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# Sub-Saharan Africa Report

FOUO No. 758



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INTER-AFRICAN AFFAIRS

HAMIDOU KANE ON ECONOMIC, CULTURAL CHANGES

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French No 1092, 9 Dec 81 pp 68-70

Interview with Cheikh Hamidou Kane, minister of industrial development and crafts, by Philippe Decraene/

Text Minister of development and crafts in Habib Thiam's government, Cheikh Hamidou Kane did not agree to come back on the Senegalese political scene until after former president Mamadou Dia, imprisoned for plotting in December 1962, was freed.

A close associate of the former Senegalese prime minister, he then fell into disgrace and was sent as a diplomat to Monrovia, then to Lagos. It was there that he started a career as an international civil servant by entering UNICEF. After a 13-year stay abroad, he returned to his own country and in 1976 became chairman of the board of Dakar-Marine, a huge industrial project, destined to make a major naval repair and construction center of the Cap-Vert peninsula.

Descended from an aristocratic Toucouleur family from the Senegal River valley and born in Matam in 1928, Cheikh Hamidou Kane had his primary schooling at the School of the Sons of Chiefs in Saint-Louis and his secondary schooling at the Lycee Van Vollenhoven in Dakar. He received his diploma from the National School of France Overseas, the former "Colo," With a degree in law and a degree in arts, he is, along with the English-speaking Chinua Achebe, the best West African novelist. Author of "L'Aventure Ambigue" The Ambiguous Adventure published by Julliard in 1961, he was one of the first to deal with the tragedy of acculturation, a theme that has been developed many times since then, and the only one to do so with such a talent for expression and writing. His career and his work as a writer, unique but powerful, have made him one of the prototypes of the African intelligentsia of the independence generation, being at the same time a political leader and a man of culture.

"We Are Accomplices of the Westerners"

JEUNE AFRIQUE: How did you discover the white world?

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Cheikh Hamidou Kane: I did it in several stages. I was still a baby when it started. I was perhaps 2 or 3 when I remember having been placed in a pagne on a woman's back. I still have a very precise memory of a white woman dressed in a tropical helmet, strapped tightly into riding breeches. This sight of a human being who was not black seemed strange to me.

When I had learned to read, books permitted me to discover the thoughts of the white man, me who belonged to an oral world where the only known book was the Koran, a work of divine and not human origin.

Then I discovered the colonizer through his administrators and commanders--in the Vichy era, a time of danger and mobilization.

The last stage was the school, with my fellow students and teachers, who were all French and very different from the officials in authority

J.A.: And your discovery of France?

C.H.K.: That took place in September 1952, when, wanting to become a professor of philosophy, I went to metropolitan France. I then discovered the French, after having discovered white men. Western thought was not unknown to me, but the potential for violence in the world of the whites crushed me. Their history baffled me. I was paralyzed by the contrast between their cultural humanism and the political violence that they were capable of carrying out, either toward themselves or against a third party. I was at the same time distraught and fascinated, and it seemed to me that, even if a greater mastery of techniques had permitted Africans to go overseas, they would certainly never have acted in such a brutal fashion as the Europeans did.

J.A.: Do you think that the West has culturally traumatized black Africa?

C.H.K.: The inequality of the conditions of exchange between the West and Africa is especially shocking on a cultural level. Only very few specialists have really paid attention to the ways of Africans. Educated in European universities, now placed in positions of command, we transmit only the concepts of this Western civilization, of which we are thus the accomplices.

The quarrel between Marxists and non-Marxists seems to me quite secondary, for these categories are still unknown to us. Indeed, what seems serious to me is the rude break for the child as soon as he enters nursery school, from his traditional surroundings. Thus, as far as I am concerned, what forms my being, my irreducible substance, is my "Foulanity", the fact of being a Toucouleur and of speaking the Pulaar language. But we are, my fellow countrymen and I, constantly invaded by foreign cultural influences, transmitted

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by very powerful media. The different ethnic groups do not react to these aggressions in a uniform way. The Wolof of Senegal and the Yoruba of Nigeria, who are very plastic, very open, resist cleverly by creating new cultural models.

J.A.: Are you worried about the social changes to which the African continent is now subjected?

C.H.K.: The massive urbanization is serious. The destructuralization of the rural areas, due to the severity of peasant living conditions, accounts for the difficulties in development outside the capitals. Because of this, the political leaders ought to completely re-examine their strategy for developing the continent.

J.A.: What do you think of Africa's religious development?

C.H.K.: Being a strictly observing Moslem, I know nothing of the traditional religions. If they are threatened by destruction, I would consider that a misfortune, even though I would not be personally concerned by this fact on an emotional level. In any event, I observe that Islam, which entered West Africa along the valley of the river where I was born, has continued to develop, particularly in intensity, above all among the youthful elements of the African people. As for Christianity, even though it has suffered from its colonial affiliation, it still has a considerable impact, by reason of the amount of work achieved by the missions in terms of education, health, and social assistance.

"Yes to Deep-Rooted Islam, No to Ayatollahs"

J.A.: Do you believe in a real thrust of militant Islam?

C.H.K.: This is a phenomenon that corresponds to a continuous movement since the Hegira (622 A.D.)--which can be explained by the fact that the vehicles of Islam were and are Africans. However, unless they are guided from abroad via television, I do not think that ayatollahs can truly assert themselves in black Africa. In any event, if there were a test of strength between religious power and political power, political power would prevail. There is an instructive precedent in this regard, in Senegal itself, where President Dia entered into and won the test of strength against Cheikh Tidjane Sy, the uncle of the chief of the powerful Tidjane brotherhood and his PSS /Senegalese Solidarity Party/, which was, however, supported by Gamal Abdel Nasser.

J.A.: Are there certain economic changes that seem to you particularly important?

C.H.K.: I am primarily struck by the spectacular progress in the development of infrastructures, whether it concerns transportation, schools, hospitals, or dispensaries. In this area, the progress achieved has been greater than during the previous century. How

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can we not admire the progress in the percentage of children attending school, and in the number of hospital beds? How can we not stress the beneficial consequences of introducing farming with animals, fertilizers, fungicides?

We should not forget the rapid development of new crops, such as rice or cotton, and of industries, very appreciable in Senegal, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, and Cameroon.

J.A.: Do you believe in the inevitability of African dictatorships?

C.H.K.: Absolutely not. The further we get from the colonial era, the less certain will become the danger of dictatorships being established. We have seen more dictatorships on our continent than we will see in the future. We had no political experience, and our model of government was that of the British or French governors and not that of the democracy of Westminster or of the Fifth Republic. Curiously, we have lost the memory of the consensus that prevailed in the governments of traditional African societies. Now we are gradually rediscovering these African models and the "imported" democratic models.

J.A.: What do you think of the decision made by President Senghor to voluntarily relinquish power?

C.H.K.: It was good that an African chief of state gave such an example to the world. But was it truly the right moment? Were those truly the best circumstances?

J.A.: What judgment would you pass on the African military regimes?

C.H.K.: The invasion of soldiers in the African world has at times been useful. It was not absolutely necessary, in spite of some excessive civilian acts of irresponsibility. In any case, this invasion could only be temporary, and the soldiers' duty in such circumstances is always to withdraw. Alternance is possible and it is such that it takes away any justification for intervention, even temporarily, by the military.

J.A.: Do the political tensions seem to you to be more serious in Africa than in the rest of the world?

