

FRANCE AND FRENCH WEST AFRICA  
1956-1961

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## C O N T E N T S

		<u>page</u>
	Preface	1
Chapter I	Salient Features of French Policies in Africa	1
Chapter II	Loi-Cadre Reforms	21
Chapter III	Formation of the Community	40
Chapter IV	Period of Transition	64
Chapter V	The Emergence of African Nations	84
Chapter VI	Conclusion	110
	Bibliography	116

## PREFACE

The relations between France and French West Africa have become a subject of increasing importance for scholars throughout the world. As a case study, the subject highlights the relations between a highly industrialized, modern and prosperous European nation on the one hand and the emergent and developing African nations on the other.

France's attitudes and policies towards French West Africa have been shaped by several complex factors in different phases. The period from 1956 to 1961 is memorable in Franco-African relations in the sense that it gave birth to a number of institutions, forces and ideologies both in France and French West Africa. Thus one can hardly underestimate the importance of this dynamic period.

France and Britain were two major colonial powers in West Africa. Their ways of ruling the colonies widely differed and it is important that we take note of these differences to understand the primary motivations behind French policy of expansion in Africa. The French treatment of African subjects represents the evolution of the policy of assimilation and the concept of citizenship. An analysis of this aspect will help us to understand the position of French and African in the 'Federal structure of the French Union'. Finally, the study of the growth of political parties in West Africa and their respective ideologies would give us

a clear image of the newly emergent forces in modern Africa.

France entered Africa in the nineteenth century and gradually established her control in North Africa, West Africa, Equatorial Africa, Somaliland and Madagascar. In the beginning of the twentieth century France firmly consolidated her hold in these parts of Africa.

The area of French West Africa was nine times bigger than that of France. The Federation of French West Africa was divided into eight constituent units, e.g., Senegal, Mauritania, Sudan, Niger, Guinea, Upper Volta, the Ivory Coast and Dahomey. Among European powers Britain was the only formidable rival of France in West Africa. She controlled the Gold Coast (now Ghana), Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

The intellectual climate, the system of governments, the language and culture of France and Britain were quite different. Both had their own philosophy of governing overseas territories. 'Unlike Britain which treated the constitutional advance of each of her colonies quite separately, France pursued a common policy and time-table for her colonies'. (1) Initially both the powers went to Africa to educate and Christianize the African peoples. The importance of trade and exploitation of natural resources certainly played an important role in the policy formulation of Britain and France. By 1860 the British government had taken

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(1) Colin Legum, ed., Africa Handbook (Aylesbury, Bucks, 1969), p. 337.

control of trading establishments of the Gold Coast and Nigeria.(2) Both the powers dominated, for a substantial period, the African territories both economically and politically.

'Republique une et indivisible' that is 'Republic one and indivisible' was the central idea in French colonial policy towards West Africa. France wanted to integrate all the colonies to form a united, integrated and efficient Republic. It also wanted to transform the black African citizens into French citizens. Excessive centralisation of all powers thus <sup>was</sup> a logical extension of this 'integrationist' philosophy.

British method of governing the colonies was diametrically opposite. The Britishers intended to build their colonies as distinct units, separate from Britain. Unlike France, Britain introduced the system of indirect rule in West Africa. In the later half of the nineteenth century Britain set up local legislative assemblies in its West African colonies. In the beginning the colonial administrators were in a majority in these assemblies but later on they were replaced by Africans. According to Andrew Cohen, in Nigeria till the First World War, the legislature did not cover the Northern Provinces and in the Gold Coast it neither covered Ashanti nor the Northern Territories. Also until the First World War there were no Africans on the Governors' Executive Council. (3)

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(2) Cohen Andrew, British Policy in Changing Africa (London, 1959), p. 9.

(3) Ibid., p. 20.

The constitutional advance in French West Africa was rather slow because in view of the absence of the system of 'indirect rule' French West Africans found few opportunities to participate in the governmental process. French colonial administrators took all the important decisions from Paris. Britishers used to choose native authority and manipulate it to serve their objectives.

Indirect rule is the key to understand the British colonial policy. 'Indirect rule, governing in local affairs, through the customary institutions of the people of the area, fits into the general British concept of relying on local institutions rather than a centralized bureaucracy'. (4)

One of the important advantages of the system of 'indirect rule' was that the people and government could co-ordinate and function efficiently. Indirect rule led the foundations of local government in Africa. It also became the medium for British officials through which they could exercise their qualities of leadership. (5)

In short, ideas of centralization, integration and assimilation have dominated the French policy while decentralization, indirect rule and development of trade have influenced the British policy. Both the countries changed their policies after the Second World War and acknowledged the popular movements in their

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(4) Ibid., p. 22.

(5) Ibid., p. 24.

respective colonies by giving better representation to Africans in legislative and executive bodies.

France, as already stated, had occupied eight territories in French West Africa and established her federation. The centralist integrationist and the assimilationist ideas evolved gradually till the end of Second World War. The philosophy of assimilation or the objectives of French colonial policy were shaped by existing situation in French West Africa.

This dissertation is written on the basis of books and articles which were available in the Sapru House Library. It is organized in five chapters;

The first chapter deals with the salient features of the French colonial policy. It also includes a study of the emergence of political parties and leaders in French West Africa and their contact with the French political parties.

The second chapter starts with the turning point in the Franco-African relations, that is from the phase of reforms caused by loi-cadre, its implications, the French intentions behind such reforms, the reactions of African leaders to those reforms and the results of 1957 elections, etc.

The third chapter starts with the economic and political challenges faced by Fourth Republic due to the Algerian crisis. It analyses Bomako Conference in Africa. The establishment of E.E.C., the birth of Fifth Republic, the organization community and re-entry of General de Gaulle in French politics form the important theme of this chapter.

The fourth chapter deals with the reorientation of French policies in Africa. Vital issues like referendum of French West Africa, Guinea's rejection to join Community, the establishment of Mali Federation and French attitudes toward the Mali Federation are covered at this point.

The fifth chapter begins with de Gaulle's effort to resolve the Algerian problem and attitudes of West African states towards Algeria. It also deals with the process of transfer of power in Africa, the newly born African states and their regrouping, European unity movement and its impact over Africa, and France's economic, political and military relations with the African states.

The 'conclusion' deals with the accords signed between France and the African states at the time of independence. It analyses the kind of independence which was attained by the Africans. Before concluding, I must express my gratitude to Dr Girija Kumar Mookerjee under whose supervision I worked. I am also grateful to Dr H. S. Chopra who discussed French policies in Africa with me and gave certain important suggestions. My special thanks go to Dr Anirudha Gupta who took special interest in my work and encouraged me immensely. Finally, I am grateful to our efficient Librarian, Mr Ansari and his colleagues who unhesitantly cooperated with me.

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## Chapter I

### SALIENT FEATURES OF FRENCH POLICIES IN AFRICA

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The French overseas territories in West Africa have their own economic structures. The ethnic and linguistic differences make each territory a distinct unit manifestly dissimilar from other units. Each territory in its own way posed a number of challenges to France. Some units were less populous and less fertile. In some units the infrastructure was poor. France had to build roads, ports and establish rail routes for the transportation of goods. A brief description of each country's geographic location, population, area, and natural resources would be useful:

(a) Senegal - It is a coastal state, with a population of 3,500,000, and 76,084 square miles in area. It is not self-sufficient as far as food is concerned. France established first her control over Port of Dakar, and expanded her empire in West Africa.

(b) Mauritania - It is a coastal state. Its population is 1,000,000 and area 418,000 square miles. Her principal resources are iron-ore, copper and groundnuts.

(c) French Soudan (Mali) - It is a landlocked state; its population is 4,500,000 and size 463,500 square miles. The primary resources of the territory are rice and groundnuts. She exports dried fish.

(d) Niger - It is a landlocked state. Its population is

3,200,000, area 459,180 square miles. The chief economic resources of Niger are millet and sorghum.

(e) Guinea - It is a coastal state. Its population is about four million and area 41,945 square miles. Principal exports are coffee, pineapple and banana. Guinea is rich in mineral resources such as bauxite, iron-ore, diamonds and alumina.

(f) Upper Volta - It is a landlocked state. Its population is 4.9 million and size 105,879 square miles. It is one of the poorest countries in West Africa.

(g) Ivory Coast - It is a coastal state. Its population is 4,100,000. Its area is 124,550 square miles. The principal resources of Ivory Coast are timber, cocoa, coffee, banana, and pineapple. Her mineral resources are diamonds and manganese. Ivory Coast is one of the richest countries in French West Africa.

(h) Dahomey - It is a coastal state. Its population is 2,462,000 (1967 estimate). Its area is 44,913 square miles. Dahomey is self-sufficient. She is the chief exporter of 'dried and smoked fish', coffee and tobacco.

Shortly, French West Africa has been rich in mineral resources. Dakar, Abidjan and Cotonou are extremely important ports in the area. They are not densely populated. The population is composed of Africans and Europeans.

## II

This brief survey of the geographic location and the resources of French West African countries provides a key to the understanding of motivations behind French colonial policy. The

intentions of the colonial power in retaining the control over her colonies are numerous. We can study them under the following categories: economic, political and cultural.

French economic policy towards her African colonies was influenced by the thinking of Jean-Baptiste Colbert who was a cool, calculating and pragmatic economist.

Colbert desired to bolster France's fiscal and balance of payment position. It was his hope that the barter terms of colonial trade would work in favour of France, thereby relieving fiscal pressures at home and improving the chances of achieving a favourable trade balance with other countries. Colbert intended to establish trading posts in tropical areas because tropical products were certainly not posing a competitive threat and had the added advantage of enabling the French people to enjoy a higher standard of living. (1)

Like other European nations France was interested in importing the raw material and exporting finished products to her colonies. 'The mercantilist doctrine of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had held that the true wealth of a state consisted of precious metals, and that to get these the state should try to achieve a permanent excess of exports over imports.' (2)

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- (1) Mark Karp, "The Legacy of French Economic Policy", in W. H. Lewis, ed., French Speaking Africa: The Search for Identity (New York, 1965), p. 146.
  - (2) Norman D. Palmer and Howard C. Perkins, International Relations (Calcutta, 1970), p. 133.

The striking similarity between British mercantilism and Colbert's thinking is that, both of them abundantly highlighted the importance of raw material in the economic policy. According to Mark Karp, Colbert's thinking rested on three premises, e.g.

- 1) Trade with colonies should be monopolised by the mother country.
- 2) The colonies should specialize in the production of primary products.
- 3) All fishing with the colonies should be under French flag. (3)

The notion of 'colonial pact' was dominant in French colonial policy. It simply meant that France did not want to industrialise her colonies. French colonialist always took special care in keeping the colonial empire from the economic penetration of other competing powers.

France desired to establish strong political control over her colonies in Africa. Establishment of absolute political control was necessary for the success of her economic policy which was to deliver enormous goods and increase the prosperity of France.

Moritz Julius Bonn's definition of imperialism explains well the French political policy in Africa. According to him, 'Imperialism is a policy which aims at creating, organizing, and maintaining an empire, that is a state of vast size composed of various or less distinct national units and subject to a single

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(3) Mark Karp, "The Legacy of French Economic Policy in Africa", in W. H. Lewis, ed., n. 1, p. 147.

centralised will.' (4)

French colonialists were undoubtedly centralist. Many important problems of the colonies were solved by the French administrator. Paris was the only centre of power for a long time. All decisions affecting colonial subjects were made in Paris.

The French regarded Africans as inferior and backward. They felt that it was their duty to civilize Africans. Like all other Europeans, Frenchmen were also conscious of their cultural superiority. They too wanted to civilize and Christianise "backward" African peoples and they did succeed in imposing French traditions, ideas, and ways of thinking on African states.

The French colonialist believed in the policy of 'assimilation'. The policy of assimilation emerged when Louis 14th was ruling France. While speaking to the Prince of Ivory Coast he said 'there is no longer any difference between you and me except that you are black and 'I am white'. Before the end of 18th century the French speaking Africans living in Saint-Louis and Goree (Senegal) were describing themselves as Frenchmen and acting in that capacity. (5)

The French believed that African colonies were not separate entities but they formed part and parcel of the French

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(4) Moritz Julius Bonn, "Imperialism", Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (New York, 1937), vol. VII, p. 605.

(5) Edward Mortimer, France and Africans: A Political History (London, 1969), p. 32.

Republic. France expected her colonial subjects to be assimilated to the point where, not only legally or politically but also culturally they would become Frenchmen. In short, making an 'African' a 'Frenchman' was the essence of the philosophy of assimilation.

French education was made an instrument to carry out the policy of assimilation. 'The young African pupils learned of all the noble heritage of modern France; the 'immortal principles of 1789'; Rousseau's concept of freedom and equality before law, Jacobinism of Roberpierre and Saint-Just, finally Babeut's utopian and French version of communism or Proudhon's gentile and mild socialism'. (6)

The philosophy of assimilation, however, became controversial. Both French and Africans began to criticize it from their respective points of view.

Felix Eboue was one of the prominent opponents of the policy of assimilation. He was governor of Chad. An African by birth from French Guiana, he had studied African as well as French culture. Both cultures appealed to him and he did not see any reason for Frenchmen to impose their ways and ideas and traditions on the Africans. He thought that the latter should not lose their identity and that their culture must be kept alive.

Lyautey suggested another alternative. He was founder of the French protectorate in Morocco and he had quite independent views about French policy. He favoured the policy similar to Lord

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(6) Guy de Lusignan, L'Afrique Noire depuis l'Indépendance. l'Evolution des Etats Francophones (London, 1969), p. 55.

Lugard's 'indirect rule'. He advocated that the French should administer the colonies with the help of traditional native rulers.

Harmond was one of the staunchest opponents of this policy. He published his famous book Domination et Colonisation in 1910. He thought that the policy of assimilation was a foolish endeavour and a bankrupt attempt. He said that it is nonsense to pretend that either sort of possession is an integral part of nation's territory. He believed that the colonies were merely the nation's property and that they must be governed in an authoritarian way. (7)

Senghor, poet and statesman, also opposed the policy of assimilation. His poetry dramatically displayed the schismic clash between 'becoming a Frenchman' and remaining an African, and resolved it at any rate in verse in favour of the second. (8) Senghor elaborated the concept of Negritude. For Africans Negritude became an effective weapon in the struggle for equality of status. (9)

Finally, the first college voters and deputies opposed the policy of 'assimilation' because they thought if all the Africans became French citizens their privileged position would be lost.

The theory of assimilation and the concept of citizenship are interlinked. In fact the theory of assimilation became the basis for Frenchmen to determine who should be the citizen in West Africa.

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(7) Edward Mortimer, France and Africans: A Political History (London, 1969), p. 33.

(8) Basil Davidson, Which Way Africa: The Search for a New Society (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1971), p. 74.

(9) *Ibid.*, p. 74.



The concept of citizenship in French West Africa is a complex phenomenon. French theory of assimilation, French intention of continuing centralized administrative structure and retaining all powers, French desire to place Frenchmen in privileged position and several other complicated factors have influenced the concept of citizenship. The fact that French concept of citizenship was based upon injustice created a dissatisfaction among the African subjects.

In a democratic state, power is vested in citizens and the citizens delegate their powers to Parliament which represents the interests of all the citizens. Till 1940, only four communes of Senegal were represented in the French Assembly. Rural areas in Senegal and other black territories were not given representation. The executive could legislate for them by decree and without reference to Parliament.

The Africans had to struggle very hard for the attainment of citizenship. The conditions in Africa were quite unfavourable for the Africans. The system of 'indigenat' prevailed and till 1944 very few Frenchmen advocated the abolition of that system. (Indigenat was a cluster of provisions which permitted French administrators to impose punishments on African subjects without reference to any law.) French colonial administration did use indigenat as an effective tool against troublesome subjects. Native penal code was also manifestly unfair. According to it some acts committed by Frenchmen were legal while they were illegal if done by Africans. The use of forced labour in the colonies was highly deplorable.

Both Government and private entrepreneurs were actively involved in it.

Thus, in French West Africa, there existed a class of poor, suppressed and underprivileged people. France introduced the system of double college in her colonies. There were three categories of citizens in French West Africa. The first one consisted of French citizens who settled in Africa. Secondly, there were the citizens of French Union. Finally, there were citizens of French Union who did not possess the right to vote.

The constitution of the Fourth Republic did not give much representation to the Africans in the National Assembly. The powers of the local assemblies were also limited. Franchise was given to mothers having two children 'living or dead'. According to the law of April 1946, one person represented 800,000 inhabitants. In May 1951, one more law regarding citizenship was passed and in French West Africa there was overall 17 per cent rise in voters. In the rural area of French West Africa people were poor, illiterate and a majority of them belonged to the third category of citizens, that is, they were citizens without vote. All the French African countries were primarily agricultural countries and the population in the rural area vastly outstripped that in the urban centres.

