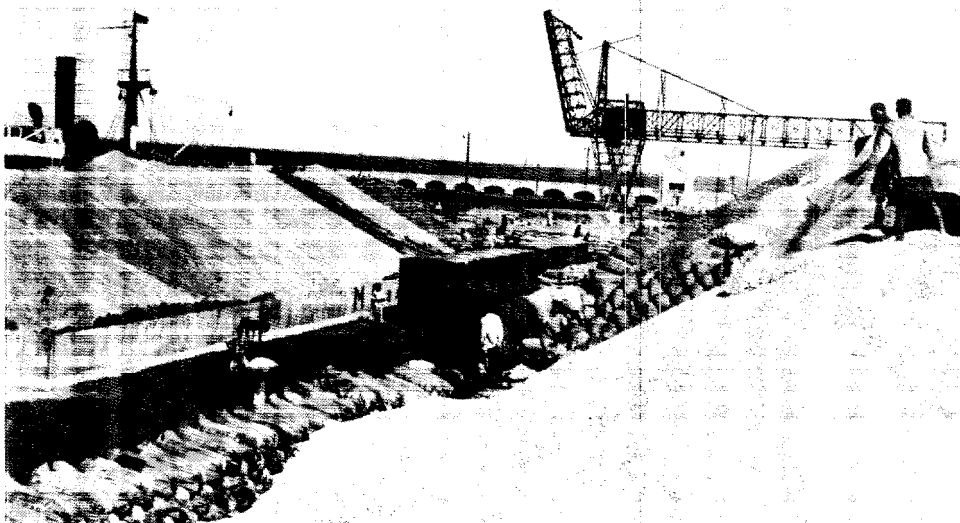
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The poor peanut harvests have had a dampening effect on all sectors of the economy. Gross domestic product actually declined in 1967, and growth in industrial production was barely perceptible. In spite of the government's receptive attitude to foreign investment, and an advantageous investment code, the lack of any known resources and the small domestic market militate against large inflows of foreign capital.

Peanuts Awaiting Shipment



Barring the discovery of exploitable mineral resources, Senegal's economic future looks bleak. Even with perfect weather conditions, another mediocre peanut harvest is expected because of a decrease in the use of fertilizers by the financially hard-pressed peasants. A significant increase in the world market price for peanuts is unlikely, and efforts at crop diversification have thus far not been notably successful. Moreover, there is an ever-increasing migration of the peasants to the city and, often, to unemployment. Senegal is hardly able to meet the costs of its operating budget, over half of which supports its cumbersome civil service, and economic development will remain largely dependent on the continued inflow of foreign assistance. Although economic cooperation with neighboring countries could provide the larger market for which Senegal's now under-utilized industries and transport facilities were originally designed, Senghor's continuing efforts to promote regional cooperation are unlikely to be effective in the near future.

OUTLOOK

With little respite from its economic problems in sight, Senegal's political future is uncer-

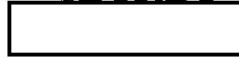
tain. Even if he undertakes reform of the educational system, Senghor will not reach the roots of student unhappiness and is likely to face continued unrest. Further labor agitation is also probable. In such volatile situations, any incident could trigger a chain of events that eventually could lead to his removal.

Although the past year has shown just how ineffective his carrot-and-stick approach is in dealing with the various elements of Senegalese society, Senghor is unlikely to undertake the drastic reforms, such as streamlining the large and corrupt government bureaucracy, that would help to ease the country's ills. Moreover, aware of the continuing need for French economic assistance, he is not likely to make more than gestures toward reduction of French influence. Yet, despite the growing disenchantment with Senghorism, there is at present no visible political alternative.

There are increasing indications that Senghor, although publicly exuding optimism, is

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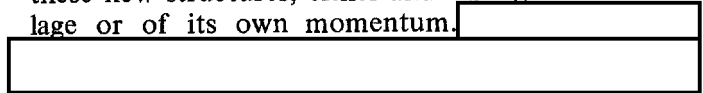


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weariness of his task. Among these is the recent suggestion, probably made at Senghor's behest, that Senegal return to a parliamentary government in which he presumably would retain his position as a world figure but pass on his domestic problems to a prime minister. Senghor is also experimenting with new organizational struc-

tures, possibly hoping that they will replace the worn-out party mechanism. If the present regime is not swept away in a revolutionary upheaval, Senegal's future leadership may emerge from these new structures, either under Senghor's tutelage or of its own momentum.

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