C.H.K.: No, I think on the contrary they are more serious in Latin America. But among the aftereffects of colonization is this myth that Africans are incapable of governing their own affairs, a myth that is even more deeply rooted in the fraternalism of the left than in the paternalism of the right.

J.A.: What do you think of Africa's place in the "concert of nations"?

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C.H.K.: We no longer form the infantry in international forums, neither for the communist countries nor for the former colonial powers. We have achieved our autonomy, in relation to the nonaligned nations, in relation to the "big brothers" like Fidel Castro, and in relation to the Arabs. With regard to the Arabs, who, after ignoring us, then discovered us because they needed our support for Palestine, we have succeeded in persuading them that the inter-Arab quarrels are of no concern to us.

J.A.: Do you believe in Panafricanism?

C.H.K.: I believe in Africa's dedication to continental unity and I remain a supporter of the federal idea. Our small stakes are scarcely viable and it is absolutely necessary to create larger entities than those inherited from colonization. We should at least have kept the former AOF /French West Africa/ and AEF /French Equatorial Africa/ federations: perhaps the time has now come to re-establish them, for we have now made evaluations, worked out the expenses, measured our exact possibilities, while 20 years ago the desire to be masters of our own destiny involved the continuation of decolonization.

J.A.: But do you not then believe at all in the strength of nationalism?

C.H.K.: The nationalist frontier seems to me to be above all marked on either side of the Sahel between black Africans and Arab-Berbers.

J.A.: Do you, like Fanon, think that Africa will remain impervious to any form of ideology?

C.H.K.: Fanon was not African, but came from Antilles, and therefore was devoted to Western ideologies. It is unfortunate that our elite remains faithful to imported political models. It would in fact be logical for African political parties to preach specifically African principles.

J.A.: Does black Africa seem to you to be "off to a bad start"?

C.H.K.: No, it is being constructed after passing without a major shock from the colonial situation to independence. In spite of the difficulties encountered, it does not look too bad, having succeeded in particular in obtaining a seat in the international community.

J.A.: What do you think of the general progress of the world?

C.H.K.: I am an optimist. After the domination of the world by the West--since the era of the great discoveries--came the reign of the two "major powers". Now we are entering into a new phase, that of the gradual disappearance of bipolarity and of the emergence of the Third World. The blocs are splitting apart and reforming. . . .



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I do not really think there is a real danger of a world conflict.  
One does not enter into a war unless one thinks one can by force  
change the course of events in one's favor.

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CHAD

HOPES PINNED ON OAU PEACEKEEPING FORCE 'ILLUSORY'

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French No 253, 23 Nov-6 Dec 81 pp 10,11

[Editorial by Simon Malley: "Chad, the Illusions of the OAU"]

[Text] "What could I say to you? That I am far from feeling reassured? That I remain skeptical, if not deeply disturbed, because I know the realities of my country? That the immediate prospects seem rather cloudy to me and the longer-term prospects are a cause of concern? The balance of forces in Chad is very fragile, which dangerously complicates the situation. Why have we suddenly demanded the withdrawal of Libyan troops when the inter-African force was not ready to come to our country and our own army was not sufficiently educated, trained, and provided with officers? We should not lose sight of the crucial fact that all of the Chadian people owe a great deal to Libya. Libya was the only country in Africa to respond to our appeal in December, 1980, helping us, fighting at our side, to defeat the traitor, Hissein Habre, who was supported militarily and financially by Egypt, the Sudan, and many other countries. It was very much due to this disinterested aid from Libya, unanimously requested by our government (the GUNT [Transitional National Union Government]), that is by agreement of the 10 political tendencies which are represented in it, that we have succeeded in re-establishing calm, security, and stability in the country for the first time in nearly a year.

"So why, under these conditions, ask me again to expedite this request for a withdrawal of Libyan troops? Why do it without consultations, without prior discussions? First of all, this concerned a decision of the cabinet, which made the request for the withdrawal of the Libyan troops. This was a political decision which we had to transmit to the Libyan government and whose modalities we had to negotiate. However, Libya surprised us by announcing the immediate withdrawal of its troops..."

President Goukouni Oueddei halted his statement for a moment. He was apparently calm and serene during this conference of chiefs of state of France and of Africa. However, his face at this moment showed a certain concern, which he had difficulty in hiding. His colleagues were trying to clear up what a West African chief of state called a "deep mystery." Many questions were asked of him, to which he was not yet able to provide an answer. We continued to press him. What was he afraid of? Did he act under domestic or external pressures? From where did they come? Asking for the withdrawal of the Libyan troops in the form and with the tone used in the communique of the cabinet--didn't this create the risk that

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Tripoli would interpret this demand as a kind of ultimatum which, it is difficult to believe, could be sent to a country which sent its troops to fight and die to help you to defend the territorial integrity of your country? Certain governments allied with imperialism, of course, acted in this way toward once friendly countries, which they sought to humiliate or to discredit. That was the case of Egypt under President al-Sadat with regard to the Soviet Union in 1972. However, a Chad which had been torn up, looted, threatened with fragmentation by the mercenaries under Hissein Habre, guided by the French government under President Giscard--hadn't it received vital assistance from Libya at a decisive, crucial moment of its history?

It is apparent that, whatever were the secret intentions of certain of his government colleagues, President Goukouni Oueddei clearly did not seek to humiliate his powerful neighbor to the North. It is also apparent that, whatever the amount of the aid which he could hope for from France or from certain African countries, he knew that too many interests bind Chad and Libya for him to be so naive as not to understand that the geopolitical situation and the vital interests of Libya could not be accommodated to the presence of a hostile country on its southern frontiers. This is all the more so since it is notoriously well known that, under the influence of American leadership, Egypt and Sudan are trying to enclose the Libyan regime in a vise aimed at choking it before overthrowing it.

That is why President Goukouni Oueddei was trying to justify the decision of his government in order to show that his principal concern was to help what he considered were the common interests of the two, neighboring countries. Do you realize, he explained in substance to the chiefs of state and to close friends, have you seen what an atmosphere this summit meeting is steeped in? Whatever the reasons, and we are all aware of them, everything was well arranged so that the star of this summit meeting would be Chad.

In other words, make Libya the target. From the beginning, one might have said that a password was spread around which brought together the interests and the purposes of the majority of the leaders present: those who wanted to deflect the attention of the summit meeting from the other, serious problems which are currently outstanding in Africa and those who had every interest in searching out, attacking, denouncing, in order to isolate Qadhafi's Libya that much better. An effort was made to distort reality, to confuse public opinion, to invent fantastic works of fiction. For "public opinion"--and that did not begin only with the "summit" meeting--Chad had lost its sovereignty, was under the Libyan military yoke, no longer had any legal existence. According to such views, Tripoli was threatening the independence of Niger, of Cameroon, of Mali, of Nigeria, of Sudan, and I don't know what other countries! Public opinion said, have you forgotten the cry of alarm that went up at the conference of the 12 countries in Lome last January, against the alleged Libyan danger? And what can be said of that Western superpower which is continuing its preparations with a view to carrying out aggression against Libya, with the aid of Egyptian and Sudanese forces? And wasn't it stated that the former French president, Giscard d'Estaing, had given them his approval and his blessing?