Mr Edgar Faure's government, in France, was short-lived but during that period a very important electoral law was passed. It is known as electoral law of 1952. It recognized officially the existence of local assemblies which were entitled as "Territorial Assemblies".

Very few Africans could acquire French citizenship. In

fact, citizenship virtually remained synonymous with a European. Those Africans who aspired for French citizenship had to sacrifice many things. There is a great difference between African customs and French law. If any African desired to become French citizen he had to believe and act according to French civil code. In simple words, he had to adjust with French traditions and social and cultural systems.

The colonial administration gave 'French citizenship' to few Africans and created a privileged class. The distinction between Frenchmen and African subjects and between one African subject and the other led the French administrators to establish double college system. The French citizens who settled in Africa and the Africans who were awarded French citizenship formed an electorate and elected First College deputies of the territorial assemblies and the assembly of the French Union. The first college voters were a handful minority but their representation was equal to that of double college voters in the National Assembly and the Senate of France. The tables of the Representation of French West Africa in metropolitan assemblies and in the territorial assemblies are given in the next section<sup>7</sup>. Thus, the concept of citizenship was basically grounded on injustice. African leaders openly started rebelling against it and the French government ultimately had to concede to their demands in 1956.

French administration in West Africa was highly authoritarian and centralized. Active African participation in the political life was limited to the four communes of Senegal. The

citizens in four communes namely St. Louis, Dakar, Goree, and Rufisque were placed in privileged position. They were politically vigilant. Africans in other parts of West Africa were poor, backward and rural. There was no effective political party which could organize West Africans as an effective pressure group. Majority of the Africans were not citizens and hence their opinion in the affairs of 'French Union' had no value. Only town-dwellers in Africa were interested in attaining full equality with the French.

### III

Several developments took place in French West Africa by the end of Second World War. Very few French West Africans attended university in France before the Second World War. The spread of education in West Africa made the masses vigilant. Ecole Normale William-Ponty near Dakar trained teachers, civil servants and African assistant doctors. (10) The new elite emerged and it aspired for equality with the Frenchmen, it stood for abolition of dual college system, forced labour and indigenat.

French leftist parties also supported African demands. Popular Front government of Leon Blum permitted the Africans to form the labour unions. The leaders of the labour unions became power-centres in West Africa. The Groupes d'Etudes Communistes was established. It established contacts with all the major cities. The cooperation between African elite and French left

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(10) Folt William J., From French West Africa to the Mali Federation (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1965), p. 21.

parties began to increase. A decree of August 7, 1944, abolished the literacy requirement for union membership. By 1946, in West Africa 175 trade unions were registered. (11)

Second important development was the victory of democratic and liberal forces over all kinds of Fascist ideologies. The Africans fought against fascist forces and helped Frenchmen to liberate France. Thirdly, the Atlantic Charter affirmed that every nation had a right to choose its own government.

The Brazzaville conference of 1944 marked the turning point in French policy towards Africa. France had to pay considerable attention to the demands of African subjects. The Conference recommended the abolition of Corvee and indigenat. It also promised that France will support various programmes of economic development in Africa. It suggested that the colonies must be represented in constituent assembly but it strongly opposed African representation in the National Assembly.

The question of granting independence to the African countries was ruled out. On the question of decentralization of power the conference took an ambiguous stand. On the one hand it preferred the partial decentralization of West African administration and on the other it advocated the continuation of some form of federal organization. The conference stood for the participation of Africans in public affairs. It also decided that there should be higher representation of Africans in the parliamentary bodies.

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(11) Ibid., p. 21.

According to Michael Crowder, "French policy then was a constant search for a compromise between two extremes, for a formula that would conserve the unity of Greater France by retaining ultimate political control in Paris and yet allow a degree of local autonomy both compatible with this thesis of unity and yet sufficient to turn African politicians' attention away from the ideas of independence." (12)

In 1946 the Fourth Republic was established. France slightly modified her posture towards her colonies. Frenchmen discarded using the word 'colonies'. They also did away with the word 'French Empire'. Both these were replaced by two words, e.g. "territories" and 'French Union' respectively. The shade of colonialism was less dark in these two words.

Immediately after the Second World War, African leaders began to fight for their demands. African leaders like Senghor, Felix Houphouet Boigny, Lamine Gueye's M. Apithy, Mamadou Konate and Fily Dabo Sissoko put forward their demands in the constituent assembly. They were supported by French liberals and the communists. African students in France, leaders of trade unions in Africa and the communist study groups in Africa also made a persistent cry for reforms.

A few important reforms were initiated in 1946. The different liberties were granted, the right of association and

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(12) Michael Crowder, "Independence as a Goal in French West African Politics 1944-60", in W. H. Lewis, ed., French Speaking Africa. The Search for Identity (New York, 1965), p. 19.

meeting was recognized for the development of political parties in French West Africa. The administration did away with indigenat and forced labour. Jurisdiction of native courts in penal cases was superseded by French penal code. It was called First Lamine Guey ' law. It conferred citizenship on all the inhabitants of overseas territories.

The law was embodied in the article 'eighty' of the Fourth Republic.

#### IV

The French Union, which came into being in 1940 was composed of distinct organs. The Assembly of French Union was created in 1947. It had its sessions at Versailles. In the beginning it had 240 members but after 1953 it had only 204 members as a result of the withdrawal of North African territories from participation in the affairs of the Union 'High Council' of the French Union was a coordinating body and it assisted the government in conducting affairs of the Union.

There was one Federal Assembly at Dakar. In 1947 and 1948, territorial assembly was instituted in each territory. The members of the assembly were elected under dual college system and they had a power to vote on territorial budgets, taxes and other important matters affecting the respective territories.

'Grand Council' performed the executive functions. It consisted of forty members. They were elected by territorial assemblies which were instituted in French West Africa.

The following chart shows the representation of French West Africans in the Assemblies of Metropole and their representation in the territories of French West African Assemblies.

French West African Representation in the  
Assemblies of the Metropole

Territory	National Assembly		1946 Senate		1948		French Union Assembly
	1948	1951	First College	Second College	First College	Second College	
1. Niger	2	2	1	1	1	1	3
2. Dahomey	2	2	1	1	1	1	2
3. Upper Volta	3	4	-	-	1	2	5
4. Ivory Coast	2	2	2	3	1	2	4
5. Soudan	3	4	1	3	1	3	5
6. Guinea	2	3	1	1	1	1	4
SINGLE COLLEGE							
7. Mauritania	1	1	1	1		1	1
8. Senegal	2	2	3	3		3	3
	17	20	19		20		27

Source: K. E. Robinson, Political Development in French West Africa: Africa in the Modern World (Chicago, 1955), p. 161.



Representation of Territories in French  
West African Assemblies

Territory	1948		1952		Grand Council
	First College	Second College	First College	Second College	
Niger	10	20	15	35	5
Dahomey	12	18	18	32	5
Upper Volta	10	40	10	40	5
Ivory Coast	18	27	18	32	5
Soudan	20	30	20	40	5
Guinea	16	24	18	32	5
Mauritania	6	14	8	16	5
Senegal	50		50		

Source: K. E. Robinson, Political Development  
in French West Africa, Africa in the  
Modern World (Chicago, 1955), p. 161.

Thus the Federation in French west Africa evolved gradually in different phases and the overseas territories began to acquire more and more power. In August 1947, two great councils were established - one at Dakar, and other at Brazzaville. They looked after the federal budget of French West and Equatorial Africa. France ultimately had to give up her policy of assimilation.

V

The 1946 reforms of French colonial administration contributed to the development of political parties in Africa. A few

important leaders of different parties in Africa represented African population in the Constituent Assembly of France. The French political parties welcomed the new developments. The political parties in France decided to collaborate with African parties to advance their own interests. African parties also badly needed their cooperation. Thus, a new era started in French West Africa.

In the Constituent Assembly of France of 1946 there were 152 communist; Section Francaise de l'Internationale Ouvriere (SFIO) got 143 seats; Movement Republicain Populaire got 150 seats. Movement Republicain Populaire (M.R.P.) was primarily determined to wipe out communist influence from French politics. Union Democratique et Sociale de la Resistance (U.D.S.R.) had 29 members. Radicals who dominated in third Republic had only 28 members.

Rassemblement Democratique Africain (RDA) was one of the most dominant parties in French West Africa after the Second World War. The RDA stood for resisting French colonialism. Its ambitious leaders like Houphouet Boigny wanted to spread the influence of RDA over all AOF and AEF. The RDA firmly opposed the exploitation of blackman by the white and advocated equality of rights in all the spheres.

In the 1946 election RDA got a remarkable success. Eighteen RDA men could enter the metropolitan parliamentary bodies. Out of them six were deputies, five were senators and seven were councillors of the French Union.

French communist party rendered a great service to RDA.

The communists taught the RDA leaders the tactics of propaganda.(13) Communist gave the RDA an extremist orientation. Organizational structure of the communist party became the model for RDA.

In the initial period Houphouet Boigny emerged as unchallenged leader of the RDA. Due to collaboration with communist party several clashes took place between the RDA leaders.

Ivory Coast was the stronghold of the RDA. French communist party endeavoured to dominate RDA. In all the metropolitan assemblies R.D.A. always voted with the communist bloc. D'Arboussier, the Secretary General of the RDA, and Remond Barbe shaped the ideology of RDA. Remond Barbe was an eminent leader of the French communist party.

The intentions behind the collaboration of the RDA with the French communist party were obvious. The French communist thought that without the liquidation of French empire the total destruction of the capitalist system was impossible. Secondly, the French communists regarded African nationalists of those days as inevitable allies of the French workers who were striving to overthrow the capitalist structure. Thirdly, the communist went to different parts of Africa for a variety of reasons. They wanted to inject political consciousness and militancy in African blood. They thought that if Africans fought for their legitimate rights, the capitalist state of France could face problems from all the quarters and the communist movement would be accelerated.

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(13) Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, French West Africa (London, 1958), p. 85.

That is why the communist established informal study groups in Africa and supported the alliance of Africans with the Movement 'Unifié' de la Résistance.

From African side the RDA's alliance with the communist party of France was based on practical considerations. The RDA wanted to fight against colonialism. It stood for racial equality and for greater local autonomy to the overseas territories. The RDA also wanted to make the Africans aware of their legitimate rights. The RDA leaders desired a greater representation of Africans in the French National Assembly. In order to popularise its movement RDA needed a big organization. The proposals of RDA needed support from some party in metropolitan assemblies. Houphouët Boigny once made it clear that the RDA depended upon the 183 votes of the communist party. (14) In other words, it was an alliance of mutual benefit.

Houphouët Boigny antagonized the French administration by joining hands with the French communist party. The election of 1951 was disastrous for the RDA. Soon after 1951, the communist party of France also began to lose its pre-eminent position in French politics. The alliance with the communists neutralized the force of RDA movement and hence RDA decided to break off with the communist.

Unlike Ivory Coast, the position of R.D.A. was comparatively weaker in Senegal, Niger, and Upper Volta. Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal organized one party named Independent d'outre Mer (I.O.M.). It represented a group of liberals and moderate

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(14) Ibid., p. 87.

parliamentarians. The African deputies and senators of I.O.M. wanted to create one pressure group and get passed certain laws. Although, I.O.M. lacked strong organization like R.D.A. It could, with the cooperation of French government, win more seats than R.D.A. in June 1951 elections of the National Assembly.

Some important French political parties desired to co-operate with African parties. Movement Republicain Populaire (M.R.P.) of France established one branch in Ivory Coast. It also cooperated with Union Voltaique of Upper Volta. S.F.I.O. of France was ideologically closer for leaders like Lamine Gueye, Senghor and Yacine Diallo while Movemet Unifie de la Resistanse of France appealed to the leaders like Houphouet Boigny, Sissoko and D'Arboussier. The African leaders used to discuss their problems with French political leaders. Thus French and African parties collaborated in the period before 1956 and the study of French and African parties and their cooperation is fascinating one.

To conclude, this chapter has viewed French policy in a historical perspective. The study of the philosophy of assimilation, the concept of citizenship, and progressive developments in the structure of the federation gives an account of the theoretical foundations of French policy. The different political parties became important forces in West Africa after 1956. The brief survey would help <sup>in</sup> understanding the 'acceleration of national liberation movements', the 'loi-cadre reforms' or the concept of 'community'.

## **Chapter II**

### **LOI CADRE REFORMS**

## Chapter II

### LOI CADRE REFORMS

The period between 1954 and 1956 was crucial for the world in general and for France in particular. The newly liberated Asian countries pledged their determination to put an end to colonialism everywhere. In Indochina, Dr Ho Chi Minh organized armed struggle against French domination and managed the uncere-  
monious exit of French influence from South-East Asia. At the Bandung Conference, which took place in 1955, leaders of Afro-Asian nations extended their support to the liberation movements in Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. They called for the termination of colonial system and racial oppression in any form. Finally, the Suez crisis represented an important landmark. Prompted by France and Britain, Israel launched an attack on Egypt, which was later backed by the French and British troops. For France Suez became a disaster. It gradually started losing its control over North Africa and the strategically important territories in the West Mediterranean area.

Morgenthau has aptly summarized this period. He observes: "In June 1954, shocked by military defeats in Vietnam, the French National Assembly invested the unorthodox Premier Pierre Mendes France. He and his successors negotiated the Geneva agreements on Vietnam and the treaties recognizing independence for Tunisia and Morocco, registering the end of French hopes of integrating these nations into the French Union. Since the end of 1954, another war, against the Algerian nationalists, drained heavily on French human



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and material resources; the war's continuation sapped public confidence in the utility of legal fiction which designated Algeria as a part of French republic. The failure of Anglo-French intervention in Suez contributed to the decline of French power in North Africa." (1)

In January 1956, elections took place in France. Guy Mollet who was a popular socialist leader became Prime Minister. However, owing to the multiplicity of parties no single party obtained a clear majority in the French National Assembly. The fragmented composition of the Assembly made all governments of the Fourth Republic instable. Any government, for its survival, had to look desperately for the support of different parties and pressure groups.

'After the 1956 election the possibility of a solid government majority and of a coherent government policy became even more precarious. With uncompromising opposition from the Poujadists on the extreme right and from the communists on the extreme left, any government was in effect, dependent on the support of the 'classical' right and the small Gaullist group, and both these were sharply hostile to any weakness shown in the handling of the Algerian problem.' (2)

French West Africa also sent twenty deputies to the French National Assembly. Rassemblement Democratique Africain scored

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(1) R. S. Morgenthau, Political Parties in French Speaking Africa (London, 1964), pp. 61-62.

(2) Alexander Werth, revised Edition, Political Leaders of Twentieth Century De Gaulle (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1969), p. 234.



unprecedented victory. The number of its seats went up from three to twelve. Independent's d'Outre Mer (I.O.M.) lost eight seats and their number was reduced to six. SFIO got two seats. R.D.A. emerged as the strongest interterritorial party, local units of RDA like 'Parti Democratique de Guinee (PDG) of Guinea and Union Soudanaise (U.S.) of Soudan became mass parties and tried to coordinate with each other by doing away with the social, territorial, ethnical and linguistic barriers.

The 1956 election resulted in the decline of the influence of I.O.M. I.O.M. had won the previous election with the help of French government. The basic drawback of I.O.M. was that it lacked an effective organization. I.O.M. leaders could not communicate their ideas to the rural areas. 'The losses of the I.O.M. indicated a new political orientation in French West African politics. Gone were the post-liberation days when African leaders<sup>were</sup> politically inexperienced and when French parties exercised considerable influence over African parties and the choice of African leaders. Since then the African parties increasingly well-organized, and developed their own primarily African dynamics.' (3)

When the elections were over the ministry of Overseas France announced one of the most important policy statements. It made known the desire of the French colonialists to perpetuate the Federal structure of French Union in which Paris would have upper hand.

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(3) R. S. Morgenthau, Political Parties in French Speaking Africa (London, 1964), p. 108.

The African deputies like Houphouet Boigny and Senghor had entered French politics by this time. As already stated, the communists and the Poujadists in France increased their strength in the National Assembly and the 'Centrist' or the government which was 'left of the centre' needed the support from centrist parties. The importance of African votes thus increased. The RDA made an alliance with Union Democratique et Socialiste de la Resistance (U.D.S.R.) in the French Assembly. The U.D.S.R. was a small centrist group and it could play an effective role in French politics with the support of the RDA.

The key role of African deputies compelled the French government to appoint Africans in important posts. Houphouet Boigny of RDA vigorously participated in French politics and became a staunch supporter of Mollet's government (January 1956 to May 1957). He was the first African to hold a ministerial portfolio. Hamdoun Dicko who was a socialist from Soudan, became an Under Secretary. When Bourges Maunoury became prime minister (May 1957 to September 1957) he appointed another African Under Secretary. His name was Modibo Keita. In Gaillard's regime (October 1957 to April 1958) there were three African Under Secretaries. Hubert Maga was the last person to be appointed as an Under Secretary.

