Chapter II

BEGINNING OF INTERDEPENDENCE
Chapter II

BEGINNING OF INTERDEPENDENCE

The post Second World War period was characterized by four important changes affecting the structures of French West African societies. In general, these societies were overwhelmingly based on peasant economies. Relatively, the peasant population was larger in Niger 97 per cent, followed by Upper Volta 96 per cent and Soudan 94 per cent. The peasants constituted a majority also in the Ivory Coast and Senegal but the post-war years witnessed some kind of industrialization in these latter territories. Several small scale industries such as textile, paper/soap were installed. These industries provided new avenues of employment to the population.

The second change was witnessed in the growth of urban centres such as Dakar and Abidjan. For example, the urban population of Abidjan rose from 25,000 in 1920 to 160,000 in 1950. P.F. Gonidec, a political scientist, asserted that the flood of population from the rural to the urban areas


3 In contrast there was hardly any industrial development in Dahomey, Niger, Upper Volta and Soudan. During 1942 to 1949, 33 and 46 industrial establishments came up in the Ivory Coast and Senegal respectively as against Dahomey, Niger and Upper Volta where one industrial establishment came up in each country while Soudan had five industries. Ibid.

accelerated the imbalance between the cities and villages. Further, there was a conspicuous numerical growth of immigrant workers and peasants in relatively prosperous territories. In 1956 approximately 60,000 Mossi workers from Upper Volta were employed in cocoa and coffee fields owned by the Ivorian Africans, 8,000 of them were working in coffee, cocoa, pineapple and banana fields owned by the Europeans, and 10,000 were working in the European owned forests.

With such massive immigration, the structures of peasant societies also underwent a number of changes. Reymond Barbe, a political sociologist, asserted that the vital effect of immigration was that a peasant ceased to be prisoner of his own tribe and that with enlarged and widening horizon he began comprehending the social realities in Africa.

Further, the modifications in socio-political structures posed challenges to the position of the chieftains in French West Africa. According to Jacques Lombard, the threat to the

6 Barbe, n. 1, p. 18.
7 Ibid., p. 25.
8 The attitude of the African population towards chieftains varied from region to region. Jacques Lombard observed in his famous work Autorites Traditionelles et Pouvoirs Européens en Afrique Noire that in some places the chief was regarded as a major source of unity and he symbolised opposition to the foreign domination. But most of the times the chiefs outrightly indulged in close co-operation with the colonial power and proved themselves to be effective instruments of foreign rule while implementing inhuman conditions like 'forced labour' or heavy taxation. They symbolised the triumph of colonial ideas. Jacques Lombard rightly called them 'le valet du colonialisme'. See Jacques Lombard, Autorites Traditionelles et Pouvoirs Européens en Afrique Noire (Paris, 1967), p. 211.
position of chiefs became sharper due to an increasing politicization of the rural population. This change reached all levels of local organizations. The African leaders of all levels began to debate the position of the chiefs. In 1947, the bureau of the French National Assembly issued a circular through the Ministry of Overseas France to seek the opinions of governors and territorial assemblies of Africa regarding the chieftains. The issue was discussed in the French Parliament from 1949 to 1953. Broadly, there were two different groups in the French Parliament which looked at the chieftains through different angles. The traditionalists regarded chieftainship a symbol of African civilization. Secondly, there was a group of progressive leaders in the Socialist Party of France (Section Francaise International Ouvriere) which visualized the disappearance of the chiefly institution. Some African leaders, such as Sekou Toure supported this group.