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This is to say that the request for the withdrawal of the Libyan troops, presented on 28 October, in the mind of President Goukouni was reportedly dictated by one concern--although it is insinuated that this was mixed with others--and that was to free Libya from a dangerous trap which a coalition of forces and of hostile Western, African, and Arab interests reportedly wanted to drag it into. Perhaps this was so...although we may be permitted to doubt it! For where are we now? Where do we risk being tomorrow?

Without wishing to play the role of a prophet of doom, an analysis of the events and the realities of the last few days shows clearly that by committing himself happily to the creation of an inter-African force and the sending of its first, Zairian elements to Ndjamena, the secretary general of the OAU, Edem Kodjo, continues faithfully, as head of the OAU, to follow a course of action which has never served anything other than the protection of the interests of the African neo-colonialist regimes. Should one be astonished at this? All of those who have observed his diplomatic "initiatives" or their deliberate absence, at the moment desired, know as we do what were the brains which really directed him and continue to do so. We will content ourselves with asking these simple questions: what was Edem Kodjo doing in Paris for the 2 weeks which preceded the meeting of the Franco-African summit? Who convinced the Zairian tyrant, Mobutu, to be the first chief of state to propose sending his paratroops to Chad in an attempt to gild the escutcheon of his corrupt regime, rather considerably tarnished since his "cousin" in the Elysee Palace in France was overturned by the French people? Who suggested to Hissein Habre and to his Egyptian and Sudanese tutors the idea of a ceasefire on the Sudanese frontier until Tripoli announced the departure of its troops, in order to encourage subsequently the resumption of the fighting and to justify the speeding up of the dispatch of OAU troops? Who, among the 50 chiefs of state who are members of the OAU, was consulted before the Nairobi summit resolution was interpreted in Kodjo's fashion and the principal candidates were selected, who, by chance, turned out to be certain countries whose hostility to Libyan was no secret to anyone? And by virtue of what divine right was he allowed to decide arbitrarily--without previously consulting the members of the committee charged with supervising the operations of the inter-African force--the choice and the date for sending the first Zairian contingent to Ndjamena? Finally, why propose units from countries bordering on Chad when the Lagos resolution specifically prohibited it--and for obvious reasons? Of course, it will always be possible for Edem Kodjo to pretend that the Nairobi resolution, which did not specifically exclude selecting such countries, made the earlier resolution null and void. However, since when does the secretary general of the OAU consider that a resolution on the same subject makes null and void those which preceded it, particularly if this is not specified? On what kind of jurisprudence is this based?

For the establishment of an inter-African force to have the slightest chance of being effective, viable, and useful, it is important for it to meet an indispensable criterion: it must be effectively neutral, impartial, and objective. Now, is the force proposed for Chad and which Edem Kodjo has confirmed truly neutral? Neutral regarding whom and regarding what? Just take the trouble to analyze, even for a little bit, the policy of certain countries chosen for the inter-African force and the inevitable behavior of their armed contingents! Let us be sure that the financing, the logistics, the organization, and the leadership of

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this force is really "non-aligned!" In other words, "neutral" and "non-aligned" at the same time regarding the various political tendencies which make up the GUNT and regarding Libya, which could not remain indifferent to what happens in Chad, by virtue of the grave dangers which it faces as a result of the threats from Washington, Cairo, and Khartoum. By what aberration of mind, to take only one example, could one pretend that these Zairian paratroops which have arrived in Ndjamena remain "neutral," when we all know the scandalous support which Mobutu has never stopped giving his de facto ally, Hissain Habre? Which observer, then, could ignore the fact--which we have all observed at one time or another in the history of Africa--that these paratroops are trained, organized, and infiltrated by mercenaries of every stamp--including Moroccans--and spend their time drinking, taking drugs, and abusing young women?

Some people have tried hard to state that the most positive result of the Franco-African summit meeting will turn out to have been the beginning of the end of the drama of the Chadian people. We didn't think so at the time and we think so even less today. If the first meeting of Francois Mitterrand with Africa on 3 and 4 November is to be an historic occasion, it will certainly not be due to the "success" of the Chadian affair. Rather, it will be remembered because the African peoples want to believe that the promises which the French president has made to turn the page on neocolonialism, domination, and interference in the internal affairs of other states will be applied in concrete terms.

Regarding Chad, the fire which smolders under the ashes is becoming evident, unfortunately, little by little. The suspicions, the antagonisms, the rivalries are appearing again, and the fighting, although still limited at the time we write these lines, is beginning along the Sudanese frontier, where the adventurer from the SDECE [Foreign Intelligence and Counterintelligence Service] found refuge. And why should one expect that Hissain Habre should not raise his head? Hasn't he seen achieved his principal demand: the withdrawal of the Libyan forces and the fact that no other military force in a position to deal with him is able to relieve the Libyans for a long time to come? Doesn't he hope to find within the various contingents of the inter-African force the assistance which would permit him to make a comeback on the political scene?

What more can we say? The trap in which the French Right--thanks to the formidable resources which it continues to have in the means which it manipulates cleverly and even within the government, and particularly the intelligence services, and thanks also to the friendships which it still has in the African regimes which it has nurtured since 1960--seeks to enclose the African policy of the Leftist government of France, this trap seems to be closing slowly but inexorably. This is the trap of a return to the vicious circle of military interventionism in Africa. Moreover, this is a kind of interventionism condemned without further recourse both by the chief of state and by the French Socialist Party. An interventionism which all the opponents of the overwhelming victory of 10 May 1981 desire. For have you ever asked yourself what the French government would do if unforeseen obstacles were to prevent the inter-African force from undertaking or continuing its mission? For the hope which many people try to maintain on the subject of the success of the mission of the inter-African force, as it has been conceived and created, is an illusion, a mirage in the moving sands of the Chadian desert.

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GABON

RECIPROCAL NEEDS SEEN GUIDING BONGO-MITTERRAND RELATIONS

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French No 1090, 25 Nov 81 pp 34-37 (excerpts)

[Article by Siradiou Diallo: "Does Mitterrand Need Bongo?"]

[Excerpts] If most African leaders were disoriented by the victory of Francois Mitterrand last 10 May, Omar Bongo, Gabon's chief of state, was completely dumbfounded by it. Not that he was taken by surprise (highly placed sources in France had confided such a prediction to him) but because of the privileged relationship that he had with Valery Giscard d'Estaing. Gabon's chief of state is convinced that the interest of his country commands him to establish friendly relations with the whole French ruling class, beginning at the top. "Communist though he may be," says Omar Bongo, his hand over his heart, "if Georges Marchais is elected president of the republic tomorrow, not only will I try to maintain good relations with him, but I will also make a friend out of him, unless he does not want anything to do with me."

All the more reason why he does not see why he would not get along with Francois Mitterrand. Without renouncing the solid friendships which link him to the leaders of the emerging majority--because "I am not a weather vane"--Gabon's chief of state is persuaded that he can get along with the French Socialist leader. "Especially since we do not have," he says, "any divergence of an ideological nature. On the contrary."

This does not prevent Omar Bongo from being worried the day after Francois Mitterrand's victory. Because a crowd of people had deliberately sought to stir up the fear of Socialists in him. They are going to try to destabilize your regime, they had told him: "These are dirty Reds...." Gabon's chief of state was even more justified in believing them since the French press made the summer particularly hot for him.