Thus, in French political system African deputies began to play an increasingly important role. The French government was liberal enough to send Houphouet Boigny as a delegate to the United Nations. The Guy Mollet coalition of the socialists, radicals and U.D.S.R. - R.D.A. became a symbol of Franco-African

cooperation. The first rank African leaders after the 1956 elections indulged in French politics and lost their contacts with the African masses. Besides Houphouet Boigny, two more active RDA leaders, Sekou Toure and Modibo Keita, entered the French National Assembly. The African leaders started fighting for their demands in the French Assembly.

By 1956 it was becoming increasingly difficult for France to control her colonies in Asia and Africa. In North Africa and in Indo-China the freedom fighters posed a variety of challenges and shook the administrative and legal framework of French colonialists.

Meanwhile, convinced that people of West Africa had one overwhelming interest, the fight against imperialism, the RDA sought to form a vast Congress-type movement that would be "the means of expression of the masses and the masses themselves [rather than] an avant grade political party" and permit the union of "all ideological conceptions, all ethnic groups, all social levels, all territories around a program of concrete and clearly defined proposals." (4)

France had to modify her posture towards her colonies. While evaluating the situation in French West Africa the minister of Overseas France said in French parliament; "The natives are restless... The question is not whether we should plagiarize the British, but there is no doubt that the fact that they 'transformed the political and administrative regime of their territories has

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(4) Foltz William J., From French West Africa to Mali Federation (London, 1965), p. 54.

contributed to the growth of impatience of the people of French West and French Equatorial Africa". (5)

## II

The passage of loi-cadre by French parliament in June 1956, changed the dimensions of the relations between France and French West Africa. The concept of citizenship changed drastically. A totally different structure of federation emerged. William Zartman observes that the loi cadre was important because it provided institutional stimulus to the formation of eight new states, giving parties and nations a territorial framework. (6)

The loi cadre was passed on twenty-third of June 1956 in the French National Assembly. Africans vigorously participated in the debates of the National Assembly. Among African countries Ivory Coast had rather privileged position. Since Houphouët Boigny of Ivory Coast was in the ministry of Mollet, he could participate in all the important debates during the last two years of the Fourth Republic.

The loi-cadre reforms granted universal adult suffrage to West Africans. The distinction among different citizens was no longer insisted upon and the system of double college was abolished. The right of vote created confidence among Africans. They thought that they were capable of running their own government. French citizens who were living in Africa lost their special position.

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(5) Quoted in Zolberg Aristide R., One Party Government in Ivory Coast (Princeton, N.J., 1964), p. 173.

(6) William Zartman, International Relations in New Africa (Englewood Cliff, New Jersey, 1966), p. 8.

Now, the rural and uneducated Africans also enjoyed the right of franchise.

Decentralization was the heart of loi-cadre reforms. The loi-cadre reforms clearly distinguished between different spheres of governmental activities. All the services were reorganized. There were three different levels of these services, e.g. federal, state and territorial. Before loi-cadre all services were state services. There were, however, different cadre often called "local", "federal" as well as "state". All of them were accountable to the state. The loi-cadre by changing this pattern of accountability truly brought about decentralization. But some of the services formerly managed by federation became state services outright. This led to repeated complaints that the law created further centralization into the hands of the ministry of Overseas France. If these services had remained in the hands of federation, they might have been controlled by the Africans after attaining the self-government at the federal level.

France's policy was very cautious. By passing some important services to the state level France conveniently avoided the African participation in important matters. The six groups of state services were controlled by France. They were:

- A) External Affairs (diplomatic and consular, frontier control, external trade and exchange control, immigration, cultural relations)
- B) External communications (Aviation including air safety and meteorology radio communications and submarine cables, international light houses and beacon ships, inscription maritime and harbour masters)

- C) Defence and Security (Armed forces, gendarmerie customs, security, police, ciphers, civil defence etc.)
- D) Civil Liberties (Courts of French Justice, i.e. excluding courts of customary law in private law matters, administrative courts, labour inspection, etc.)
- E) Solidarity and Economic, Social and Cultural Expansion (Treasury financial supervision, supervision of state companies and mixed companies, central development projects financed by FIDES distribution among territories of products which may need to be subject quotas, university education, broadcasting and television stations, map and survey service, geological map service and atomic energy).
- F) Representation of Central Power (High Commissioners and governors, heads of the provinces and administrative districts, and their secretaries and cabinets. (7))

In simple words, France retained the power as far as key services were concerned. Through the control of these services French Government could take important decisions on vital matters affecting these territories. The control of these services caused discontent and Africans thought that it was nothing but the continuation of previous rule.

The loi-cadre reforms established council of government in each territory. It was headed by the Governor. The Council was composed of twelve members and all of them were elected from territorial assembly. In a way it was a modification of Defferre project which suggested the formula for Togoland in which six

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(7) Robinson, Kenneth E., "Constitutional Reform in French Tropical Africa", Political Studies, vol. 6, 1958, p. 56.  
(London)

members of the council of government were nominated and other six were elected. The loi-cadre reforms were one step further and provided for the elected executive.

The leader of the council of government was named 'Vice-President'. There was no responsible government but Council could resign if it felt that the territorial assembly had no confidence in it.

To a certain extent the loi-cadre replaced the excessively centralist set-up of administration by federal orientation. Local powers were transferred to the territories. The territorial assemblies which were elected by universal franchise became important bodies. Africans began to participate in local affairs. They voted the budget provisions, regulated the administrative affairs and enjoyed legislative powers.

The state services were controlled by the high commissioner who was the representative of French government and the territorial services were controlled by Council of government.

Thus, there were three important power centres in each territory: Assembly, Council of Government, and High Commissioner. From 1956 onwards the Assembly's field became wider. It looked after agriculture, forestry, fisheries, primary and secondary education, health, internal waterways, customary law, internal trade, saving banks, town planning public libraries, tourism, etc. By instituting the council of government the French introduced parliamentary system in West Africa and with the help of the governor France continued to dominate the Africans.

The High Commissioner was nominated by the decree of the President of the France Republic. He became the representative of France Overseas. "Il relève directement de l'autorité du ministre de la France d'outremer". (8) He took up directly the authority of the minister of overseas France.

The High Commissioner was the head of state services. The assembly had to communicate all the decisions to him and he was to execute them within a period of thirty days. If he considered that any decision of the Council of Government exceeded its powers or prejudiced national defence, public order, security and civil liberty he could report to the minister who could, after consultation with Council d'Etat, annul the decision by a cabinet decree. (9)

The High Commissioner was to maintain solidarity of the constituent parts of the Republic. He also had to look after the development of the Republic in social, economic and cultural spheres. It was his duty to coordinate state and territorial services.

The most important power of the High Commissioner was the power to declare the emergency. His functions as a head of the group were separately specified. These were: (a) economic and financial coordination within the group; (b) direction of minimum inter-territorial services specified in the decree - for these

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(8) Conseil de la République Documents Parlementaires session de 1956-57, vol. 12, part I, 2 October 1956 to 14 February 1957, p. 6.

(9) Robinson Kenneth, "Constitutional Reforms in Tropical Africa", Political Studies (London), vol. 6, 1958, p. 56.



services he was to have three more services - e.g. financial service, a service of economic coordination and one for problems of economic development; (c) He also had the power to determine the international conflict. (10)

In short, High Commissioner was one of the most powerful posts. Through him the French government could serve several purposes.

Lastly, the loi-cadre reforms curtailed the powers of the Grand Council. It became more of an advisory body. It could make recommendations with the view of coordinating and unifying territorial legislation and fiscal regimes. Territorial assemblies could authorize it to legislate in particular matters of international interests.

### III

The loi-cadre reforms changed the entire structure of French Union. It introduced new dimension to the Franco-African relations. The (loi-cadre) decrees gave to elected territorial governments power which can be compared to those granted to the Gold Coast legislative assembly by the order of December 1950.

According to Article Seventy six of the Fourth Republic, 'the representative of the government in each territory or group of territories is the trustee of the powers of the Republic. He is the head of the administration of the territory.' The appoint-

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(10) Ibid., p. 56.

ment of the High Commissioner was consistent with this article. He was really 'le depositaire dans le territoires des pouvoirs de la Republique.' (11). He was really the repository of the powers of French Republic in territories

Loi-cadre reforms could not escape criticism. Many Africans positively criticized it. Guy de Lusignan, an expert on Franco-phone Africa, remarked, In fact, however, the loi-cadre was outdated the day it came into effect, since the French government, under pressure from the United Nations, had already gone so far as to concede full self-government in Togo and Cameroun. (12)

Gonidec, a well known author on French Africa held the view that the French Parliament and the government knew that French West Africa with its twenty million people, its important economic potential, and the movement for unification which was taking place at the political and trade union level would have constituted a strong unit which could have imposed its views on the metropole.

Gonidec further added that the principal of decentralization to the territorial level definitely weakened the strength of those movements of unification and served properly the French interests, that's why French defended 'decentralization' doggedly. (13)

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(11) Conseil de la Republique, *ibid.*, p. 6.

(12) Guy de Lusignan, L'Afrique Noire Depuis l'Independence, (London, 1969), p. 78.

(13) Quoted in Zolberg Aristide R, One Party Government in Ivory Coast (Princeton, N.J., 1964), p. 177.

Maurice Duverger asserted that the loi-cadre reforms undoubtedly paved the way for the creation of federation although no one would admit it. (14) Robinson observed that the reforms may not result in responsible local ministries. (15)

Gonidec could predict the future more accurately. He thought France's policy greatly resembled the policy of autonomy followed by Britain. This tendency was evident in case of Togo and Cameroun. As far as the overseas states were concerned France maintained the idea of the unity of French state. Gonidec predicted that all the French West African states in the future would become separate units distinct from France. (16)

The loi-cadre reforms were viewed differently by different political leaders. The reforms gave birth to two antagonistic philosophies. Leopold Sedar Senghor became the most important champion of federalism while Felix Houphouet Boigny staunchly supported the anti-federalist thinking and the stand adopted by the French government.

The loi-cadre did not envisage any kind of primary federation and Senghor was very much disappointed. Senghor was defeated in Paris, but he was determined to popularise his views in Africa and get support from the Africans. Through the Bloc Democratique Senegalaise (BDS) newspaper he reiterated his thesis of West African primary federation joined as a part of federal

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(14) Ibid., p. 177.

(15) Ibid., p. 177.

(16) Ibid., p. 177.

French Republic. (17) Senghor bitterly opposed the loi-cadre reforms. He said that France wanted to balkanize African territories. By introducing the policy of divide and rule France only wanted to perpetuate her regime. In the French National Assembly Senghor wittily remarked that the African governments were given "toys and lollipops". Loi-cadre reforms did not give power in a real sense.

The trade unions in French West Africa were also very critical about the loi-cadre reforms. The trade union leaders believed that the loi-cadre reforms was a continuation of French rule in a different way. Union Generale des Travailleurs d'Afrique Noire (UGTAN) which controlled over eighty per cent of the French African organized labour, condemned the loi-cadre as 'a mystification, a facade which fools no one, its sole aim is to divide us, to disguise and perpetuate 'the colonial regime'. (18)

The other group that is, a group of anti-federalist was led by the Ivory Coast. Houphouet Boigny supported the policy of French Government. In Ivory Coast the anti-federalist thinking was always encouraged. Once the governor of the Ivory Coast said in the press conference "We are on the eve of the institution of the new loi-cadre system, which will bring about inevitably new financial burdens. If we pursue her economic and social expansion, it appears not only fair, but also good business, to

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(17) Foltz William J., From French West Africa to Mali Federation (New Haven and London, Yale University Press), p. 76.

(18) Ibid., p. 79.

return to this country all the incomes she collects from customs." (19)

The economic factors shaped the decisions of Ivory Coast. Ivory Coast was one of the richest countries in French West Africa. The farmers of the Ivory Coast grew coffee and cocoa. Soudan, Niger, Upper Volta and Mauritania were far away from any kind of economic development. The federation would have proved very costly for Ivory Coast. Had Ivory Coast supported the federalist thinking all its surplus resources would have been transferred to the poor countries in French West Africa. The latter would have lived comfortably at the cost of Ivory Coast, <sup>the former</sup> which did not want. On the contrary, Ivory Coast wanted to develop independently and its leaders intended to make Ivory Coast a powerful country capable of leading the rest of the French West Africa.

Secondly, the leaders of the Ivory Coast and particularly Houphouet Boigny was involved in French politics. It was his active involvement that helped him in joining Mollet's government. He could put forward his ideas in cabinet meetings and fight for the interests of the Ivory Coast. Thus the Ivory Coast was placed in a privileged position. In other African countries Houphouet Boigny was regarded as a stooge of French government.

Thirdly, the transfer of income from indirect taxes to the territorial budget was going to help Ivory Coast in increasing her revenue rapidly and at little cost.

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(19) Quoted in Zolberg, A. R., One-Party Government in Ivory Coast (Princeton, N.J., 1964), p. 178.

France supported Ivory Coast and Houphouet Boigny's policy. In fact, France got a devoted ally in Houphouet Boigny. Politically speaking, the loi-cadre completely destroyed the federation. France was a colonial power and a federation would have undoubtedly proved harmful to the French interests in Africa.

By introducing loi-cadre reforms, France was successful in creating two rival groups who fought against each other. The rivalry was not only between Senghor and Houphouet Boigny but it also sprang up within the RDA. The RDA ceased to be a monolith. While some leaders like Sekou Toure stood for federalist ideas, others on the extreme left led by Sekou Toure and Keita opposed the participation of Houphouet Boigny in Mollet's government. They also denounced the use of West African troops in North Africa ridiculed the loi-cadre, and disapproved the European candidate whom Houphouet had seated for RDA. (20)

The rivalries between different African political parties and within a strong political party like RDA served the French objectives. The effectiveness of the anti-colonial movement was slightly reduced because of the different strategies adopted by the African statesmen. All the Africans were to fight for independence but their divergent approaches and the character of the anti-colonial movement did not help them. Through the loi-cadre reforms France could demonstrate to the North Africans that they were going on the wrong way and that autonomy can also be attained

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(20) Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, French West Africa (London, 1958), p. 95.

through peaceful means.

#### IV

The political trends and the strength of the different political parties and factions changed rapidly after the loi-cadre reforms. As said earlier, French government succeeded in dividing African leaders by introducing loi-cadre reforms. Houphouet Boigny supported French policies while Senghor consistently opposed them. Senghor demanded that the territories of Black Africa must enjoy the status which was enjoyed by Togo and Cameroun by virtue of the decree of August 1956.

French West Africas were going to elect the territorial assemblies which were going to function according to loi-cadre reforms. There were three important interterritorial parties e.g. R.D.A., Movement Socialiste Africain (M.S.A.) and Convention Africain (C.A.).

R.D.A. was well-organized and the strongest party. It had charismatic leaders like Sekou Toure, Modibo Keita and Houphouet Boigny. Parti Democratique du Guinee (P.D.G.) of Guinea, Union Soudanaise (U.S.) of Soudan and Parti Democratique de la Cote d'Ivoire (P.D.C.I.) of Ivory Coast, were important branches of R.D.A. These branches, also, were well-organized and were capable of mobilizing the masses.

The other two parties namely M.S.A. and C.A. were undoubtedly weaker than R.D.A. There was an important conference of M.S.A. in January 1957 and it broke up the relations with S.F.I.O. of France. By 1957 no French political party was directly associated with any

of these three interterritorial groups.

William Foltz has aptly summarized the political process of French West Africa in those days. According to him "The basic unit of political activity was the individual territory, and party organizations tended to reinforce the distinctiveness of each territorial unit. Representation in the Grand Council and in the Parisian assemblies presupposed control of a territorial base. While effective political organization at the territorial level was thus a precondition of political success, organization at a higher level was possibly desirable but not absolutely necessary." (21)

The election took place in March 1957. It was for the first time that the Africans were electing these territorial assemblies through universal suffrage. The elections were held in eight territories of French West Africa.

R.D.A. emerged as the strongest party. It got clearly majority in four territorial assemblies, e.g. Guinea, Ivory Coast, Soudan and Upper Volta. Previously in Dahomey and Niger its position was not strong but it did well in those territories also.

In French West Africa out of 474 seats R.D.A. captured 234 seats. R.D.A. scored landslide victory in Soudan. The local unit of RDA, namely Union Soudanaise won fifty-seven out of seventy seats.

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(21) Foltz William J., From French West Africa to Mali Federation (New Haven and London, 1965), p. 61.



Convention Africain (C.A.) won fifty four seats out of which forty-seven were from Senegal. Bloc Progressiste Senegalaise a territorial unit of C.A. fared well. Movement Socialiste Africaine (M.S.A.) won sixty two seats.

After the elections the important leaders of R.D.A. could hold executive post. In Ivory Coast, Guinea, Soudan and Upper Volta the Council of government was headed by R.D.A. Gabriel d'Arboussier, the eminent R.D.A. leader became the president of the Grant Counsell of French West Africa. Houphouet Boigny became the President of R.D.A.