Another important change in social structure was the emergence of educated elite in West Africa. Elite formation was facilitated with the spread of education in French West

9 Ibid., p. 212.


11 While defining the term 'elite' in the African context, P.C. Lloyd wrote, "The term 'elite', used so commonly today, is convenient because it suggests the superior status of its members; it connotes, too, positions of influence which the educated African certainly holds in redefining traditional values. Furthermore, an elite is thought of as an open group, access to which is not restricted by birth or family antecedents - and the present West African elites have certainly recruited their members widely." P.C. Lloyd, Africa in Social Change (London, 1967), p. 136.
Africa and with the opening of advanced centres of learning such as Ecole Normale William Ponty, Saint Louis and Ecole de Medicine of Dakar. Senegal and Dahomey produced the largest number of graduates in West Africa. From 1925 to 1928, 38 and 25 per cent graduates came from Senegal and Dahomey as against 9 per cent from the Ivory Coast, 12 per cent from Guinea and 10 per cent from Soudan. The Dahomeans with their advanced education were able to get lower civil service or clerical posts in other countries of West Africa. The lack of educated people in the Ivory Coast worked to the advantage of the Dahomeans. Even the small number of educated Ivorians had to compete with the Dahomeans who had settled down in their territory.

In general the emergence of educated elite in French West Africa also made its influence felt in the political sphere. This was so because, in the absence of large scale industrialization educated Africans could only get employment in the government services. Such jobs were small in number. This created problems for the new elite. On the one hand, they failed to get respectable position in the colonial set up, and on the other hand those who got such position became alienated from the indigenous African population. Immanuel Wallerstein, an Africanist, observed: "The small group of individuals who were termed intellectuals (or elite) in West Africa faced frustrating conditions. Systematically trained in European values, they were specialised to anticipate career patterns,

\[\text{M.E. Amos Djoro, "Reflexions sur la vie politique en Cote D'Ivoire", Association Francaise de Science Politique-Table Ronde (Paris), March 1959, p. 11.}\]
which they were not permitted to fulfill.

Against the background of above political and social circumstances in French West Africa, it becomes easier to understand the emergence of pressure groups, formation of political parties at the territorial and interterritorial level. Since eight constituent West African states developed simultaneously, in the framework of French Union, it is difficult to make an isolated case study of the development of political parties in the Ivory Coast.

The establishment of a political organization in the Ivory Coast under the colonial rule of France was a difficult task. This was so because of the diversity of the population which was composed of sixty disparate ethnic groups. Some of these groups found their social and cultural affinity beyond the borders of the Ivory Coast. Secondly, the existence of Islam and Christianity as also the uneven development of the Southern and Northern region added to the complexities of Ivorian social life. Above all because of the French policy of encouraging French settlements the differences in the indigenous population as based on tribal and ethnic affiliations became more aggravated.

Despite this, a group of Ivorian planters came to share common concerns as they began facing new difficulties under the French system. The fluctuation in the prices of their commodities affected these planters severely. There was also the fact that the same commodity found different prices if it

---

was produced by the European planters. European planters got 4.50 Francs C.F.A. for one kilo of cocoa while an African planter got 2.60 Francs C.F.A. for the same amount. It was estimated that European planters owned roughly one third of cocoa trees and even larger proportions of coffee trees. After the Second World War competition between the European and African producers increased. The latter sought to establish an economic organization to safeguard their interests as planters. Thus, in 1944 the Syndicat Agricole Africain (S.A.A.) was established.

The major architects of the S.A.A. were Houphouët Boigny and Auguste Denise. Both of them were rich planters. The S.A.A. was led by rich planters who were small in number. According to 1956 estimates 74 per cent of the Ivorian population had less than 5 hectares of cultivable land and only 10 per cent controlled more than 10 hectares. It is important to note that the S.A.A. was dominated by two major ethnic groups namely,


16 In the process, African planters were not only forced to abandon their plantations because of the lack of manpower but were themselves recruited for work on European plantations. A.R. Zolberg, One Party Government in the Ivory Coast (Princeton, 1964), p. 61.

Agnin and Baole, which were comparatively in a better financial position than other ethnic groups of the Ivory Coast.

Houphouët Boigny tried to widen the base of the S.A.A. by associating relatively poorer farmers with it. Thus, those who owned two hectares of coffee or three hectares of cocoa also joined it and yet sizable Ivorian population remained the victim of forced labour.