Certain well-established French milieux in Gabon took advantage of this to sow discord, even to insinuate to President Bongo that this campaign was orchestrated behind the scenes by French officials. They assured him that his Gabonese opponents were from that point on warmly received at the Rue de Solferino (Parisian headquarters of the Socialist Party). And that in agreement if not with the government itself at least with the party leaders, the newspapers were getting ready to "pull the children's massacre coup on him" (allusion to the bloody events of February 1979 which cost Bokassa his throne).

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The operation was all the more believable since it was mounted by well-placed people in Gabon and since it mobilized a solid and vast network, going from security services to the large local French companies, passing through business agents, patrons of bars and well-known restaurants in Libreville.

Likewise, on the matter of nationalization of French companies, for which some of the highest officials of the country are pushing, the president seems to be in favor of a more moderate solution. While he is entirely in accord with the principle of the increase in state participation in the large companies that control the key sectors of the economy, he seems to want to set aside, at least for the moment, the idea of a true takeover of Elf-Gabon. The chief of state is aware of what it would cost him to raise the current state part (26 percent) to 51 percent, from the financial point of view as well as on the political plane. This does not take into account the fact that Gabon does not presently have enough competent staff personnel to take over the operations of an enterprise as complex as Elf-Gabon.

Which is perhaps not true for other companies such as COMILOG (Mining Company of Ogooue) which works the manganese deposits of Moanda, or COMUF (Uranium Mining Company of Franceville).

While awaiting the decision from Libreville, it is necessary to state that this anxiousness to please has been costly.

As for the government in Paris, it is eager to foil the trap which its opponents in Gabon had laid for it. In the midst of the crisis, President Francois Mitterrand did not hesitate to pick up his telephone to talk with his counterpart. And to explain to him his sincere desire to clear away the clouds which had gathered, independently of his will, over the skies of French-Gabonese relations.

To continue to develop them in the well-understood interest of both countries. Since then, not only has his adviser for African affairs, Guy Penne, called on Bongo several times, with the mission of warming up relations between Paris and Libreville, but the two chiefs of state consult by telephone frequently.

In spite of his bonds of friendship with the men of the former majority in France, Bongo cannot fail to take into consideration the profound political change which has come to pass in that country. France remains, by far, Gabon's main economic and financial partner. Under these conditions, he will be forced, one way or another, to separate himself from a crowd of collaborators who are suspect in the eyes of the new French leadership.

In any case, a new ambassador from France, Robert Cantoni, replaced Maurice Robert, considered too close to the former Giscard regime, on 14 October in Libreville. Cantoni was assigned a precise mission: to chase out of the Gabonese sheepfold the black sheep who, not content to graze the rich grass of this petroleum-rich province of France which Gabon is, devote themselves to stirring up trouble which the new French authorities are unsure of preventing or controlling. Even if Paris has "nothing to fear from us," in the opinion of the representative of the French in Gabon, Morelli, a courteous and distinguished Corsican businessman who has lived in Libreville for 30 years. Even if, he adds, to be used as may be fitting, "we think that the Socialist team is going too fast in its will to reform and that it should, according to us, moderate its appetite a little in this area."

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As for Mitterrand, he is perfectly aware of the role and the place of Gabon in the structure of economic and political relations that France maintains with the outside world. First of all because this country constitutes a precious milk cow which nourishes 25,000 Frenchmen; in these times of unemployment in France, this is not a negligible thing. Especially since having surmounted the grave financial imbalance brought about in 1977 by the heavy investment program, the economy is starting up again stronger than ever in Gabon.

Supporting his viewpoint by the immense natural resources of his country, President Bongo does not hesitate to compare Gabon to a "very beautiful girl whom all the men want to court." It is true that offers of cooperation with his country are not lacking. They come from the United States, which Bongo visited as early as the day after the victory of the left in France, as well as from the Federal Republic of Germany, Belgium or Italy where he spent some time several weeks ago; without mentioning Brazil and Argentina who are forcing their attention in Libreville's direction.

But Mitterrand equally needs Bongo for reasons of a political nature. Gabon's chief of state constitutes in fact an essential piece in the strategic disposition of France in central Africa. If a spark should erupt in any country in the region, Bongo would try to contain it. In case the brush fire should threaten the interests of France, Paris knows that it can count on his tact to help put it out. It is no accident that Libreville recently hosted the initial contacts between Chadian Goukouni Oueddei and Guy Penne, and between the latter and the new master of Bangui, Gen Andre Kolingba.

Just like Giscard d'Estaing, who used Gabon as the turntable of his diplomacy in the region (the turbulent Journiac-Bokassa meeting in Franceville in August 1979 is still present in everyone's memory), Francois Mitterrand seems to have realized that he has more to win than to lose by keeping close ties with Omar Bongo. This is why, after the summer clouds, it has not taken long for the skies of French-Gabonese relations to clear up since autumn.

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GUINEA-BISSAU

BRIEFS

BAUXITE CONTRACT WITH USSR--An important agreement concerning the mining of bauxite in Guinea-Bissau has just been concluded between the governments of Guinea and Russia. It is known, in fact, that Guinea-Bissau has, in the southeastern part of the country, some important deposits of this "aluminum ore" concentrated in the foothills of Fouta-Djalou. The USSR has agreed to invest \$200 million in a mining venture that the Portuguese had neglected and which will have to be repaid in 8 years by way of deliveries of bauxite. [Text] [Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French No 253, 23 Nov - 6 Oct 81 p 19] [COPYRIGHT: 1981 Afrique Asie]

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MAURITIUS

PM RAMGOOLAM'S 'READJUSTMENTS' EXAMINED

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French No 253, 23 Nov-6 Dec 81 pp 38-39

[Article by special correspondent Jonathan M'Haruia]

[Text] Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of Mauritius, invited the leaders of the Mauritian Militant Movement (MMM), Paul Beranger and Aneerood Jugnauth, to a meeting on 8 Sept to discuss matters relating to peace and public order after an unsuccessful demonstration staged the preceding day by the Mauritian Social Democratic Party (PMSD), a party of the Right headed by Gaetan Duval. A maximum of 7,000 people--of the 100,000 expected--attended the demonstration, which almost degenerated. At the meeting Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam formally submitted a proposal to the MMM for a general pre-election agreement and a coalition government including all parties.

Obviously the Ramgoolam regime, its actions inspired by the panic engendered by the unprecedented economic crisis afflicting Mauritius and unable to think of anything else to do to mitigate the severity of this crisis, wanted, a few months before the election, to get the MMM to share the burden of its disastrous performance on all levels. The MMM expressed its willingness to "give the government a hand" in maintaining peace and order in the country, but absolutely rejected the Prime Minister's offer, thus confirming the fact that the MMM and the PSM will go to the elections united, as previously agreed.

The reason for Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam's repeated and pressing invitation to the MMM to join the government became apparent less than three weeks later. The whole country received a crushing blow on the evening of September 27: the Mauritian rupee had been devalued by 20 percent with respect to the principal foreign currencies for the second time in less than 2 years. The Special Drawing Right (DTS), a unit of account of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which was worth 7.72 rupees before October 1979 and had risen to 10 rupees 2 years ago, at the time of the last devaluation, is now worth 12 rupees.

According to a government communique this decision should enable Mauritius to increase its exports of sugar, tea, molasses, and industrial products. The government also announced a price freeze for the next six months. It is worth noting that this decision was announced on television by a regular commentator--not by a government official--in forbidding technical lingo; that the word "devaluation" was not mentioned; and that the blow fell while the Prime Minister

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was travelling in his own country<sup>1</sup> and the Minister of Finance--Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo--was travelling abroad, as were almost all the other ministers.