To sum up, the passage of loi-cadre reforms inaugurated a new phase in Franco-African relations. The division of African opinion on the issue of reforms served the French interest. R.D.A. ceased to be a monolith. This chapter provides a necessary background to understand the most debated and vital issue of 'federation in French Africa', discussed in next two chapters.

## **Chapter III**

### **FORMATION OF THE COMMUNITY**

## FORMATION OF THE COMMUNITY

The later half of 1957 was a difficult phase in the life of the Fourth Republic. The different institutions had proved their ineffectivity in coping with all sort of challenges. "Despite uncontestable success in the field of economic reconstruction, the Fourth Republic failed to live up to the high hopes which had been placed in it. The measures intended to ensure governmental stability proved to be inadequate, and although the need for reform was generally recognized, the regime seemed incapable of reforming itself." (1)

The domestic instability in the political system and Algerian problem shattered the foundations of the Fourth Republic. Front de Liberation Nationale (F.L.N.) organized guerrilla force of perhaps more than 20,000 fighters. They controlled large areas of the countryside some of which were undoubtedly inaccessible to France. The F.L.N. fighters, with their terrorist methods intended to paralyse the important city of Algiers. They could not succeed in their endeavour but France was compelled to send more than 500,000 troops to Algeria.

Algerian crisis ceased to be an affair between Algeria and France. African and Asian nations condemned the violent tactics of the French colonialists. What is more, Tunisia and Morocco supported the freedom fighters of F.L.N. in their liberation struggle.

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(1) Pierre Avril, 'Politics in France', translated from the French by John Ross, (Aylesbury, Bucks, 1969), p. 16.

There was widespread discontent among French intellectuals about French policy in Africa. Raymond Cartier, the famous political economist and leading intellectual of France in those days, openly assaulted French policies in his writings. In one of the most popular magazines, namely, 'Paris-Match', Cartier wrote a series of articles. He stood for immediate independence of Africa. He criticized the enormous amount of waste of money in Africa. He argued that French investment in Africa would certainly be unprofitable from the long-term point of view.

Raymond Cartier predicted that the African countries would attain independence and after that, the new African statesmen would nationalize industrial plants and transport facilities. The French had paid for these things out of their hard savings. Raymond Cartier gave the illustration of nationalization of 'Suez Canal Company' by Egypt which highlighted the validity of his arguments.

Thus on the domestic as well as on certain important matters of foreign policy, the policy of the French government remained ambiguous. The multiplicity of interest groups, lobbies and parties made the political process diffused and the criticism from every nook and corner of the country added fuel to the fire and made the whole system defunct.

The situation in French West Africa was altogether different. The freedom fighters, political parties and African intellectuals could easily take the advantage of a favourable situation. The weakness of France gave them a good bargaining position. They

could popularize their ideas and mobilize the masses for the freedom struggle.

After the elections of March 1957, the nature of politics in French West Africa changed drastically. The unprecedented victory of Rassemblement Democratique Africain (R.D.A.) placed R.D.A. in a strong position and R.D.A. men could vigorously implement their policies. Ghana became an independent nation and the president of Ghana, Nkrumah, visited Abidjan in April 1957. It was for the first time in history that channels of communion between English speaking and French speaking Africa were established.

The leaders of R.D.A. had become matured in eleven years time. They had faced many critical situations and they had their own ways of tackling the problem. Most of the leaders wanted to reassess the conditions in French West Africa. After the passage of loi-cadre reforms the differences among important R.D.A. leaders such as Sekou Toure and Houphouet Boigny came on the surface. R.D.A. leaders were keen to find the area of agreement between themselves.

The Bamako Conference took place in the last week of September in 1957. A few commentators defining it retrospectively commented that it was the Bandung of Africa. (2) Eminent French politicians, popular African leaders and most of the important personalities participated in the debates of the Conference.

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(2) Andre Blanchet, L'Itineraire des Partis Africains Depuis Bamako (Paris, 1958), p. 6.

Among the French leaders Mendes-France, Edgar Faure, Francois Mitterrand attended the Conference. Guy Mollet, Antoine Pinay and Roger Douchet were also invited but they did not send a reply. Chaban Delamas saluted the Congress by a letter. (3) The Communist and Poujadiste were deliberately ignored.

Poujadiste was a party of extreme right in France. The Poujadiste always believed in adopting a very hard stand on the overseas territories. The Communist were also not invited because of a variety of reason. First, the collaboration between R.D.A. and communist party of France proved to be futile. Houphouet Boigny was criticized by R.D.A. leaders because he was defending that collaboration. The collaboration ceased to exist when the communist party began to lose its strength in the national assembly of France.

Secondly, from January 1956 to June 1958 the centrist forces were dominating the French assembly. Government was formed by the coalition of centrist forces. That is to say, communist party was not in power. Thirdly, R.D.A. associated itself with the government and important R.D.A. leaders attained power. As said earlier, Houphouet Boigny was a minister in Mollet's government.

Fourthly, the communist party of France during these two was consistently opposing the French policies in Algeria.

also against the government's financial policy. Many

in France suspected that the communists were trying to

influence R.D.A. Andre Lafond who was Secretary General of Confederation Generales des Travailleurs believed that fraction of R.D.A. was communist. He was suspicious about the attitudes of Sekou Toure, d'Arboussier and Diallo.

The socialist governments of France were definitely against communist ideology, methods and their tactics of subversion. By inviting communists in Bamako Conference, R.D.A. leaders would have invited troubles. French government would have thought that Marxist fraction is dominant within the R.D.A. The position of the R.D.A. leaders, who had already attained power, would have been affected by the participation of the communist in the conference. On account of these reasons R.D.A. leaders safely avoided the communist participation in the Congress.

Most of the important African personalities attended the Conference. Mr Auguste Denise (Ivory Coast) Sourou Migan Apithy (Dahomey) Mamadou Dia (Senegal) Quezzin Coulibaly (Upper Volta) who were vice-presidents of the Council of Government, also participated in it.

There were three important issues on the agenda of the Conference. There were three important parties in French West Africa, namely, R.D.A., M.S.A. (Movement Socialiste Africain), C.A. (Convention Africain). The delegates to the Conference were supposed to find out areas of agreement in these groups.

The second question was of the 'Federal Executive' for French West Africa. As said earlier, the loi-cadre reforms of 1956 divided R.D.A. into two major groups. Surprisingly, there were certain leaders like Houphouet Boigny who supported the

reforms. Houphouet Boigny took special pains to build R.D.A. in its earlier days. In fact, he endeavoured to give it an inter-territorial character and struggled for unity within the R.D.A. But after 1956 he became a secessionist. He realized that by developing independently Ivory Coast can make rapid progress and can hold a prestigious position in French West Africa.

On the other hand, there were leaders like Sekou Toure who assaulted the loi-cadre reforms. They believed that such reforms may weaken the freedom movement and serve the purposes of the colonists. Sekou Toure was a staunch federalist. He proclaimed that French West Africa needs a Federal Executive. Sekou Toure introduced a resolution in the Federal Assembly of Guinea which advocated the Federal Executive for French West Africa and he got it passed in July 1957. In August he secured a unanimous vote of the A.O.F. great Council to the same end.

In short, the two important groups, federalist and anti-federalist, within the R.D.A. were pulling the organization to the different directions. Finally, the participants were also going to discuss the future of Franco-African community. This was the situation of French West Africa on the eve of Bamako Conference. The party was undoubtedly divided. But still the leaders were ready to come on the table and negotiate in search of unity. Now, let us study the economic and political resolutions passed by R.D.A.

## II

Economic programme of R.D.A. was presented at Bamako by Grabieli Lisette, President of the inter-parliamentary group. The



economic objectives were:-

- 1) To transform underdeveloped economies into modern economies.
- 2) To liquidate the 'Colonial Pact'.
- 3) To take steps for the progressive integration of African economies.
- 4) Development of production.
- 5) Protection of African masses from the perpetual exploitation of the colonial regime.

Lastly, R.D.A. Conference also recommended the Africanization and socialization of commercial system.

The Congress declared that the R.D.A. had been consistently struggling for the political, economic, social and cultural emancipation of African development. It declared that the sovereignty was vested in the people and independence was the inalienable right of the people. It emphasized the interdependence of the territories.

It advocated for the establishment of the Franco-African community having a democratic basis. (4) It stood for the democratization of Federal Executive organs. It declared that the Africans must assume the governmental responsibilities and realistically solve the problem of investment.

As regards the Algerian problem, the resolution requested the French government to settle it amicably and peacefully. Finally, it stood for the exclusion of all forms of exploitation and discrimination.

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(4) Andre Blanchet, n. 2, p. 188.

At Bamako the three basic objectives of the Congress were discussed but participants could not draw out a precise programme for action. In French West Africa the three important political groups were led by Houphouet Boigny (R.D.A.) Senghor (C.A.) and Lamine Gueye (M.S.A.) respectively.

In the past all the three parties had allied themselves with the different parties of France. There was intense competition of the three groups in the territories of French West Africa. The leaders had their own theories, tactics and perspective of different problems the accommodation of which was extremely difficult. (5)

Each group had its own idea about the future development of French West Africa. The ideas were partly coloured by the national interest of the respective territory. For example, Ivory Coast of Houphouet Boigny supported the anti-Federal thinking because by developing independently Ivory Coast was bound to achieve greater prosperity.

The efforts were made to reunite the three groups e.g. R.D.A., M.S.A. and C.A. The negotiations between Sekou Toure (R.D.A.), Ya Dumbia (M.S.A.) and Abdoulaye (C.A.) failed to regroup these parties. Thus, Bamako Conference failed to achieve its first objective.

Secondly, on the question of Federal Executive also the rift became evident. Sekou Toure took a federalist line and faced

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(5) Ibid., p. 38.

an opposition. Houphouet Boigny opposed his ideas. He stood for rapid suppression of the intermediary organs between federal and territorial powers. (6) In other words, he stoutly defended the concept of territorial autonomy. The reconciliation of these divergent viewpoints within the R.D.A. was very difficult. The second issue also remained unresolved.

Finally, the political resolution of R.D.A. expressed its views on the future of Franco-African community. In this case, the French attitudes and interests were also involved and Africans, since they were under French rule could not impose their ideas on France. Thus the resolution simply revealed wishful thinking.

### III

European nations achieved a remarkable economic recovery after the Second World War. Winston Churchill, Robert Schuman, Paul Henri Spaak, Alcide de Gasperi, Konrad Adenauer were important spokesmen of European unity and they made special efforts to bring European nations closer by establishing organizations like European Defence Community or European Coal and Steel Community.

The perpetual threat of Soviet Union brought the West European nations closer. Few significant developments took place in cold war politics in late fifties. Firstly, Soviet Russia suppressed the revolt in Hungary and it became clear that the United Nations was ineffective in dealing with events inside the communist

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(6) Ibid., p. 86.

world. Secondly, Russia proved its nuclear capability by launching a sputnik in space.

European leaders like de Gaulle wanted to avoid American economic and military domination over Europe. At the same time they intended to build Europe as an independent power centre which would not be vulnerable to communist penetration.

The dependence upon America, the danger of Russia and emergence of third world countries prompted European statesmen to accelerate European unity movement. Economic and political co-operation between European nations became a necessity.

Establishment of European Common Market was an important step in the direction of unity. The Common Market treaty was signed in Rome on March 25, 1957, and ratified by six national governments in the second half of 1957. The treaty became effective on January 1958. (7)

James Ingram, a well known economist, observes: "The Rome treaty is nevertheless an important turning point in the European history, since it creates a far-reaching economic union between those ancient enemies, France and Germany, and Italy, Belgium, Luxemburg and the Netherlands." (8)

The aims and objectives of the European Common Market were:

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(7) Benoit Emile, Europe at Sixes and Sevens (New York, 1961), p. 4.

(8) Ingram, J. C., International Economic Problems (New York, 1966), p. 111.

To remove tariffs quotas and other barriers to trade within the community.

To adopt a uniform external tariff on goods coming from the outside world.

To allow free movement of capital, labour and enterprise within the community.

To establish a common agricultural policy, a common transport policy and a common policy toward competition and business practices.

To harmonize and coordinate monetary and fiscal policies social policies, and even equalize wages for men and women". (9)

Among the members of the E.E.C., France, Belgium and Netherlands were colonial powers. Due to inadequate economic development and lack of industrialization the countries in French West Africa were still dependent upon France. France was interested in associating her overseas territories to E.E.C. The reasons were obvious. By associating them with E.E.C. the colonial nature of economic and political relationship between France and French West Africa would have remained unchanged. Thus, France by offering the benefits of European unity to her colonies was serving her own interests. For example, the Rome Treaty provided economic assistance to member states for economic and social advancement. Since France was a colonial power she was bound to utilize E.E.C. funds in such a way which would give

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(9) Ibid., p. 112.

France maximum advantages.

In Conference of Foreign Ministers at Venice in 1956, France raised the issue of overseas territories, and since Belgium had a colony in Central Africa she supported the French proposals. An accord was reached on the basis of Franco-Belgian memorandum at the sixth ministerial Conference at Val-Du-Chesse in January 1957. Thus, African countries were associated with the E.E.C.

E.E.C. is a unique attempt at integrating the different economies. The E.E.C. nations concentrate on those goods in which their advantage is the greatest. Each state will have monopoly of at least some goods. Broadly speaking, E.E.C. is an attempt to develop a free trade within the community and also protect it from the competition from the outside countries.

When the African countries associated themselves with the E.E.C. a new dimension was introduced to the trade of E.E.C. countries. For six European nations the overseas territories were open for exports and they could import the goods from any members overseas territory.

With this background one can turn attention to the provisions of the 'Treaty of Rome' as regards the 'African Associates'. Chapter IV of the Rome Treaty deals with the provisions relating to the associations of overseas territories. "Article 131 of the Treaty provides for the association with the community of 'non-European countries and territories which have special relations with Belgium, France, Italy and the Netherlands.'" (10) The

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(10) Treaty of Rome, Part IV, Article 131.

countries from French West Africa, ~~French West Africa~~ French Equatorial Africa, Somaliland, St. Pierre and Miquelon, the Comoro Archipelago, Madagascar, French settlement in Oceania, Southern and Atlantic territories, Togo, Belgian Congo, Somaliland under Italian trusteeship, and Netherlands New Guinea etc., were associated with E.E.C.

After entering the E.E.C. the associated states began to specialize in the production of those agricultural commodities for which they had special advantage due to climatic conditions and geography. The member states specialized in industrial goods and those agricultural products for which they had special advantage. The economic power of the member states was certainly better than that of the associate states and this arrangement offered more advantage to the members of the Community than associated states.

"Article 132 prescribes that member states shall, in their commercial relations with the associated countries and territories, apply the same rules which they apply among themselves; thus Germany should apply to imports from Senegal the same duties that she applies to similar imports from Italy. Article 132 provides further that the associated countries and territories shall apply to their commercial exchanges with member states and between themselves the same rules which apply (11) in respect of European state, with which they have special relations."

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(11) P.N.C., Okigbo, Africa and the Common Market (London, 1967), p. 30.

Articles 131 and 132 of Rome Treaty shape the relations between the European states and African associates in unambiguous terms.

According to P.N.C. Okibgo 'these articles specify the rhythm of eliminating customs duties between member states, stipulations now to serve as a formula for abolition of customs duties by associated territories.' (12)

Thus, E.E.C. with its African associates began functioning. The European members established a Common External Tariff. It must be remembered that unlike the members, the associates were not enclosed within Common External Tariff and they were free to establish their own tariffs on imports from third parties.

Several efforts were made in Europe and Africa for the improvement of Euro-African trade. Every associate was to combine its quotas for all states other than its metropolis into a single community quota that was to be without discrimination. European Overseas Development Fund totalling \$581.25 million was to be allocated among the individual associates by the E.E.C.

European countries began to take special interest in the economic and social advancement of the developing countries. Trade between Europe and Africa began to increase. African non-associates were highly critical of such cooperation which affected their trade. African continent was clearly divided between two rival groups, e.g. Associated States and Non-Associated States.

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(12) Ibid., p. 31.



## IV

Despite the acceleration of European Unity Movement and improvement in Euro-African economic institutions the unstable French governments of the Fourth Republic had to face great opposition. Jacques Soustelle attacked the policies of Bourges-Maunoury government and his stand was supported by the Gaullists most of the 'Classical Right' and Poujadists. (13)

The radical government of Bourges-Maunoury had to face considerable opposition. The Communist Party of France began to criticize his policies when he used repressive measures in Algeria. Soustelle attacked his policies because he believed that French government had failed to establish firm control in -Algeria. He stood for the integration of Algeria with France. There were the right wingers in France who desired to retain Algeria as a French colony. Gaullists were against the then political system and so they also supported Soustelle. Beside political parties, Algiers generals and the Algiers teddy-boys also supported Jacques Soustelle's point of view.