According to the present regime the rupee was not devalued, it was "adjusted" to bring it into line with the major foreign currencies.<sup>2</sup> But technically it was a devaluation, even though this word was never used. There was no other way for the government to try to camouflage the failure of the first devaluation and of its whole economic policy, all the more so in that a month earlier the Minister of Finance emphatically denied that he was considering the possibility of devaluing the national currency so as to cope with the growing deficit. At a meeting of the National Economic Council (which is composed of representatives of the government, the private sector and trade unions) on 19 August 1981, he even gave an absolute guarantee that there would not be another devaluation and that the economic outlook did not make such a step necessary.

Despite the fact that the government lied about the economic situation before and after the second 20 percent devaluation, this devaluation could be predicted from the facts and figures. The first devaluation, in October 1979, was accompanied by a program of economic adjustment which was supposed to lead to structural changes enabling the country to cope successfully with the economic crisis. It is easy to see that this structural adjustment existed only on paper. To cite only a few figures, investments declined 12.4 percent in the agricultural sector and 7.5 percent in the manufacturing sector in 1980. Today 60,000 people are officially unemployed; in fact the figure is higher, about 20 percent of the active labor force. We must add to these the 12,000 people who will leave school and enter the labor market at the end of the year, and hundreds of others receiving diplomas: from January to June 1981 about 700 workers received their tickets to unemployment. Jobs were created at a rate of 2.6 percent in 1975-1980 instead of the 4.7 percent provided for in the plan.

#### Begging in Washington

The enormous deficit in the balance of payments went from 635 million rupees in 1979 to 950 million rupees in 1980. The deficit in the balance of trade, which has been more than a billion rupees for the last three years, grew by 1.4 billion rupees in the first 6 months of 1981. This deficit, which will reach about 2.1 billion rupees at the end of 1981, is the main reason for this second 20 percent devaluation. Imports have grown in volume by 4 percent, while expenditures for food imports went from 880 million rupees in 1979 to 1.3 billion in 1980.

Thus now that the surprise has worn off, trade union circles are all reacting with anger, all the more so because this second devaluation is not accompanied by an increase in salaries, as was the case in 1979; the price freeze is just an illusion; and artificial, intolerable shortages are created by tradesmen. Even people who never got involved in politics before have now demanded "the resignation of the Ramgoolam government and the holding of general elections as soon as possible, so that competent, capable people may take over and remedy the economic situation." The anger these people, and wage earners in general, feel is understandable if we realize that every wage earner's purchasing power will decline 33-35 percent due to this second devaluation, after having already declined dramatically more than 30 percent after the first devaluation.

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A week after the second 20 percent evaluation, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture, Sir Satcam Boolell, whose policy of agricultural diversification has been a total failure--Mauritius imported more than a billion rupees worth of food in 1980--admitted that a price freeze was impossible to implement. Everybody already knew that--except for Sir Satcam Boolell, who is said to be very close to Duval--ever since this step was announced.

The Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have spent a month travelling in Europe and the United States in quest of foreign aid while the people waited for them to provide explanations for the devaluation and for a chance to ask them for salary increases. Their quest failed, so Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam begged President Reagan for a large handout on 16 October, offering him "the cooperation of Mauritius to enable the United States to strengthen its strategic presence in the Indian Ocean" and then, upon his return to Mauritius, offered the MMM an enlarged coalition. As for the IMF, where Sir Ringadoo, Minister of Finance, expected to open the credit tap after the second devaluation, whatever aid it may give--which will be negligible--will be accompanied by "new conditions" and will not be granted until February 1982, after the IMF--which as Sir Ringadoo says himself is keeping our country at arm's length--has completely reviewed the state of the economic situation. The only way out for the present regime is a large loan in eurodollars at around 20 percent interest, which would drag the country even deeper into the hole it is now in.

According to the MMM, whose leader Paul Beranger would be Minister of Finance, Planning and Labor in an MMM-PSM government, a third devaluation is inevitable in the coming months if general elections are not held before the beginning of 1982 and if the country continues on its present course. It would be out of the question for the MMM to join the present government, as that would be tantamount to certain political suicide when it is only a step away from power.

The Prime Minister, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, who held a press conference on 24 October after returning home while the Minister of Finance, Sir Veerasamy Ringadoo, was still negotiating with officials of the IMF, indicated that legislative elections will not be held before February 1982, since he will not dissolve Parliament until next December. This is the only piece of information the people were granted. For the rest he merely dispensed the eternal platitudes about "happiness," which the people have yet to experience!

In sum, by devaluing the currency for the second time in less than 2 years, the present regime has already signed its own death warrant a few months before the elections. The drama is that it wants to bring the whole country down with it.

FOOTNOTES

1. He left the country again on 28 October for Paris to attend a French-African summit meeting, which took place in Paris on 3 and 4 November.
2. One French franc - 1.84 Mauritian rupees.

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SENEGAL

PDS SECRETARY GENERAL WADE DISCUSSES INTERNAL, AFRICAN ISSUES

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French No 254, 7-20 Dec 81 pp 32-34

[Interview with Mr Abdoulaye Wade, PDS secretary general, by Augusta Conchiglia and Simon Malley]

[Text] PDS Secretary General Abdoulaye Wade believes that Senegal is at a crossroads. He says: For 7 years we have been working, particularly our party, to establish the bases of a modern democracy. Despite the difficulties, we have achieved a number of results: in particular, creation of a parliamentary opposition and realization of certain freedoms, such as association, travel, and expression. We also helped to achieve passage of the law on the press. All these were gains for Senegalese democracy under construction. Unfortunately, however, I believe that the manner of transfer of power as it was carried out at the beginning of the year has fundamentally distorted the process. And then there have been the practices of the government which, instead of depending on the real strength of the people, has thought it could strengthen its position by weakening the opposition. I believe that this policy has harmed Senegalese democracy. The problem of the PDS is a good illustration. We were accused of importing arms and of having planned to seize power by force. After 2 months of investigation, everyone concluded that there was not a shadow of proof against the PDS members. I believe it is worth drawing some lessons from this affair, which I hope will end soon under conditions which will not harm the progress of our democracy. I also believe that this is the viewpoint of President Abdou Diouf; a viewpoint which is not at all shared by the "fascist" faction of his party. I believe that the important thing for a country is to bring together the energies of all who desire to build a democracy, in order to overcome all the difficulties. I myself am therefore waiting to learn how the government is going to solve this problem. It is up to the government alone to draw the conclusions and to make the appropriate decisions, so that we can proceed on new bases. It is not we who are in power, we are in the opposition, and we do not control the levers of power. Thus it is not our role to direct the policy. Anyway, our will is not weakened, because when we established the party we expected many difficulties.

"I would add only that a multi-party setup which is not genuine would, in my opinion, be more dangerous than a one-party system: the latter has its own logic, based on a number of choices which reflect, certainly, the local and

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historical conditions of each country. But to pretend to establish a multi-party system while posing obstacles so that the opposition parties cannot progress and so that there cannot be a democratic alternation, I believe that this is extremely dangerous. This is why we await with some anxiety the next election of 1983, which will be extremely important for Senegalese democracy. As you know, we have made a number of proposals in this regard and I believe we will receive satisfaction. But the problem does not lie only in reform of the electoral code. It is also, and above all, a question of political morality and honesty. That is why the PDS stated on 17 June at the conference of party officials that the government of Abdou Diouf did not have the right, during this transitional period, to organize the next elections. These elections must be organized by a national commission composed of the various political parties, or at least a commission in which they would be represented. I can assure that what happened in 1978 will not be repeated this time. I have said it, and I repeat, I want it to be clear and I think the government knows it; no election rigging will be tolerated. Abdou Diouf on two occasions has told me that he will do everything possible to have normal elections. If they are not normal, Senegal will face difficulties such as it has never known in its history."