At last, on 21 May 1957, Maurice Bourges Maunoury's radical government was defeated by 279 to 253 votes over an outline law on Algeria.

In the beginning of 1958 the collapse of the Fourth Republic began. Gaillard government was losing its support and strength. Even eminent statesmen like de Gaulle opposed the

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(13) Alexander Werth, De Gaulle : A Political Biography (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1969), p. 232.

entire system. Jacque Soustelle took advantage of de Gaulle's opposition and tried his level best to overthrow the system.

France and French democracy was passing through a crucial phase. The military in France had become too strong. The army leadership in Algeria as well as in France was on the brink of rebellion against the government. In February 1958 anti-parliamentary demonstrations were held in Paris. France had lost her control over Tunisia, Morocco and Indo-China but the French rightist parties were determined to retain the French control over Algeria.

"The Algiers Rebellion of thirteenth May was a genuine one which, with its extreme right-wing ideology, aimed not only at saving Algeria, but also at setting up some kind of salut public regime in France, anti-communist, anti-parliamentary and neo-Fascist. The professional soldiers in Algiers supported the rebellion and it soon became apparent that the generals in France were in full sympathy as well." (14)

May 1958 shook France from all the corners. The French peoples' only hope was de Gaulle. The constitution of the Fifth Republic was prepared between June 1958 to August 1958. The preliminary draft of the constitution was submitted to the newly created 'Advisory Constitutional Committee' on July 29, 1958. The referendum for presidentship was held in 1958, de Gaulle secured eighty per cent votes and became the first President of the Fifth Republic.

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(14) Ibid., pp. 235-36.

One can notice a world of difference between the constitution of Fourth and Fifth Republic. While commenting on the new constitution few critics have remarked that it is the worst draft in the French constitutional history, it is quasi-presidential and tailor-made for de Gaulle. (15) The truth is that it is a hybrid, an attempt to combine two constitutional principles, the possibility of whose peaceful co-existence has yet to be proved after several years of experience. (16)

At this stage, France primarily needed a stable governmental system. Thus, a 'President dominated' structure emerged. Article eleven and article sixteen in the constitution placed the President in a very strong position. The article eleven read as follows:

"On the proposal of the Government during parliamentary sessions, or on the joint proposals of the two Assemblies, published in the Journal official, the President of the Republic may submit to a referendum any Government Bill dealing with the organization of the public authorities approving a community agreement or authorizing the ratification of a treaty which, although not in conflict with the constitution would affect the working of the institutions.

If the result of the referendum is favourable to the adoption of the bill the President of the Republic promulgates the time

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(15) Dorothy Pickles, The Fifth French Republic Institutions and Politics (Norfolk, 1962), p. 26.

(16) Ibid., p. 26.

limit laid down in the preceding." (17)

This article gave the President a decisive power. It simply meant that the President, if he disagreed with the Assemblies, can put the bill before the people by superseding them. According to the Article sixteen the French President could proclaim the state of emergency if there was a serious threat to the Republican institutions or to the independence of nation or if the regular functioning of the constitution was affected. Before that he could consult Prime Minister and the Assemblies. Article sixteen virtually made him a dictator.

Another important feature of the Constitution was about the functioning of the parties. Article four legitimised the existence of political parties. This was a very novel feature. As far as the functioning of the Parliament is concerned, the Fifth Republic simply continued and developed the tendencies already present in the Fourth Republic, and the system of Cabinet leadership constituted a reasonably faithful adaptation of the British model. (18)

The Constitution of the Fifth Republic provided for the Constitutional Council and the community. Both these institutions were new. The community was established for the harmonization

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(17) The French Constitution of 4 October 1958, Article 11.

(18) Pierre Avril, Politics in France, translated by John Ross (Aylesbury, Bucks, 1969), p. 17.

of Franco-African relations. The broad study of the institutions of the community and its comparison with the Commonwealth will be relevant to this dissertation.

The original community was based on two principles. Firstly, the members of the community were not independent sovereign nations and they had to accept the French leadership. Secondly, any member state of the community was free to leave the community.

J. A. Laponce, an expert on French government and politics, remarks 'In instituting the community, de Gaulle gambled that the former French colonies would realize that independence and a club-like association would not solve their problems, that in today's world, power and prosperity have to be sought in large communities of nations unified at least in their diplomacy, their military defence, and their economic development.' (19)

Article seventy eight of the Constitution of the Fifth Republic divided the powers of the community in two major categories. The powers of primary importance were retained by the community without restrictions. Thus powers in foreign affairs, defence, currency, community economic and financial policy and strategic raw materials policy were retained by the metropolitan power. The powers of secondary importance included administration of justice, education, telecommunications and interstate transport system.

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(19) Laponce, J. A., The Government of the Fifth Republic (Berkeley, 1961), p. 302.

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There were/major organs of the community, e.g., President, Executive Council, Senate and the Arbitration Court.

The President of the French Republic was ex-officio President of the community.

The powers of the President as regards the community were not properly outlined in the Constitution. The President could send personal representatives in all member states. He acted as chairman of the Executive Council. He could summon and close the sessions of the community senate. He could submit economic and financial questions before Community Senate for advice.

Laponce observes that the organic law of December 1958 did define the powers of the President as regards the Community but it remained ambiguous over a fundamental question, the restrictions to which the President is subject while acting as a head of the Community. (20)

There was one provision which slightly checked President's power, the decisions of the President as regards the appointment of Africans to diplomatic positions, France's financial contribution to the economic development of a particular member state had to be endorsed by the French Government or Parliament.

The Council of Executive was composed of ex-officio and appointed members, the Prime Minister of France, the heads of government's ministers in charge of community affairs. The

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(20) Ibid., p. 307.

main duties of the Council were:

- (1) To inform the member states of the community about the French position on international issues and discuss the French stand.
- (2) To organize the community by giving advice on appointments and administrative structures to the President.
- (3) Lastly, it was supposed to discuss the proposals submitted by President on his own initiative at the request of the Council.

The Senate was another important organ of the community. It included delegates from the French Parliament and from the legislatures of other member states. One Senator from a member state represented 300,000 inhabitants. Its term was for five years having two sessions of two months per year. The members of the Executive Council could participate in the debates. The Senate could give the advice on financial affairs to the President at his request.

The Arbitration Court of the community consisted of seven judges. They were selected from magistrates who served for ten years. Their tenor was six years.

Thus the title XLII of the French Constitution elaborated the concept of community and gave France the leadership of the community. Most of the key powers were retained in Paris. In fact, French elite made the community an instrument for the continuation of French rule over African states. France could

perpetuate her rule over African states by establishing a strict control over foreign affairs, defence, and economic and financial matters. The French Government reintroduced some kind of parliamentary model through community.

There was a good deal of difference between the community and the Commonwealth. Unlike the community the members of the Commonwealth were sovereign independent nations. The aim of the Commonwealth was to establish a new type of relations between the mother country and its former colony. There was no fixed rule for Commonwealth membership.

Stewart Easton, an expert on colonialism in Africa, observes that the analogy commonly used for the Commonwealth was of the grown up family, whose members are free and independent, but who do not entirely cut themselves off from parents and siblings. (21)

The members of the French Community were not fully independent. They were small, poor and economically dependent upon France. (22) 'It is customary for British writers on the community to regard it as a halfway house to a Commonwealth of British kind'. (23) But the difference must be remembered. Full self-

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(21) Easton Stewart, The Twilight of European Colonialism (New York, 1960), p. 5.

(22) Dorothy Pickles, The Fifth French Republic (Norfolk, 1962), p. 161.

(23) Easton Stewart, n. 21, p. 7.



governments are the components of the community while the nation-states are the components of the Commonwealth.

Secondly, the members of the British Commonwealth had no common foreign policy. Commonwealth was a multi-racial organization. In the cold war period members like India, Ceylon, Malaya and Ghana were non-aligned while Britain, Pakistan, Australia and New Zealand were members of the American sponsored pacts. What is more, racist South Africa was also member of the Commonwealth till 1961.

French Community was totally different from Commonwealth. The foreign and defence policy of the member states in the community was dominated by France. The foreign policy of the member states was not at all independent. The citizens of the member states were treated as the colonial citizens who participated in the affairs of the French Government. Britain was not the leader of Commonwealth countries. France definitely led the community and the community was devised to serve the French interests in all spheres.

To sum up, the period from 1957 to mid-1958 was quite significant in Franco-African relations. Dramatic events like acceleration of Algerian National Movement and the liquidation of Fourth Republic in France did influence French West African countries in one way or the other. The matured leaders of R.D.A., M.S.A. and GA tried to take the advantage of the weak position of France. All these parties aimed at overthrowing the colonial

system but they could not unite. The birth of E.E.C. and association of African states to E.E.C. changed the perspective of Franco-African relations.

## **Chapter IV**

### **PERIOD OF TRANSITION**

## Chapter IV

### PERIOD OF TRANSITION 1958-60

#### I

A sharp change in the orientation of French policy towards French West Africa became evident since June 1958. Although the Fifth Republic officially began to function from January 1959, de Gaulle had already assumed power in June 1958. He was an ardent patriot and he desired to liberate France from American dominance. He wanted to transform France economically, politically, and socially. He had independent views about the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the crucial German problem, European unity movements and the prevailing international system of the late fifties.

De Gaulle was keenly interested in the problems of French West Africa and had his own ideas about the independence of French West Africa or the role it would play in world affairs. Eminent African leaders looked at him as the man of Brazzaville. Leaders like Houphouet Boigny and Senghor were quite close to de Gaulle.

There was a noticeable change in African politics. From June 1958 the composition of leading parties like Rassemblement Democratique Africain and Parti du Regroupement Africain changed. The vital issue of 'Federation' divided these parties. On the issue of future relations with France, there was no agreement between important leaders of different West African countries.

France did not want to lose control over her overseas territories. In the constitution of the Fifth Republic 'Community' was o

one of the finest devices which was supposed to give continuity to Franco-African relationship and place France in a dominating position.

De Gaulle was totally against the idea of independence for the African states. He had the following important reasons to popularise the concept of 'Community' in Africa: First, he believed that African States had not developed the infrastructure necessary to maintain viable economy or to undertake full responsible nationhood. (1) Secondly, he always thought that France could remain an important centre of power in the world only by retaining its African territorial dependencies. There were enormous untapped natural resources in Africa. The oil of the Sahara and other natural resources were necessary for the development of the French industry. Sahara was also needed for the continuation of atomic tests. Finally, he wanted to set before the world the example of this novel cooperation between France and Africa.

In order to convince the peoples of Africa, de Gaulle went on a tour to Africa and explained to them the meaning of the community. Excepting Conakry he received every where an overwhelmingly enthusiastic welcome. In fact, one can say he was at one with Africa. Stewart Easton, an expert on European colonialism remarked, 'There can be little doubt that President de Gaulle made and is making every effort to see that the community is a

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(1) Stewart C. Easton, The Twilight of European Colonialism (New York, 1960), p. 344.

growing concern. His speeches have stressed the community of interests and the common task, as well as his hope that the community can be an example to the world of how nationalism and particularism can be transcended.' (2)

The opinion of Africans on the question of joining or withdrawing from the community was important. The French government decided to take the opinion of African population. The date of the referendum was 28 September 1958. Africans were given the chance to shape their own destiny. If any country wanted to join the Community she could vote 'yes' and become a self-governing member state within the Community. French Government provided another alternative. If any country was unwilling to join Community it was free to do so. De Gaulle promptly declared that a country which would not join Community would be deprived of French aid and technical assistance.

De Gaulle visited Conakry in August 1958. Sekou Toure made it clear that Guinea would vote 'yes' in the referendum if her demand of independence and juridical equality with France were recognized. He said that Guinea must have equal voice in the community affairs.

De Gaulle's speech at Conakry is worth quoting. He replied 'France proposes this community; nobody is obliged to join it. You have talked of independence. I say even more loudly than I have elsewhere that independence is up to Guinea. It can have it on September 28 by voting 'no' to the proposal and I guarantee

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(2) Ibid., p. 344.

the Metropole will make no objection. There will, of course, be some consequences for Guinea, but there will be no obstacles in the way. Your country can do what it wants the way it wants to and can follow any course it likes. If Guinea says 'yes' - that is, if it freely, spontaneously, of its own accord accepts the constitution - and if France on its side says 'yes' then the African territories and Metropole can work together for natural benefit.' (3)

## II

Among all the African countries the attitude of Guinea was largely shaped by its radical and popular leader Sekou Toure'. Sekou Toure frequently rebelled against the French way of governing African territories and the merciless exploitation by France through her colonial administration.

Sekou Toure was an outstanding trade unionist. In 1953 he launched a 67-day strike against the colonial administration and compelled it to grant the demand of the workers. The administration allowed the workers to work for forty hours per week. (4) Sekou Toure built Parti Democratique de Guinee which became vehicle of new nationalist sentiments. (5) As an active RDA worker he endeavoured to give it a radical orientation.

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(3) Quoted in L. Gray Cowan, "Guinea" in Gwendolen M. Carter, ed., African One Party States (New York, 1964), p. 168.

(4) Ibid., p. 157.

(5) Ibid., p. 157.

Sekou Toure's views on French colonialism and federation deserve a close attention.

Assimilation was the corner-stone of French policy of governing the overseas territories. It simply stood for the total annihilation of old African norms and culture and imposition of French culture over Africa. Sekou Toure believed that the French policy was aimed at making Guinea "a military, economic, and cultural extension of France". (6) He could not appreciate such a policy as he insisted that the unique culture of Africa must be preserved.

The Guineans were entirely against the whole colonial setup. The prices of imported goods were high and all the French trading companies used to bag enormous profits. (7) They thought French administration was merely concerned with maintaining law and order rather than African development. The difference between the standard of living of French ruler and African subject was a manifestation of naked injustice.

These circumstances provoked Sekou Toure to assail French colonialism. While describing French rule he once remarked, 'We have known the brutality and arrogance of a colonialism that treated us not as men but as inferior beings'. (8) Due to RDA's moderate stand against French colonialism and the thinking of RDA leadership on the crucial issue of 'federation', Sekou Toure's PDG left RDA

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(6) Ibid., p. 156.

(7) Ibid., p. 157.

(8) Ibid., p. 157.



in 1957. Guinea took a stronger stand on Algerian issue.

Sekou Toure was a strong supporter of African unity movements. He observed that by breaking the federations of French West Africa and Equatorial Africa, France had placed countless obstructions in the way of African unity. He attacked the constitution of the Fifth Republic because it did not do away with the shortcomings of loi-cadre.

Sekou Toure's conception of federation was different from that of de Gaulle. He believed that in a Federal State all states must be autonomous and equal. No single state should govern it or get special advantages. It means, he very much wished, that an African state and France must enjoy equal status.

France could never agree with such ideas. In fact, the establishment of this kind of federation would have uprooted the basic motivations of French policy towards Africa.

L. Gray Cowan, writing on Guinean politics, has aptly summarized the intentions of French government behind the establishment of the community and the status of African states within the community. He observes:

"The Overseas territories were not to be considered as equal members with France in the Community; rather, the Community structure provided a legal umbrella for their integration, into a larger metropolitan France." (9)

Thus the community was designed to serve the vital national interests of France. Views of Sekou Toure and the attitudes of

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(9) L. Gray Cowan, n. 3, p. 167.

de Gaulle were diametrically opposed to each other, that is why Sekou Toure was interested in clearing few doubts before joining the Community. He declared in August 1958: "It is just because we desire a marriage that we wish to state clearly our reservations, and clarify the conditions of our entry into the community. Our aim is not divorce, but a lasting marriage without concealment of anything." (10)

It was ultimately clear to the French government that unless Sekou Toure's demand of equal status in a federation was granted Guinea won't enter the community. In Guinea, during the elections there was a great campaign by French Government and Parti Democratique de Guinee. The French territorial administrations were accused of applying pressure at every point for an affirmative vote. (11)

On September 14, 1958, Sekou Toure pointed out that huge amount of money was utilized by the French government in order to influence the elections. He advised the militants of PDG to vote 'no' but take money which was offered by the French government.

French government never imagined that the population of Guinea would refuse to join community and vote against de Gaulle. When it became clear, the parachute troops were sent to maintain order during the voting time.

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(10) Quoted in Easton Stewart C., n. 1, p. 340.

(11) L. Gray Cowan, n. 3, p. 168.

The result of voting on 28 September 1958 showed that a huge majority had sided with Sekou Toure and P.D.G. Out of total of 1,405,986 voters on the lists, 1,200,171 voted. Of these 1,130,292 voted 'no'; 12,920 ballots were spoiled or left blank, and 56,939 voted 'yes'. (12) Approximately 94.17 per cent people voted 'no'. Other French West African countries voted 'yes'. In Ivory Coast 100 per cent, Upper Volta 99 per cent, Dahomey 98 per cent, in Senegal and Soudan 97 per cent and in Niger 78 per cent voted 'yes'. (13)

Thus Guinea became by default a sovereign independent nation. The flow of French aid and technical assistance to Guinea was immediately stopped. Among the African states, Ghana immediately promised aid to Sekou Toure and declared her union with Guinea in 1958. Guinea joined Ghana in supporting Pan-African countries policies. Soviet Union and East European/rushed to help the newly born Guinea.