Although he is watching to see how the situation concerning the PDS develops in Dakar, Abdoulaye Wade also considers as crucial the dominant current issues in Africa and the Middle East: the development of the situation in Chad following the Libyan withdrawal, the Namibian issue, Western Sahara, and prospects in the Middle East following the death of Sadat... First, what does the PDS secretary general think about the conclusions of the conference of heads of state of France and Africa held in Paris 4-5 November?

"These conclusions were certainly important, but that was not the key element," Mr Wade said. "What was important was the spirit in which it all took place. The conference was attended by representatives of French-, English-, Arabic-, and Portuguese-speaking countries, which means that the language barrier has been largely overcome. Moreover, many countries which were not present were impressed by the conference, which suggests that they may participate in future 'summits' of this kind.

"The broadening of this institution was in a sense the reply of the African countries in moving toward socialist France to discuss problems of Africa and the Third World. The November meeting was certainly a success for the French head of state. But having said that, what can socialist France do? I do not think it is in a position to respond with increased aid. First of all, because it does not have sufficient means to provide financial resources to develop all the African states which will attend the future summit conferences.

"But what I believe France can do is to help in transformation of the structures of trade and international relations. As President Houphouet-Boigny said, it could use its influence so that raw materials are paid for at a fair price, products are developed, and middlemen eliminated. Certainly, France cannot do everything, particularly since the United States under Reagan is following a withdrawal policy in comparison with the Carter regime. But France can influence other states, and its example might eventually be followed by some members of the EEC.

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"At the same time, what France can do is to genuinely assist in promoting transformations in African countries, with the objective of creating the conditions of democracy and freedom without which the people do not have faith in development. France can help in this reformation in attitudes, which also assumes that the political parties should reflect the interests of the masses. However, French policy must also be directed at the masses through the governments. The world must stop being merely an administrative council of presidents and ministers. The discussions must take place at the level of the people. The whole problem is to orient efforts directly toward the people. Can the French Government achieve this transformation? There is no doubt that it is very difficult. But there is nothing to prevent changing the objective of aid programs, and taking care throughout their preparation and through control in their implementation to prevent future diversion of this assistance. If there is agreement on the objective, all that remains is the problem of how to organize the transition from the present system of dependence to a system of self-generated development.

"In conclusion, I believe that the November conference had very profound significance. However, it is up to the French Government to see that it does not end up as a new disappointment for the African people."

[Question] What is Mr Wade's view of the Chad situation following the withdrawal of Libyan troops?

[Answer] "I believe that Libya acted properly by withdrawing its troops from Chad when asked to do so by the Transitional National Union Government (GUNT). At the time, we approved of Libya's intervention in Chad, pointing out that in a situation where the French troops had failed one could not protest against Libya helping to restore peace. This view was ultimately shared by the OAU and all African countries, and on this point there can be no issue. A priori, there is no objection to having an inter-African force replace the Libyan troops, but will there be sufficient coordination among the various contingents to assure order? That is another problem, and there we have some cause to be skeptical..."

[Question] Under the terms of a draft treaty signed on 14 November at Kaour (Gambia) by Presidents Abdou Diouf and Daouda Diawara, a confederation of Senegal and Gambia is to be established. What is the position of the PDS on this process which began 4 months ago with the Senegalese intervention in Banjul?

[Answer] "In a general way we are against all intervention, whether by an African country or a state outside the continent. Except in certain cases, for example genocide or massacres. Or also aggression. It was on the basis of this principle that we condemned the Senegalese Army's intervention in Gambia, particularly because the purpose of the move was to restore Diawara to power. The situation then existing in Gambia can be compared to that in Zaire at the time of the Shaba affair. There were two governments pursuing policies which caused the people to reject them and a revolutionary situation developed.

"In both cases an appeal was made abroad on the excuse of subversion and foreign interference. However, in both cases it was later concluded that there had

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been no foreign involvement. Thus the Senegalese intervention in Gambia was not justified, particularly since the defense agreements between Banjul and Dakar provided for possible military assistance only in the event of outside aggression. If each time a government feels threatened and its unpopular policy produces a revolutionary situation there is an appeal to outside forces to support it, then no change will ever be possible. We thus condemned the Senegalese intervention and regret the consequences--more than a thousand are known to have been killed--consequences which are hard to forget, and are not the best basis for establishing unity between the two countries. For I am convinced that both the Gambians and Senegalese want this unity, on condition that it be achieved democratically, that it result from the choice of the people. This is why we have suggested the restoration of political freedoms in Gambia so the parties can have the opportunity to state their views, and so that free legislative and presidential elections can be organized. The new institutions resulting from these elections could then decide their position on the question of unity with Senegal. Instead of this, Diawara has been restored to power, the opposition leaders have been imprisoned, and the other parties no longer exist. And official agreements are being signed by heads of state to achieve this unity. We do not oppose the principle of this unity, but we do disagree with the procedure, with the methods for achieving it. According to the agreement signed to establish a confederation, the two countries are to be consulted. But in what way? What should be done now is to conduct a democratic canvassing of the people who are qualified to speak on this issue. For example, the National Assembly is not qualified to do so."

[Question] Does the secretary general of the PDS believe that Senegalese troops must be withdrawn from Gambia?

[Answer] "Absolutely. These forces are to some degree occupation troops, and no referendum can be organized under such conditions."

[Question] Aside from regional border issues, there are two continuing important problems, Western Sahara and Angola. It is known that the PDS and the other Senegalese opposition parties back the Sahara people and favor normalization of relations between Dakar and Luanda. It is also known that the PDS continues to condemn puppet movements such as UNITA and the FNLA...

[Answer] "I think we can pass quickly over the first point, given that the PDS was the second African political party, after the Algerian FLN, to give its support to POLISARIO in 1974. Since then our position has not changed. We favor independence for Western Sahara and we think it is in the long-term interest of Morocco to end this war. In the beginning, Morocco thought that the "Green March" followed by intervention of a small paramilitary force would be enough to settle the problem. I believe that those who support Morocco's interests should persuade Rabat to recognize the independence of the Saharan Democratic Arab Republic (SDAR), especially since this independence would not exclude subsequent cooperation between the two countries, for the two peoples have so much in common."

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## Dangerous Precedent

"It is regrettable that the OAU backed away from this problem at Nairobi. If the SDAR had been recognized at the summit conference in July it would now be sitting in the OAU and the war would not have worsened in this way. Indeed, hesitation to apply principles always has extremely dangerous consequences. I hope that matters will be cleared up and that the African countries will once again assume their responsibilities by recognizing the SDAR and admitting it to the OAU.