French administration could not easily reconcile to the reality. "In their pique, French officials made it more difficult for Guineans to operate the administrative machine by destroying vital files in some cases and in other taking them as part of their baggage. Excesses such as destruction of the telephone instruments and plumbing facilities were not uncommon. Sekou Toure has claimed that circulars from the French mission in Conakry indicated that

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(12) Ibid., p. 171.

(13) Guy de Lusignan, L'Afrique Noire Depuis l'Indépendance  
l'Evolution des Etats Francophones (London, 1969), p. 30.

this administrative sabotage had official concurrence. (14)

France did not give de jure recognition to Guinea for a long time. On December 13, 1958, Japan and Iraq sponsored the resolution for admission of Guinea in the United Nations. France abstained from voting. This shows the tough attitude of France towards Guinea.

### III

Excepting Guinea all other French West African countries decided to join the community. Houphouet Boigny and Senghor supported the ideal of community.

Economically the position of Ivory Coast was better than other African states. Her budget was balanced and had favourable balance of trade. Houphouet Boigny wanted to improve the position of his country with French cooperation. He believed that the community was a unique experiment. He emphasized the need of enduring relations with France. (15) Besides that he was in charge of different ministerial portfolios of French cabinet since 1956. He was also one of the architects of the constitution of Fifth Republic from African side. Finally, he had always opposed the idea of federation and the radical element in RDA. For France also, support and cooperation of Ivory Coast and Houphouet Boigny was valuable.

Elliot Berg, an expert on West African economies, wrote that economic conditions of African states dominated the decision

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(14) Quoted in L. Gray Cowan, n. 3, p. 169.

(15) Stewart C. Easton, n. 1, p. 329.

of Africans when they voted to join the community. Soudan, Niger, Upper Volta and Mauritania were outside the currents of modern economic life. (16)

French West Africa was dependent on French Capital Grants for Development Expenditure. Its post-war development has been accompanied by relatively heavy doses of public capital investment the greatest part of which has come in the form of grants from France. Between 1947 and the end of 1956 public capital investment in French West Africa totalled 170 billion CFA Francs. Of this 70 per cent came from French treasury. (17) France also made about 35 per cent contribution to civil and military expenditures.

The second advantage of joining the community was French markets continued to protect the African goods. According to Berg the major characteristic of the pattern of economic development of French West Africa is its close trade integration with the highly protective Franc zone. Much more than British and Belgian territories in Africa, the French areas have developed within the protective wall of the metropolitan country. (18)

Lastly due to unsound economic position most of the countries could not afford diplomatic representation abroad on extensive scale. Thus, most of the African nations were unwilling to lose 'export markets' and French economic aid at the cost of independence.

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(16) Elliot J. Berg, "The Economic Basis of Political Choice in French West Africa", American Political Science Review (Wisconsin), no. 2, June 1960, p. 392.

(17) Ibid., pp. 394-95.

(18) Ibid., p. 398.

Guinea was different from these countries in the sense it was politically organized, its mining boom was attracting new investments of foreign capital. (19) Guinea's economic future was not bleak at least.

The twelve autonomous member states of the Community began to function with France after the referendum. The names of self-governing member states were: Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Upper Volta, Mauritania, Niger, Gabon, Congo, Central African Republic, Tchad, Madagascar, Soudan and Senegal.

The constitution of the Fifth Republic considerably influenced the constitutions of the member states. All the African states adopted Republican and Parliamentary constitutions of a traditional French type with supreme executive power resting in a Cabinet responsible for assembly elected by adult suffrage. (20)

The post of a minister counsellor was extremely important in the community. Four ministers counsellors were appointed for one year term. They used to attend the Cabinet meetings when the crucial issues regarding community were discussed. The counsellors were Houphouet Boigny (Ivory Coast), Senghor (Senegal), Gabriel Lisette (Vice-President of Tchad) and Philiber Tsiranana who was a President of Malagache Republic.

In February 1959, French Government decided to appoint seven members in charge of community affairs. They were: Couve

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(19) Ibid., p. 405.

(20) J. A. Laponce, The Government of Fifth Republic (Berkeley and Los Angeles), p. 304.

de Murville for Foreign Affairs; Guillaumat for Defense; Pinay for Currency, Economic and Financial Policy; Michelet for Justice; Boulloche for Education, Buron for Interstate Transportations and Cernut Gentille for Telecommunications.

Some important decisions were taken by the community during its short life span. In June 1959, at Paris meeting, the principle of free movement of goods within the community was established. The meeting also gave the right to each state or group of states to set up its own tariffs vis-a-vis foreign states within the framework of general economic policy. One of the important meetings was held at Tananarive which gave the members the right to send their representatives in organizations like UNESCO, FAO and ILO. It gave Africans confidence and a feeling that they also can express their wishes and aspirations in international bodies.

Another important step was that of common citizenship for all members. The discrimination on the basis of race and religion was eliminated. This step introduced a new frontier to Franco-African relations. All members of the community enjoyed equal political rights. A Frenchman in Ivory Coast remained subject to the French civil code but was not politically considered as a foreigner; he could vote and stand for elections. Likewise, an Ivory Coast citizen could be an electoral candidate in France or could be appointed to the French Civil Service. (21)

One of the important decisions of community executive Council that it maintained the same exchange rate between the

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(21) Ibid., p. 306.

metropolitan France and the CFA Franc. President also took an important decision regarding status of Soudan and Senegal within the community which we will study in the next section.

#### IV

The question of 'Federation' remained burning topic in all the countries of French West Africa. It was an unusually complex phenomenon. Numerous political parties and their leaders as well as French interests were directly involved in it. Federalists and anti-federalists entertained their own views about the way in which African societies can be developed. As stated earlier, France had always opposed the idea of 'Federation'. In Africa Houphouet Boigny had also opposed it.

Senghor was an important leader of Parti du Reprupement Africaine (P.R.A.). He was one of the greatest critics of loi-cadre reforms and staunchest supporters of the concept of federation and African unity movements.

The issue of 'Federation' was both, a dividing force on the one hand and uniting force on the other. It did divide the major parties in two opposing camps at the same time it inspired those persons who believed in federation to negotiate and come closer by ignoring their party loyalties.

Thus, Senghor from P.R.A. and Modibo Keita from R.D.A. became the chief exponents of federal ideas in Africa. Both of them had worked in different party organizations having different ideologies and tactics. Like Senghor, Modibo Keita also opposed loi-cadre reforms and it was his belief that establishment of



'Federation' in French West Africa would be beneficial to the development of different territories. The agreement on the issue of 'Federation' prompted Senghor and Keita to negotiate with each other even though they were from different parties.

Guinea had already refused to join the community. It was clear that the negotiations for some kind of workable federation in West Africa were going to take place within the members of the community. Senegal, Soudan, Upper Volta and Dahomey were favourable to the idea of federation. Niger and Ivory Coast were in the opposite camp.

Upper Volta and Dahomey failed to take clear cut stand. Although leaders in those countries favoured federation, demands of national interests made their stand wavering. Upper Volta was economically weak compared to Senegal and Ivory Coast. She wanted to be friendly with both these powers and make considerable economic progress.

On January 28, 1959 Voltaic assembly approved the Mali Federal Constitution. This did not oblige Upper Volta to join the federation. From February 1959, the interference of Ivory Coast and France in internal matters of Upper Volta increased. Both these powers were determined to prevent Upper Volta from joining the federation. Upper Volta did not want to choose between Dakar and Abidjan and she declared that African unity was of paramount importance.

Ultimately Upper Volta had to concede to the joint pressure brought by Ivory Coast and France. 'The pressures that Houphouet Boigny and France brought to bear were not simply verbal arguments,

but effective, if implied, threats of eliminating a specific group or leader from participation in Voltaic political life." (22)

In Dahomey Parti du Regroupement (PRA) Africaine was in power. The bloc of Sourou Migan Apithy was opposing federation and the bloc of Alexandre Alande and Emile Zinson was supporting federation. Apithy thought that a developing country like Dahomey needs French cooperation. He resigned from PRA in January 1959 and formed a government with the help of Northern parties and RDA. On 14 February 1959 Dahomey officially refused to enter Mali Federation.

In Senegal and Soudan the opponents of Mali federation were ineffective. The triumph of federalist option in Soudan and Senegal was reinforced by decisive victories of Union Soudanaise and Union Progressiste Senegalais in the March 1959 elections for new territorial legislatures. (23)

De Gaulle did not welcome the formation of Mali Federation. He was busy in organizing Franco-African community as a Paris-dominated structure. He saw no need for inter-African federation. (24) Politically, France might not have welcomed the federation but the formation of such federation did not harm French business interests in Dakar, neither they were deprived of the access to

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(22) Foltz William J., From French West Africa to Mali Federation (New Haven, and London, 1965), p. 110.

(23) Ibid., p. 112.

(24) Richard Adloff, West Africa: The French Speaking Nations (New York, 1965), p. 203.

African markets. Leaders of Senegal and Soudan repeatedly declared that they do not intend to leave the community. This assurance served the French interest and prevented France from taking any destructive step against the Mali Federation.

From April 4, 1959 the Mali Federation officially began to function. Soudan and Senegal looked at the federation from different points of view. Soudan's geographic position at the "cross-roads of West Africa", with a flourishing commerce with neighbouring states and her dependence on a port in a neighbouring country, continued to play a role in her advocacy of federalism. The leaders of Union Soudanaise saw federalism not only as a matter of economic convenience, but as something closely related to their very political survival. (25) They thought that a federation must have a general political outlook which will hold together all the forces favourable to federalism. The Soudanese saw the federation as a modern expression of traditional African unity.

The establishment of Mali Federation gave political as well as economic advantage to Senegal and Soudan.

Politically, Mali gained strength and prestige in African politics. The African countries had to recognize the force of Mali.

Senegal and Soudan both were benefited economically. Senegal's nascent industrial sector sold between 30 to 35 per cent of its production, amounting to approximately 8.5 billion CFA Francs

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(25) Foltz William J., n. 22, p. 130.

in 1959 to Soudan. Senegal and Soudan also cooperated in building Dakar-Niger railway line from Dakar to Bamako. This provided employment for about eight hundred Soudanese in Senegal and did about 1.5 billion CFA Francs worth of international haulage. (26) For the Soudanese, participation in the Federation brought them substantial rebates from Federal government. In 1959 these amounted to some 2.2 billion CFA Francs. (27)

To sum up, the attitudes of Soudanese and Senegalese leaders as regards 'Federation' and orientation of that Federation towards France were different, although Federation offered certain economic and political advantages to both the countries. For example, Soudanese believed that France was responsible for division of Africa while Senegalese regarded France as a unifier of Africa.

Leaders like Senghor wanted to use Federation as an instrument to increase their influence in French politics while Modibo Keita had no such ambitions. He intended to build a politically unified population and for him Federation was something more than a mere coordination of few political leaders.

Senegal and Soudan had enthusiastically formulated the Mali Federation. The two countries could not get along with each other for a long time. The maladjustment between the political leaders

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(26) Ibid., p. 156.

(27) Ibid.

of the two countries as well as lack of understanding in the economic field paved the way for the federation's process of disintegration.

The two countries interpreted the idea of federation in diametrically opposite way. Leaders of Union Soudanaise advocated that powers in all fields must be retained by the federal government, on the contrary Senghor championed the cause of autonomy for Senegal.

Soudanese wanted to concentrate supreme political power in one single individual who will be chief of the state and lead the federation. Senegalese did not approve this idea. They stood for joint executive.

Disputes began regarding the membership of Union Soudanaise (U.S.) and Union Progressiste Senegalese (U.P.S). Soudanese admitted Senegalese who were residing in Soudan in the Union Soudanese and they also emphasized the importance of Parti de la Federation Africaine (P.F.A.) which was uniting Senegalese and Soudanese. Senegalese were reluctant to include Soudanese in different committees of U.P.S.

The Soudanese pleaded for Africanization of administrative post in the Federation while the Senegalese were busy in appointing European technical expert.

Senghor wanted a loose union with Soudan. He stood for multi-party system, parliamentary government and close ties with France. (28) Modibo Keita stood for single party state and strict

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(28) Fichard Adloff, n. 24, p. 204.

state control over planned economy. Senghor and Keita became rivals for the post of Presidentship of Mali Federation.

In the economic fields also the two countries did not collaborate. There was no common economic agency which could coordinate the economic activities of the two countries.

"A second economic disadvantage for Senegal lay in depending exclusively on Soudanese rice to make up the 20,000 tons Senegal imported annually. Because of the Office du Niger's inefficiency and the less than optimum Soudanese climate, Soudanese rice delivered in Dakar cost some 15 to 20 per cent more than rice imported from Southeast Asia. While this sacrifice was a small one for the Senegalese economy, it did weaken the economic arguments for federation." (29)

One sees a great change in French attitudes towards the formation of Mali Federation as well as the question of Mali's independence. Firstly France allowed the formation of such federation; secondly on the question of its independence, France did not adopt a rigid posture. Due to her rigidity Guinea had left the community. On 22 September 1959 Senegal and Soudan made a formal request that negotiations should take place and there should be transformation of sovereign powers from community to Mali Federation. De Gaulle visited Mali federal assembly on December 13, 1959 and made it clear that France won't put hindrances in the path of Malian independence and France would continue

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(29) Foltz William, J., n. 22, p. 155.

to help Malian economically after the independence.

Mali acquired the status of independent nation on June 20, 1960. It continued to be the member of the community. Mali allowed France to maintain her military base on Malian soil.

French community proved flexible enough to accommodate Mali. Two articles of the French constitution of the Fifth Republic were amended. Article 85 of title XII was amended in order to make possible revision of all the articles in title XII. In order to make independence compatible with the membership of community Article 86 also was amended. De Gaulle did not repeat Guinean mistake and Senghor and his party men escaped from choosing between France and the Federation.

The lack of coordination between Senegal and Soudan resulted in an immediate break up of the Federation. On September 12, 1960 France recognized Senegal and Soudan as independent nations and supported their admission in the United Nations. Soudan became the 'Republic of Mali' in 1960.

In short, the period from June 1958 to September 1960 was extremely eventful in the history of Franco-African relations. Significant events like beginning of de Gaulle regime, Guinea's independence, formation and end of Mali Federation and the revision of the French constitution took place. French power and prestige started declining and West African states rapidly marched towards the path of independence.

## **Chapter V**

### **THE EMERGENCE OF AFRICAN NATIONS**



## Chapter V

### THE EMERGENCE OF AFRICAN NATIONS

With the establishment of the Fifth Republic the politics of France took an entirely different shape. Left wing forces in France receded back and the Union pour la Nouvelle Republique (U.N.R.) emerged as the strongest party. The variety of French political parties held different views on some crucial issues such as the Algerian crisis, France's role in European Economic Community, and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Every citizen of France began to show concern towards the Algerian problem. The question of French settlers in Algeria, the intolerable burden on the French economy caused by the Algerian crisis made Algerian crisis a major issue for debate. Only a strong executive authority with the sanction of popular and institutional support, could have resolved it. Gaullists engineered the return of the General to power and the refashioning of the institutions of the Republic in order to construct a strong state and a stable executive authority that would be able to solve internal problems and restore the French prestige in the world. (1)

De Gaulle won the sympathies and admiration of practically all the U.N.R. deputies. Despite the divergence of views they could work together because of him. There was one thing in common with all the deputies, that is, as staunch nationalists,

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(1) Roy C. Macridis and Bernard E. Brown, The De Gaulle Republic (Homewood, Illinois, 1960), p. 292.

they earnestly desired the transformation of France economically, politically and socially.

There were two groups within the U.N.R. which advocated two different lines. The first group was led by Soustelle and Delbecque. They were called "activist". They believed that the question of 'Algeria' should primarily concern France. They were quite uncompromising. They wanted to maintain French sovereignty over Algeria by all means. To them, integration of Algeria with France was absolutely essential and they were not in favour of offering autonomy or independence to Algeria. The other group was led by Chalandon. He emphasized the need of transforming France economically. He stood for the improvement of economic conditions in France.

On the question of Algeria and economic conditions of France, de Gaulle had his own views. He was liberal enough to declare that he was willing to negotiate with the Algerian leaders. The Constantine speech of de Gaulle in October 1958 was a historic one. He elaborated the Five Year Plan for the industrialization of Algeria. He also promised to spread education in Algeria, the distribution of land to the Moslem farmers, to take measures for the exploitation of natural resources in Algeria and to create iron and steel production centres. Lastly he assured that France would take drastic steps to solve their unemployment problem. (2)

De Gaulle was a sheet-anchor of the U.N.R. A few activist

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(2) Ibid., p. 297.

deputies expressed their serious differences with him but they had to bow down to his wish. 'The Party remained what de Gaulle wished it to be: a 'mass de manoeuvre' of some 200 deputies, without policy and doctrine, without leadership and organization, ostensibly ready to follow the President of the Republic whenever he might lead them. (3)

On 16 September 1959, de Gaulle offered Algeria to choose between integration, independence and local autonomy. Within the U.N.R., for the first time, the few deputies openly rebelled against de Gaulle's policies in Algeria. Most of them were 'activist' who played a leading role on the 13th May episode. Nine 'activist' deputies were expelled from the U.N.R.

De Gaulle explained the Algerians the relative merits and demerits of these three options. Accordingly, if Algerians choose 'independence' there will be internal chaos and Algeria would suffer from communist domination. De Gaulle felt that total integration with France was difficult because French citizens would be reluctant to assume the financial burdens of complete integration. De Gaulle was in favour of the third alternative which was based on two principles, e.g. government of Algerians by Algerians and the other was close cooperation between France and Algeria and the French assistance to Algerians as regards economy, education and foreign policy. (4)

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(3) Ibid., p. 297.

(4) Ibid., p. 298.

Different political parties reacted differently on this offer of de Gaulle. French Communist party's stand was very ambiguous. First it criticized de Gaulle's policy. Jacques Duclos wrote that it was another "manoeuvre to gain time and mislead the U.N." (5)

When de Gaulle invited Khrushchev to France the criticism of French Communist Party was blunted. 'The Central Committee stated that the higher French bourgeoisie and its government were favourably disposed toward getting out of the war in Algeria because there was an incompatibility of interests between French capitalism and French socialism. (6)

Mouvement Republicain Populaire (MRP), approved de Gaulle's policies. Radical leaders like Francois Mitterant attacked it. The Poujadiste began to demand the overhauling of the Fifth Republic. Independents also criticized it.

De Gaulle had given many promises to the Algerians in Constantine Plan.

Algerians lost faith in France because France did not take any positive step towards the industrialization of Algeria. Plans for the utilization of Saharan energies were based on the needs of France and European Economic Community rather than Algeria. 'In any case, as the French completed the pipeline to the sea and increased production of both oil and natural gas, the Algerian leaders became more determined than ever to win independence and

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(5) Ibid., p. 298.

(6) Ibid., p. 298.

lay their hands upon the resource of their own soil'. (7)

Algerian problem was also very widely discussed in the territories of French West Africa. The opinion of French West Africa was divided on this issue. In fact, Algerian crisis placed all those territories in a difficult situation. ( )

Guy de Lusignan observes that the "propaganda of French colonial administration was sufficient enough to neutralise the opinion of tiny African nations." (8) Guinea and Ivory Coast were the two extreme poles of African opinion.

Guinea offered a recognition to the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (G.P.R.A.) Guinea also exchanged ambassadors with Algeria and sent Guinean troops to fight in Algeria. In short, the Guinean attitude was the reflection of Casablanca bloc.

On the other hand, Houphouet Boigny was the mouthpiece of France. In January 1961 Houphouet Boigny stoutly defended the French policy towards Algeria. He advocated that the Algerian problem must be solved through negotiations between France and Algerians. According to him the interference of United Nations in the affairs of France and Algeria was not necessary. Senghor also supported this stand.

The Ivory Coast's stand on the Algerian crisis was determined by enlightened self-interest. By taking a tough stance

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(7) Ibid., p. 318.

(8) Guy de Lusignan, Afrique Noire depuis l'Indépendance l'Evolution des Etat Francophones (London, 1969), p. 267.

Ivory Coast and other French West African countries would have surely lost the French economic aid and the benefit of export protection which France had given to those countries. In Sekou Toure's case it was different. Guinea was getting economic aid from East Europe and Russia so she could afford to take a hostile stand against France and other colonial powers in Africa. Guinea, therefore, insisted that referendum must be held in Algeria under the supervision of the U.N.

## II

Few ideological trends were quite evident in the late 1950s in Europe as well as in Africa. Ideas of 'unity' were getting popularized in both the continents. West European Nations like France, Britain, Belgium and Italy had indulged in intense competition till the beginning of the 20th century. The emergence of Soviet Union as a super-power and the threat of communism brought West European nations closer.

During the cold-war period the competitive spirit among the European nations was replaced by cooperative feelings. European statesman forgot the age-old rivalries for a while and began to think of coming closer, economically. In fact, Franco-German rapprochement was a turning point in European history. Eminent statesmen like de Gaulle were determined to build Europe as an independent power centre by liberating Europe from American domination.

By establishing European Coal and Steel Community, European Defense Community and European Atomic Energy Community the Europeans

had shown an inclination toward unity. European Economic Community came into being in 1958. It was the most mature attempt of Europeans towards establishing economic unity.

The Association of African States with E.E.C. made a few African states privileged. Even before the establishment of E.E.C. France had always taken special care in protecting the exports of French colonies in French market because of previous colonial connection.

After the establishment of the E.E.C. a larger market was open to the French West African commodities. An establishment of any free trade area is levying an external tariff rate applicable to all countries but in the case of French West Africa tariff structure was modified. France, instead, levied a 'preferential rate' of duty which was definitely lower than the blanket tariff rate. Thus, the goods of the French West African countries could enter the markets of the six at preferential rates of duty as a result of the reduction of the level of intra-community duties and the progressive establishment of common external tariff.

The second advantage to French African states stemmed from the establishment of an overseas development fund capitalized at 581.25 million units of account. The fund was set up to finance the development <sup>of</sup> infra-structure and social overhead capital in African States.

Britain did not associate herself with E.E.C. and ex-British colonies like Ghana and Nigeria could not get the privileges which the French colonies procured. In fact, ex-British

colonies were placed in a disadvantageous position with regard to E.E.C. which was a much larger market than Britain.

All the African nations were agricultural. All the African countries were exporters of raw materials. That is to say, their economies were competitive and E.E.C. nations only increased the competitiveness between the African nations since it was to their advantage.

Thus the association of African nations with E.E.C. undoubtedly created tensions and rivalries among them. Radical leaders like Nkrumah and Sekou Toure opposed the association of African States to E.E.C. 'They still saw colonialism in new guises and labelled European organizations formed to provide technical assistance to Africa, as well as European Common Market as 'neo-colonialist' groupings. (9)

Radical leaders in Africa of Casablanca group wanted to accelerate African unity movement. They intended to solve economic problems among African States by harmonizing economic relations. They wanted to establish African economic groupings and association of African states to E.E.C. came in their way.

The move towards 'African Unity' was hindered by French African countries who feared that any such movement would deprive them of their preferential rate of tariffs which they were enjoying with respect to a larger market of E.E.C. Thus, the association of few African nations with E.E.C. not only created rivalries but

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(9) Thompson Vincent B., Africa and Unity: The Evolution of Pan-Africanism (London, 1971), p. 163.



undoubtedly hindered the African unity movement.

After 1960 the pattern of international trade changed and European nations gained a decisive superiority over Africa. The prices of the finished products were moving upwards from 1961 and the prices of primary products were going down due to instability of commodity prices. Western technology invented substitutes for raw material. Thus Africa needed Europe but Europeans could do without the Africans.

European states were integrating six economies while African nations remained eighteen separate markets. They could neither establish customs union nor could they specialize on particular commodity in which they had special advantage.

Sekou Toure passionately criticized E.E.C. He said E.E.C. tempted French colonialists to make Africa the continent of proletariat peoples, dividing the world into white bourgeoisie and coloured proletariat. (10)

The developments in Europe and the changing relations between France and Franco-phone Africa after the establishment of E.E.C. provide a key to understand the views of radical and moderate leaders in French West Africa.

Houphouet Boigny and Senghor were the important leaders who took moderate stand on crucial issues. There was a basic difference in the thinking of moderate leaders like Houphouet Boigny and radical leaders like Sekou Toure.

"Houphouet has often stated his conviction that Africa is

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(10) James Puffy and Robert A. Manners, eds., Africa Destiny and Africa Speaks (Princeton, N.J., 1960), p. 37.

the prolongation of Europe, not of Asia, and that the unity of Africans on a continental scale is a dream impossible to realize". (11) Houphouet Boigny believed in cooperation with Europe. Ivory Coast had clearly taken pro-West stance on many international issues. While leaders like Sekou Toure openly assaulted West European colonial powers and their groupings. He had faith in Afro-Asianism. That is to say, he believed that the African and Asian nations should endeavour to solve their economic and political problems and should provide a stiff resistance to colonial powers.

"Houphouet does not believe that an African state must inevitably belong to the Afro-Asian bloc in the United Nations," holding that our sole link with the Asians is underdevelopment, and what differentiates us profoundly is that they suffer from overpopulation and we from under population". (12) He believed that Africa made progress under European colonial system.

Secondly, Houphouet was anti-communist. He did not appreciate the penetration of communist ideology in Africa. He was not in favour of taking financial aid from communist countries. On the contrary Sekou Toure due to his Marxist beliefs was certainly closer to the Communist camp and he did take material and moral support of the socialist countries. Guinea and Mali were non-aligned while Ivory Coast took a clearly hostile attitude toward communist countries. In short, Houphouet was a moderate thinker

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(11) Quoted in Virginia Thompson, "The Ivory Coast", in Gwendolen M. Carter, ed., African One Party States (New York, 1964), p. 321.

(12) Ibid., p. 321.

who believed in economic liberalism and supporting the Western Nations while Sekou Toure and Keita were militant and they championed pan-Africanism and neutralism.

### III

In 1960 Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Niger and Upper Volta were admitted in United Nations. Ivory Coast's activities and leadership was no longer confined to entente states. Houphouet aspired to become a leader of French speaking Negro-Africa.

Abidjan conference was convened by Houphouet to find out the solution for African problems in October 1960. The important issues like admission of Mauritania in U.N., the Congo crisis, common market for West African countries and Algerian conflict pictured prominently on the agenda of the conference. Senghor and Dia attended the Conference. Premier Daddah of Mauritania wanted African support in the U.N. in order to refute Moroccan claims, so he also attended the conference. Mali sent an observer. Guinea outrightly condemned the conference.

Virginia Thompson observes 'whether or not they (Guineans) were invited to Abidjan, they lost no time in condemning the prospective conference. Because of Mali's strong stand in favour of FLN and Senegal's favouring the admission of Red China to the U.N., they thought that Paris was working through Abidjan to forestall an unfavourable vote on Algeria in the General Assembly.' (13)

The communique issued by the conference indicated some

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(13) Ibid., p. 306.

substantiation of this view. On the Algerian issue in the U.N. the Abidjan powers did not vote in favour of the Afro-Asian stand. They suggested that U.N. need not supervise referendum in Algeria and that Algerian problem must be solved through direct negotiations between France and Algeria. Abidjan powers supported Mauritanian admission in U.N. They refused to condemn France for her nuclear testing in Sahara, They opposed Lumumba of the Congo. Guinea and Mali took a diametrically opposite view on these issues.

Houphouet found an area of agreement among French West African nations. It provoked like-minded Africans to meet at Brazzaville in December 1960. Mali was absent in the conference.

Brazzaville members modified the stand of the Abidjan powers on Algerian issue. They insisted that France must end the war and apply principle of self-determination in Algeria.

They believed that the African questions must be solved by Africans. "For the same reason, the Brazzaville bloc also opposed communist intervention in Africa, in both political and economic forms, and its members openly showed a distrust of Russian intervention in Congo. They declared themselves to be "obstinately dedicated to the cause of international peace." (14)

The most important achievement of Brazzaville conference was that it laid out long-term plans of economic cooperation between the twelve African nations. Brazzaville powers met in

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(14) Ibid., p. 308.

Dakar and Yaounde and chalked out a strategy for fruitful economic cooperation. Membership of the Brazzaville bloc was open to those African nations which shared their objectives. In their meetings the Brazzaville powers discussed the problems of underdevelopment, e.g. the fluctuations of prices of agricultural commodities, the problem of foreign aid and policy towards E.E.C. Thus, a coherent regional group was emerging in Africa which tried to get rid of ills of colonialism through constructive approach of solving fundamental African problems.

Casablanca bloc was another important regional group. Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Morocco and U.A.R. were the members of that bloc. These powers also intended to wipe out colonial vestiges and the underdevelopment through united action.

The independence of Ghana had an electrifying effect throughout Africa. What some had thought impossible had happened; a Negro-African government had come into being determined to assert that Africans could govern themselves. (15) Nkrumah of Ghana became the champion of Liberation movements in Africa. He declared that unless the whole continent becomes independent Ghana's independence has no meaning. He stood for the total liquidation of colonialism.

At the sixth convention of convention People's Party Nkrumah stated: "Freedom for the Gold Coast will be a fountain of inspiration from which other African colonial territories can

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(15) Thompson Vincent B., Africa and Unity: The Evolution of Pan-Africanism (London, 1971), p. 124.

draw when the time comes for them to strike for their freedom. An independent Gold Coast will encourage dependent territories in Africa to continue their struggle for freedom and independence. Our failure will damp their enthusiasm and shatter their hopes. To me, independence for the Gold Coast is meaningless unless it is linked with the total liberation of African continent. Comrade - we cannot fail! We have got to succeed. We must be prepared to face the present issue with patience and equanimity. I have always believed that greater strength lies in humility and the ultimate result will prove me to be right." (16 )

After the independence of Ghana Pan-Africanism began to take concrete shape. "The goal of pan-Africanism, namely, the crystallization of a United States of Africa, became a more serious preoccupation than it had been in the first phase." (17)

Accra Conference of 1958 was an important landmark in Africa history. It dug the foundations of Casablanca bloc, Ghana, Libya, Ethiopia, Liberia, Morocco, Tunisia, Soudan and 'United Arab Republic attended the conference. They discussed common problems and decided to support liberation movements in Africa. They were going to mobilize the world opinion against the denial of political rights and fundamental human rights to Africans.'

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(16) Kwame Nkrumah, Speech at the Sixth Anniversary Convention of the CPP of Gold Coast 1955, quoted in African Tribune, vol. 1, no. 2, Sept./Oct. 1958 issue.

(17) Thompson Vincent B. Africa and Unity: The Evolution of Pan-Africanism (London, 1971), p. 127.

When Guinea became independent in 1958 Ghana entered into a union with Guinea and offered her a financial assistance, Nkrumah could befriend the first French speaking African nation which deviated from French sphere of influence. Sekou Toure of Guinea and Nkrumah of Ghana were equally radical and militant. Later on Mali of Modibo Keita also joined them and Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union came into existence. The other radical and militant nations were Algeria and United Arab Republic. They constituted Casablanca bloc.

Revolutionary leaders like Nkrumah, Sekou Toure, Modibo Keita and Nasser of Casablanca bloc were determined to endeavour for the unification of Africa. They seldom missed an opportunity to condemn colonialism and racism.

On the Algerian issue and Congo crisis, Casablanca powers took an opposite stand to Brazzaville group. Nations like Guinea wholeheartedly supported the liberation struggle in Algeria. They supported Patrice Lumumba of Congo and denounced colonialist intervention in Congo. They opposed the minority racist regime of 'whites' in South Africa. They supported the African National Congress which was fighting against apartheid.

Casablanca powers were not allergic to communist nations. The nations like Ghana, Guinea and U.A.R. had close relations with Soviet Union. They received financial assistance from Soviet Union. They have sided with the communist camp in U.N. They preferred cooperation with Asia to Europe.

Casablanca bloc was comparatively weaker than Brazzaville

bloc. All the French speaking nations excepting Guinea and Mali were in Brazzaville group. Brazzaville powers getting aid from West European nations for their projects. Casablanca powers like Guinea or Mali were getting less aid from Western powers.

Brazzaville powers were militarily and economically dependent on Western powers. For example, military pacts were signed between France and French speaking African nations when they attained independence Britain also signed military pact with Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

Casablanca powers were against neo-colonialism. They repudiated all forms of foreign control in the shape of old imperialism or the subtler, neo-colonialism whose features were financial and diplomatic control and the 'balkanization' of large territories into units which by themselves were easily vulnerable. (18) Nkrumah once said that French states are tools of neo-colonialism both in allowing language barriers imposed by imperialism to determine their alignment and in the degree to which they have remained tied to France financially or otherwise. (19)

Although unification of Africa was a supreme objective of Casablanca powers it was difficult to achieve. Emerson observes: 'The characteristic problem confronting anyone who seeks to establish the political shape of Africa South of Sahara is that there are no natural communities or political entities,

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(18) Ibid., p. 169.

(19) Rupert Emerson, "Pan-Africanism", International Organization (Boston), vol. XVI, 1962, p. 280.



between the smallest and the most typical expression of African community, the tribe at one extreme, and the whole of the African continent at the other. (20)

In short, moderate African thinkers and revolutionary African thinkers formed their own groups in early sixties and tried to build African societies according to their own ideas.