"As for Angola, our position has not changed. Not only did we support the MPLA's liberation war, we also support its struggle, not against UNITA as such, but against the external forces which sustain that organization. We continue to take this position. On the national level, since Senegal is the only African state which has not recognized the Angolan Government and which has granted diplomatic passports to UNITA staff to facilitate their travel, we have worked in the National Assembly to cancel these concessions. We believe that an OAU member state cannot shelter or grant facilities to a party which is illegal and whose objective is to overthrow a government which officially represents the people who chose it. Such practices constitute the most serious interference in the affairs of another state and most serious action to destabilize another government. We had hoped that after Senghor's departure things would change. In any case, we will continue to apply pressure on the government to establish normal relations with Luanda.\* Giving more or less direct support to a movement like UNITA, which has become a tool of South Africa and the United States to destabilize a legitimate government, sets an extremely dangerous precedent for Africa. Destabilization attempts can start to occur everywhere. The same thing happened recently when we condemned the attack on Libyan planes by the American Sixth Fleet. On that occasion, I stated that whatever the differences between Tripoli and African governments, the latter should condemn the American aggression. If at OAU summit conferences very clear and unequivocal stands were taken on these issues, I believe that significant progress could be made on the road to peace in southern Africa. There cannot be peace there as long as the situation is endangered in Angola and Mozambique and the Namibian problem remains unresolved..."

[Question] On Namibia, the United States sets the departure of Cuban troops as a condition for settlement of that issue. What is your opinion on this subject?

[Answer] "These questions are certainly related. But the presence of Cuban troops in Angola is by choice of the Angola Government, just as, for example, Oueddei's Goukouni GUNT chose to appeal for Libyan troops. States are free in this respect. Aside from this principle, however, I believe that the Cuban presence is explained primarily by the South African incursions into Angola and Pretoria's desire to destabilize the MPLA government. But for the Cuban presence in Angola, the South Africans would be much more daring. If the South African threat was removed and the Namibian problem solved, I believe that the issue of the Cuban presence in Angola would be ipso facto resolved."

\* President Abdou Diouf met Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos in Cape Verde at the end of November.

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[Question] Senegal is a Moslem country, and the fact that the AFRIQUE-ASIE issue on Sadat's death almost sold out in Dakar reflects the interest in everything concerning the Middle East. In the aftermath of Sadat's death, do you have any comments in regard to the prospects for this area, and does Maitre Wade think that the plans which are being so widely discussed, the Fahd plan and others, can provide a solution to the Middle East crisis?

[Answer] "In regard to Egypt and Sadat's assassination, I think that AFRIQUE-ASIE gave a very discerning analysis of the events. While condemning the principle of political assassination, we have to be sad at the conditions which marked the burial of Sadat, for they showed that the Egyptian people condemn Sadat's policy of rapprochement with Israel. It was then possible to judge how far Sadat--who claimed to have the support of the Egyptian and Arab people--had strayed and taken the wrong road with the Camp David accords.

The Fahd Plan? Not Clear

"The presence of the Western heads of state at Sadat's funeral provided a significant further insight into the former Egyptian president's policy. It became evident that it was a policy designed more for the West than for the Egyptian, Arab, and Palestinian people. I therefore believe that the current Mubarak government should draw the necessary conclusions. Unfortunately, he does not seem to want to choose this course, although we should perhaps give him some time to reflect.

"As you say, we have always supported the PLO. And as is known, our policy of support to national liberation movements is based on the principle that if we can give advice to our friends then those we support have the right to give their view on the suggestions made to them. In our opinion, there are some aspects of the Fahd plan which are not clear, concerning for example the issue of recognition of Israel. There have been various interpretations in this regard. However, aside from problems of details, it appears that Saudi Arabia aspires to play a dominant role in place of Egypt in the Israeli-Arab issue. The essential element for us is that the rights of the Palestinian people to regain their lands and to organize in a sovereign state be recognized and secured."

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SENEGAL

ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS OF OPPOSITION PARTIES NOTED

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French No 253, 23 Nov-6 Dec 81 pp 45-47

[Article by Ginette Cot: "The Heirs of the PAI" [African Independence Party]]

[Text] The Senegalese political landscape has been changed since the installation of Abdou Diouf as president and the establishment of a multi-party system. After reviewing the political positions of the RND [Democratic National Rally] of Shaykh Anta Diop and the People's Democratic Movement of Mamadou Dia,\* Ginette Cot recalls here the "heirs of the PAI": the PAI of Mahjemout Diop; the PIT [Independence and Labor Party] of Seydou Cissokho and Amath Dansokho; and the LD-MPT [Democratic League - Labor Party Movement] of Babacar Sane.

The splitting up of the "Marxist family" in Senegal, as in many other countries, is one of the facts of political physiognomy. The clandestine or semi-clandestine situation in which the bulk of the organizations of the Left found themselves until early this year silenced the sometimes sharp debates between groups or leaders claiming to be heirs of the African Independence Party (PAI). With the advent of the multi-party system this "breakup" is today clearly a reality which cannot be hidden. Thus, alongside the PAI which Mahjemout Dipo leads, a party which reemerged on the official political scene in July, 1976, under the system of the "three currents of thought" established by Senghor--two other communist organizations compete in the Senegalese political field. These are the old PAI-Senegal, which acquired legal status under the new name of the Independence and Labor Party (PIT), led by Seydou Cissokho and Amath Dansokho, and the Democratic League - Labor Party Movement (LD - MPT), which, created 7 years ago following a split with the PAI, identifies itself as an organization which now must be taken into account.

At a constituent congress meeting on 8-9 August at the El Mansour movie theater in Dakar, attended by 500 delegates representing all classes of the population and the whole country, the PIT - Senegal marked its entry into legal political life. For the party leaders the success of this meeting, prepared on very short notice,

\* See AFRIQUE-ASIE Numbers 249, 250, and 252.

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was a "scathing response" to those who "tried to deny the reality" of the former PAI - Senegal. Regarding the work of the congress, they showed that the basic theme, the day-to-day practice, and the objectives of the PIT were a continuation of the past. Thus, while taking into account "the new facts of the situation," created by the accession to power of Abdou Diouf and the reforms made since last January concerning public and individual freedom, the action program which the central committee of the PIT had approved in December, 1980, just before the departure of Senghor from office, was to be re-adopted for the most part. "We are not demanding everything. However, even if positive signs have been recorded, we do not think that this is the time to lay down our arms," the PIT leaders said. For them the splits and remodeling under way can already be foreseen, as well as the waiting positions adopted here and there. The latter are evident signs of growing class distinctions and struggle.

To fight for a real improvement in the living and working conditions of the farmers--an improvement which is a necessary preliminary to any policy of recovery of the national economy; to associate the party with the claims of the workers in the face of the series of closures of factories and reductions of personnel (a process which had led to the dismissal of 25,000 people since 1979); to promote measures in favor of the emergence of a national private sector able to contribute to the elimination of foreign domination of the key sectors, such as, for example, importing and exporting; to revise from top to bottom the foreign policy of the country: these are some of the principal elements in the action program of the PIT - Senegal. At the same time that its accession to legality opened favorable prospects to it for an eventual deployment of its forces, the PIT realizes that the new situation confronts it with greater responsibilities as well as problems of adaptation. Thus, for example, the constituent congress raised the need for reducing the existing contradiction between the present composition of the party, where the petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia are the predominant elements, and the "natural class basis" of a Marxist-Leninist organization. This implies making greater efforts regarding the workers and the farmers. It is also true that they have sought to find a solution making it possible to adapt the principles of organization and of membership in the party to the social and economic realities of the country. At times the latter make it necessary that a request for entry into a political organization, in the countryside, involve not a single individual but a whole family or clan unit.

It is known that the PIT has long maintained friendly relations with the communist parties of Eastern Europe, as well as with the French Communist Party. Further, the PIT states that it undertakes its activity, "in the perspective of a rally of popular forces in order to promote a democratic, national revolution." Thus, one can understand that the problem of unity of action with the other opposition organizations was at the center of the concerns expressed by the old PAI - Senegal. As proof of the efforts made in this direction, the leaders of the PIT underline their presence within the COSU (Coordination Committee of the United Senegalese Opposition), the exemplary, united effort made in cooperation with the former group of non-party socialists led by Mamadou Dia. Today this group constitutes the embryo of a new political party, the People's Democratic Movement.\* This cooperation has led to the publication of the political monthly magazine, ANDE SOPI.

\* See AFRIQUE-ASIE Numbers 249, 250, and 252

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Frozen

The PIT leaders also report contacts made with other opposition groups, such as the Senegalese Democratic Party under Dr Wade, with which close cooperation has developed over the past year. While considering the objectives and certain positions of the Senegalese Democratic Party [PDS] ambiguous and contradictory, the PIT considers that it must take into consideration the size of the farmer groups which Dr Wade's party succeeded in organizing under the slogan of change ("Soppi") during the last few years of the Senghor regime.

At the same time the PIT, which considers itself the only real communist party in the country, is frozen in its positions when it is a matter of considering the other organizations claiming to stand for Marxism-Leninism. It rejects as out of the question and without foundation any idea of a debate aimed eventually at permitting a rapprochement if not a fusion of the different groups which came out of the "historic" PAI. The latter, established in 1957, played an important role in the struggle for national independence. A goodly number of the present political leaders "passed" through it some 20 years ago.

"We are aware of the obstacles which this dispersion has created on the path of the political growth of the working class and its necessary unity. However, it is necessary to analyze this situation in detail," the PIT leaders underline. They do not see "the reasons for which it would now be necessary to discuss the unity of Marxists." "On the other hand," they add, "we are disposed--we are already doing it--to undertake discussions or joint action aimed at the search for concrete solutions to the crisis the country is going through, with all movements or groups of the opposition without exception, in the framework of bilateral or multi-lateral contacts."

Uniting under the same roof all of the Marxist family while contributing to the unification of all patriotic forces in the country--these are the two fundamental tasks which the Democratic League - Labor Party (LD - MPT) has fixed for itself since its creation in September, 1974. Babacar Sane is the first secretary of this group, and Mbaba Guisse, Abdoulaye Bathily, Mamadou Ndoye, Mbaye Diack, Tidiane Mane, and Famara Sarr are members of the "permanent executive secretariat." These are the principal leaders of the party.

For the LD - MPT the true vanguard party capable "of organizing, leading, centralizing, and directing to a successful conclusion the people's battles" remains to be established." Proof of this they see in the turning into dead ends of the mass explosions such as those which occurred in 1963, 1968, 1969, 1971, and 1978. They also note that it was not only the heavy repression of which the African Independence Party was the victim but also the "errors and grave political mistakes made by the organization itself" which explains the succession of crises in which the PAI began to founder after 1965. And, in the view of the Democratic League, all the activists of the PAI of the time bear their share of the responsibility in this process. Also, in the view of the LD - MPT there is no doubt "that here and there, in the groups and movements which claim descendance from the historical PAI there are responsible Marxists whom the country needs to promote the revolution."

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"If we consider that the two fundamental tasks--uniting the Marxists and rallying the patriotic forces--must be accomplished at the same time, without one moving forward more quickly than the other, the fact is that we have noted that any progress recorded on one of the two fronts has favorable repercussions on the other," commented Babacar Sane, the first secretary of the LD - MPT. Thus, for example, the meetings organized, either in the framework of the COSU or on the occasion of previously arranged events on a larger scale, provided possibilities for contact with the other Marxist organizations. Without underestimating the difficulties of the task which it has set for itself, the Democratic League is optimistic. "The signs which we consider encouraging may seem negligible from the outside. However, you should know that 3 years ago one could still not establish contact with one of the two PAI organizations without the other taking offense and objecting. Now, recently, in August, it was at the headquarters of the LD - MPT--and without anyone objecting--that the opposition parties met to prepare the joint declaration condemning Senegalese intervention in Gambia. Among these organizations there were, of course, the PAI under Majhemout Diop and the PIT - Senegal. I think this is the first time for a long time that we have shaken hands..."

## Rigidity

"We are convinced," Babacar Sane continued, "that once we will have decided to meet around a table to discuss the internal problems of the revolution in Senegal, we will reach a basic agreement." Moreover, according to the LD - MPT, the obstacles are far from being insurmountable. Thus, with the PAI led by Majhemout Diop, the discussions looking toward a consolidation come to grief essentially on the choice of the name of the future, unified Marxist-Leninist party. The Democratic League advocates abandonment of the PAI name, which it considered too much involved with negative elements. For his part, on the other hand, Majhemout Diop continues to think that in spite of all the problems encountered by the PAI the name of this party continues to have an important emotional and political impact. Moreover, he says that he is ready, if necessary, to withdraw from office and to go back to being an activist party member in the ranks, on the sole condition that the debate on consolidation of the different groups is held democratically. Finally, the LD - MPT considers that the differences which lie between it and the PIT - Senegal are more of a subjective than political order. Whatever the case, they are convinced at the Democratic League "that the unification of the Marxist family will be accomplished one way or another, either by a consolidation freely agreed to or by a process of natural absorption by one of the organizations of the other groups..."

Meanwhile, the LD - MPT has just published, in the first issue of its central publication, FAGARU, (which means "get ready" in the Wolof language) a draft program "for the building of a new independent, democratic, and prosperous Senegalese society," a "society for the transition to socialism." If the length of time required for the program is destined to remain open, this means that this program, which is characterized on the other hand by the great care and depth of the analysis, and which does not ignore any of the problems of the political, economic, cultural, and social life of the country, can be further developed and reorganized. Meanwhile, the LD - MPT does not intend to shut itself up in an ivory tower but, on the contrary, wishes to keep in touch with the realities.

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However, the strategic and tactical orientations remain unchanged. The editorial in FAGARU states, "Once again it is a matter of uniting all communist forces to build a powerful, working class party capable of drawing in its wake all Senegalese who love liberty, justice, and peace, with a view to creating the conditions for the establishment of a democratic alternative to the UPS - PS [Senegalese Progressive Union - Socialist Party] regime." This alternative, which the LD - MPT defines with precision in its draft program, "will involve passing through a Democratic National Revolution (RND) which will require in particular: a break with imperialism, the building of an independent, national economy which is strong and prosperous, and the full enjoyment by Senegalese men and women of the fruits of their labor."

The LD - MPT is a very structured organization, which gives priority in its recruitment policy to quality over quantity. At the time of its entry into legal existence it had a few hundred activist members who, for the most part, are teachers. The party had solid experience, particularly within mass movements. It benefited in the same way as the other recently recognized parties from a large number of new recruits. The latter were so numerous in the party that it was necessary to establish a special body to welcome the new members. After they establish their credentials they are to be transferred to the active elements of the party. Many people think that the Democratic League - Labor Party Movement, which seems to have a strong attraction, in particular, for the youth of the country, could become, in a few years, one of the largest Left opposition parties in Senegal.

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