#### IV

At this point a brief study of certain economic organizations like Entente states and Union Africaine et Malgache is essential. It would not only help us to understand intra-African relations but it would also throw light on some aspects of French policy.

Initially Council of Entente was established in order to counter-weight the influence of Mali Federation in French West Africa. Houphouët Boigny was its undisputed leader. The other members of entente were Dahomey, Upper Volta and Niger. These four states were geographically contiguous. Houphouët was not critical about French policies and other entente states were weak. So France did not see any reason to oppose the formation of such Council.

Houphouët explained the concept of entente in April 1959. He said: "It would be the getting together of the premiers of each state, assisted by such of their ministers who deal with affairs

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(20) Ibid., p. 276.

common to all members and the presidents and vice-presidents of their legislative assemblies. The Council of the Entente would meet successively in the capital of each state under the chairmanship of that state's prime minister. Decisions would be made either unanimously or by majority of vote, and these decisions would have an executive character. In case of grave conflict we would take our case to the community court of arbitration. As to the solidarity fund, each state belonging to the Entente would pay into it one tenth of its revenues. A fifth of this fund would be placed in a reserve fund that could serve for example, to guarantee loans to each state for some project of concern to it. (21)

When Mali became independent Houphouet announced that Entente states would seek independence from France and then join U.N. France accepted these proposals in June 1960. In August 1960 entente states achieved independence. France sponsored their names for the membership of United Nations and security council approved their membership. Entente states became sovereign independent nations and their admission in U.N. gave a great advantage to France because it could rely on their votes in the General Assembly.

U.A.M. was established at Yaonde in March 1961. Its members were Senegal, Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Niger, Dahomey, Upper Volta, Gabon, Chad, Central African Republic, the Congo Republic, and

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(21) Virginia Thompson, n. 11, p. 247.

Madagascar, U.A.M. is not a supra-national organization. The principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of member states of U.A.M. Constitution are influenced by Houphouet Boigny's thinking.

Since 1961 U.A.M. began to move steadily towards its establish goals. At Yaounde the company named Air-Afrique was established; the participants discussed the problem of establishing customs union in Africa. In Tananarive in September 1961 defence pact was signed which supplemented the defence agreements that most of the U.A.M.'s members had made with France. Cotonou became the administrative headquarters of the U.A.M.

U.A.M. suggested that there should be cooperation between Algeria and France for the exploitation of Sahara wealth. UAM condemned Russia's veto in Mauritania's admission to U.N. Britain's application in E.L.C. was praised. The U.A.M. nations were against the acceleration of cold war. They made distinction between colonial powers, like France and Britain on the one hand and Portugal, Spain and South Africa on the other. They denounced the policies of Portugal, Spain and South Africa.

The Conference of Monrovia was held due to U.A.M.'s initiative in May 1961. Twenty nations were invited. It was a gathering of English-speaking and French-speaking African countries. The delegates registered a very mild protest against the nuclear testing by France in Sahara. The Conference did not support F.L.N. of Algeria whole-heartedly. The nations of Monrovia bloc were Nigeria, Togo, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Liberia, Tunisia

and U.A.M. members.

Fonds d'investissement pour le developpement economique et social des territoires d'outre Mer (F.I.D.E.S.) was a tool of French government which helped France in developing infrastructure in the African colonies. The Fund was appropriated annually by the French Parliament to pay for scheme already approved in advance. From 1947 to 1958, the total sum of \$2,146,000,000 was appropriated and spent of which 46 per cent went to French West Africa. (22)

The FIDES was criticized in Africa and France. French taxpayers attacked the FIDES. They felt that France could have used the same money for the domestic development. They believed that France was wasting her funds on Abidjan's paper mill and Richard Toll's mechanized rice culture. (23)

Africans also attacked it. They felt that industrialization of Africa and end of French monopoly were urgent issues. They emphasized the need of greater production of consumer goods in Africa to meet the need of domestic markets. According to them the FIDES was only beneficial to French businessmen and industrialists.

"Large and visible public works which redounded to the prestige of France and of French industry were given priority over

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(22) Easton Stewart C., The Twilight of European Colonialism (New York, 1960), p. 348.

(23) Adoloff Richard, West Africa: The French Speaking Nations (New York, 1967), p. 247.

smaller and more useful schemes. It was also pointed out that too much of money was wasted in higher salaries and expatriate officials which was never reinvested in Africa but which used to go back to France. Thus Frenchmen as well as Africans reacted violently to FIDES. (24)

## V

The process of transfer of power in French West Africa started from September 1958. By refusing to join the community Guinea inaugurated it. Due to insistence of Modibo Keita and Senghor Mali attained independence in 1960. Entente states also negotiated with France and liberated themselves from French rule.

From French point of view the achievement of independence by African states was beneficial as well as harmful. France gained certain economic, political and military advantages.

The most important economic advantage was French investment in Ivory Coast and entente states was welcomed. Secondly, raw material of entente states was available for France. France could think of exercising control over policies of these nations through economic influence. France could use important ports like Abidjan and markets in entente states were open for her exports.

Politically speaking, France could rely on the support of entente states in United Nations. Houphouet Boigny of Ivory Coast was against the then existing trends like 'Afro-Asian Solid-

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(24) Ibid., p. 349.

arity'. He believed in Euro-African cooperation. France saw in Ivory Coast a bastion of anti-communism in Africa.

The defence system of African nations were not developed when they attained independence. They had to depend upon French military. France signed military accords with all French speaking West African states excepting Guinea and Mali.

The transfer of power in France gave a blow to French prestige. It was also politically disadvantageous for France. When France was governing West African territories there was some kind of uniformity and French administrators and leaders could control the domestic as well as external matters of the colonized powers. After the attainment of independence ideas like 'Africanization of civil service' were in the air which definitely threatened the status of French settlers abroad.

Secondly, France of 1960 was allied with the so-called democratic forces. French West Africa was totally <sup>under</sup> her influence. When Franco-Guinean relations worsened Russia and East European communist nations entered her sphere of influence by giving aid to Guinea. Guinea emerged as an opponent of France and so-called democratic forces.

Thirdly, the radical forces of Africa clubbed together under the umbrella of Pan-Africanism and denounced the French policies in Algeria and Sahara region.

France also suffered militarily. Mali got economic aid from Russia, Yugoslavia, China, America, West Germany and Egypt. Her dependence on France decreased and Malians demanded the withdrawal of French troops from their soil. The monopoly of French

influence in Africa was replaced by multilateral influence and France lost her prestige.

## VI

When French West African territories became sovereign independent nations their political dynamics and orientation of foreign policies differed widely. The endless process of nation-building began. The character of leadership in newly emerging nations was different.

In the one-party states the party had ideology and the process of ideology formation was clearly visible in Guinea. (25) Sekou Toure largely shaped it. He was an active worker of confederation General du Travail (C.G.T.) which was communist oriented labour organization.

He believed that if at all a state progresses it can only progress with one party having precise ideology. He thought that opposition parties instead of playing constructive role hinder the progress of the nation. He observed that there is natural trend towards unity in Africa. He said, "We must know that our political task now goes beyond the borders of Guinea. Our party becomes that of all Africans who love justice and freedom." (26)

According to him the Guinean society was not divided between social classes whose interests were different. Zolberg an

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(25) Zolburg Aristide K., Creating Political Order: The Party States of West Africa (Princeton, N.J., 1967), p. 43.

(26) / Quoted in Ibid., p. 46.

American political scientist while commenting on one party structures in Africa says: "The people are one; acting through the party, which directs the state, they build the nation. The party is the basis of the legitimacy of all other institutions; ultimately it is the people, it is nation. Therefore it must be one."(27) Parti Democratique du Guinee dominated the life of Guinean society.

In Mali Union Soudanaise was the dominant party. It was 'mass' party. Modibo Keita led it. The guiding principles of the party were collective leadership, organization, and discipline. (28) In Ivory Coast the Parti Democratique de la Cote d'Ivoire (P.D.C.I.) emerged as the strongest party. P.D.C.I. achieved political monopoly. Houphouet Boigny was a pragmatic leader. He built a strong party structure and popularized his party in the country. Unity was achieved. There was no opposition.

Union Progressiste Senigalaise (U.P.S.) emerged as the strongest party under Senghor in Senegal. The powers of the President in Senegal are not quasi-dictatorial like Guinea. Senegal's concept of democratic centralism was different from Guinea. (29) The deputies of U.P.S. did not support the party leadership blindly. In Guinea, Sekou Toure was head and shoulder above his contemporaries but in Senegal Mamadou Dia and Lamine Gueye were equally popular.

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(27) Ibid., p. 46.

(28) Foltz, W. J., From French West Africa to Mali Federation (London, 1965), p. 124.

(29) Milcent Ernest, "Senegal", translation in Carter G. M., ed., African One Party States (New York, 1964), p. 124.



Senghor and Boigny were prepared to accept the pluralist political model. For example Opposition parties like P.R.A. Senegal, Parti Africain de l'Indépendance and Bloc des Masses Senegalaise very much existed in Senegal. Sekou Toure insisted on monistic model.

Foreign policies of the newly born African states can be classified in two groups. One group was composed of Guinea and Mali. It was not precisely hostile to France but it certainly wanted to establish good relations with the developed countries beside France. It supported F.L.N. of Algeria actively. It also supported movements in Angola and denounced South Africa. Mali was particularly interested in wiping out French military bases from her soil. The leaders of Guinea and Mali had socialistic ideas and they stood for Afro-Asian cooperation.

The other group was composed of moderate states like the Ivory Coast and Senegal. They desired to cooperate with France. They preached economic liberalism. They took pro-West stand on many issues. Their criticism of France lacked sharpness. They were primarily interested in economic development of their countries through French aid and E.E.C. funds.

France had to modify her policies towards Africa according to the changed circumstances. In 1961 France showed special interest in promoting her friendship with Ivory Coast and entente states which had supported her during Algerian crisis. Relations between the two countries (Ivory Coast and France) late in 1961 reached a new pitch of cordiality, and the August celebrations of Ivory Coast's independence seemed indeed to inaugurate a second

Franco-Ivoirien honeymoon, following a brief estrangement between the two countries.' (30)

France also harmonized her relations with Senegal. She retained her military bases of Dakar and Thies. Senegal remained in Franc zone. Senegal did not condemn common market and French nuclear testing in Sahara. French influence in Niger, Upper Volta and Mauritania remained because these nations were comparatively backward.

France's relations with Guinea and Mali were not cordial because they tried to deviate from French sphere of influence and assert themselves.

Thus, one can see the magnitude of influence which Algeria exercised on French African policy. This was also the period when European as well as African unity movements began to take concrete forms. The emergence of sovereign nations in French Africa with their own characteristics and foreign policies and the changing attitudes of France towards her ex colonies make a fascinating study.

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(30) Virginia Thompson, n. 11, p. 319.

## CONCLUSION

## CONCLUSION

The last four years of the French rule in French speaking West Africa is interesting phenomenon from the point of view of historians, political scientists and economists. The different dynamic events and dramatic developments like Algerian crisis and the downfall of Fourth Republic have not only influenced French and African politics but have undoubtedly decided the fate of French colonial rule in Africa.

Assimilation was one of the important tenets of French philosophy of governing overseas territories. The French colonialists were dreaming of transforming a 'blackman' into a 'Frenchman'. The total integration of French West Africa with France was their major goal. Republic one and indivisible was the popular notion which governed the minds of the rulers.

In order to carry out the policy of assimilation successfully the French rulers were following a well defined path. Excessive centralization of powers in Paris, the introduction of French language in the African educational system and the double college electoral system were the vital and effective instruments of French rulers in exercising total control over Africa and pushing the Africans towards the desired goal, that is 'assimilation'.

The drastic transformation in the concept of French rule took place when loi-cadre reforms were passed by French National Assembly in June 1956. Decentralization was at the heart of loi-cadre reforms. The reforms provided a territorial framework to the African states and political parties. Instead of developing

as constituents of French empire the units fell apart. The grant of universal suffrage to the African population made a noticeable change in the political process of French West Africa.

By participating in Council of Government and territorial assemblies Africans began to manage their own affairs and enjoyed considerable degree of local autonomy.

One valid question arises here. Was independence truly a negation of French policy? If so, then why were such reforms introduced?

Till 1956, France was certainly against the idea of 'independence' for African states. Domestic compulsions, the then trends in international politics and persistent African demands for the larger participation in assemblies and executive bodies compelled France to introduce reforms.

The government of France under the Fourth Republic badly lacked stability. The multiplicity of political parties made the national assembly fragmented and disorganized. The communists and the pujadistes were continuously criticizing the official policies. The support of the African deputies was necessary for Mollet government.

The trends in international politics of those days were changing in favour of developing countries. Tunisia and Morocco liberated themselves from French rule. France's policies in Indo-China failed miserably. Togo and Cameroun attained the status of self-governing states with the help of United Nations. Front de la Liberation Nationale in Algeria under the leadership of Ferhat Abbas was confronting French rulers with increasing

strength.

Lastly, African interterritorial parties like Rassemblement Democratique Africain (RDA) Movement Socialiste Africain (M.S.A.) and Convention Africaine were making the African masses vigilant. The African population's opinion was against the excessive control of France in Africa.

French rulers had learnt a lot through their miserable experiences in Algeria, Indo-China and Madagascar. They never wanted to lose the colonies in French West Africa. France did concede to certain demands of Africans but one can say 'liocadre reforms' was a novel device of perpetuating the French colonial rule. Six important state services were controlled by France and High Commissioner was vested with tremendous executive, legislative and judicial powers.

The second attempt of the French rulers of continuing the French rule in West Africa was evident when Franco-African community was established. Once again, important powers like foreign policy and defence policy were retained by the metropolitan power. The grand edifice of French colonial empire was shaken for the first time when Guinea refused to join the community and de Gaulle's efforts of affiliating all the French West African states to community resulted in frustration.

The process of decolonization started in French West Africa. The most interesting fact is that the process was extremely peaceful and constitutional. Guinea's 'no' in the referendum of 1958 was also a constitutional act.

There are few reasons for the peaceful transformation of powers in French West Africa. Firstly, France was pre-occupied with Algerian problem. French military was busy in suppressing the rebels in Algeria. French rulers might not have desired another source of tension which would have augmented the problems of French foreign policy and would have placed additional burden on French economy and military.

Secondly, de Gaulle had promised that a country which does not wish to join community was free to declare herself as independent nation. When Guinea refused to join community it was a matter of personal prestige for de Gaulle and he allowed Guinea to become independent.

De Gaulle always believed that French West African states were incapable of running their governments independently. De Gaulle did desire to control all the states including Guinea. He stopped the flow of French economic aid to Guinea. What is more, he threatened United States and announced that if United States would recognize Guinea France would withdraw from NATO! He might have thought that isolated Guinea would return to the community. Thus, he was busy in creating difficulties which would have impeded the progress of Guinea.

The transfer of powers as regards the Mali Federation and entente states was also peaceful. Community proved to be flexible. Guinea's withdrawal from the community made France aware of the fact that super-power like Soviet Union could also infiltrate in her sphere of influence. Since French interest were

involved in Africa, France never wanted to break off totally with remaining African states. Through peaceful negotiations France retained her military bases in Africa and granted Africans independence.

What kind of independence was attained by African states? The concept of independence is very complex in the modern world. Broadly one can say an independent country is one which is militarily and economically less dependent on other countries and which expresses its aspirations and opinions freely, that is to say, the foreign policy of independent nation is not dictated by other powers.

When French speaking West African states attained independence they lacked national armed forces. They needed French help in order to develop the army. France signed treaties with these nations in 1960. Guinea and Mali did not participate in French security schemes.

France signed treaties with Ivory Coast, Niger and Dahomey. France had bilateral accords with Senegal and Mauritania. Upper Volta declined to participate in the system and prevented France from stationing her troops.

France could interfere in the political affairs of these countries through accords. There was one clause in the accords which allowed France to send army in order to defend the constitutions and law and order in those nations.

Till 1960 West African States except Guinea, exclusively received financial aid from France. Even after independence those



countries were linked with the Franc zone. France provided a considerable amount of aid to African countries for their development programmes. Besides that the association of African States to E.E.C. made them all the more dependent on France.

Economic and military dependence of African countries on France and gave France a bargaining position and she could to certain extent, dictate the foreign policies of African nations. For example, French West Africans did not criticize the French nuclear testing in Sahara and violence of French army in Algeria. France could retain her military bases in Dakar, and Thies. The proliferation of French teachers, doctors, lawyers and technicians as well as use of French language in these countries made the French presence obvious.

To conclude, France exercised considerable economic, political and military influence in the countries of French West Africa even after independence. Excepting Guinea all other states were supporting French policies. The tremendous economic aid, the political involvement and military agreements between France and West African nations, in a way, suggested that community died in its pure form but it began to live in another manner.

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