The S.A.A. paved the way for the establishment of Parti Democratique de la Cote D'Ivoire (P.D.C.I. 1946). The P.D.C.I. championed the cause of the Africans in its manifesto. It advocated greater control of the administration by Africans; extension of suffrage, and elimination of the system of dual college; and the practice of forced labour. It also demanded a radical revision in the taxation system. P.D.C.I. was not fighting for the Ivorian independence, on the contrary, it fully supported the Franco-African community based on the principle of equality. P.D.C.I. programme was essentially reformist in the sense it strove to improve the position of Africans within the framework of French Union.

Though it was the aim of the P.D.C.I. to defend the interests of the African planters, it championed at the same time, the cause of the socially downtrodden population. These

18 Barbe, n. 1, p. 37.


Houphouët succeeded in grouping roughly 200,000 members for the S.A.A.
two aspects appear contradictory. The P.D.C.I. could take roots because the main focus of its attack was the alien population which enjoyed extraordinary privileges; but in order to gain strength it had to depend on the support of the broader masses.

The P.D.C.I. also gained strength because by this time the French colonial rule had become reconciled to the emergence of political parties in West Africa. French reverses elsewhere such as massacres in Algeria in 1945, armed struggle in Vietnam and rebellion in Madagascar had all led to a change in French colonial policies. Besides, in French West Africa, many African leaders were putting forward the idea of Franco-African co-operation or development of the colonies within the framework of the French Union. Such attitudes not only appeased the French rulers but also it convinced them that as a metropolitan power France could still regulate the functioning of African parties. Hence, instead of preventing, they encouraged the growth of political parties in Africa.

Birth of R.D.A. (1946)

It was this encouragement that gave birth to one major interterritorial party called the Rassemblement Democratique Africain (R.D.A.). The programme of the R.D.A. was more or less an extension of the P.D.C.I. programme. It opposed the exploitation of the blackman by the white and advocated equality of rights in all spheres. It also stood for


effective representation of Africans in the metropolitan assemblies and the abolition of the dual college system. As its Secretary-General, D'Arboussier, stated in 1948 that the R.D.A. "demanded the right of the elected representatives to control and administer the affairs of the country, the right which can only be exercised through political activities". He further stated that the R.D.A. aimed at the emancipation of different African countries from the yoke of colonialism by affirming their political, economic, social, and cultural personality. D'Arboussier spoke of the alliance of the proletarians and the masses colonised by the capitalist imperialism and talked of the "possibility of realising such alliance within the framework of the French Union".

The new party elected Houphouet Boigny as the first president of the co-ordination committee and Philippe Yace as the first secretary general. These two Ivorian leaders took a leading part in formulating the guidelines and the programme of the party. Further, Houphouet Boigny used the R.D.A. as a means to promoting a dialogue between the Ivory Coast and the metropolitan power.

22 Ibid., p. 71.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid., p. 61.
25 In no time the R.D.A. became the dominant party of Francophone Africa. It was particularly strong in the Ivory Coast, Guinea, and Soudan. In other parts of West Africa, especially in Senegal, there were groups led by Senghor and Lamine Gueye who lacked mass base but their representatives were more in parliamentary bodies because of their intelligent manoeuvrings with the metropolitan

...contd. on next page
Since French Africa was evolving within the framework of the French Union, co-operation between the metropolitan and the African parties became inevitable. Also, since African representatives were to be elected to the French National Assembly, the political parties in France entered the African scene with a view of gaining the support of the African voters. On the other hand, the African leaders also needed support of the metropolitan parties in order to attain their political goals. Thus, objective historical circumstances helped forging co-operation between the metropolitan and the African parties. A brief survey of the post-war developments of France would help to illustrate this fact. In 1946, the French Communist Party (P.C.F.) emerged as one of the strongest political parties with 180 seats in French Assembly. Its leader Maurice Thorez vehemently opposed the United States and supported the Soviet Union.

Yves Benot, an Africanist, believed that there were two distinct approaches followed by Africans to attain independence. One was feudal (R.D.A. had a feudal base) and the other was modern, both of them seemed contradictory and their combination created new distortions in the colonized society which put formidable obstacles in the path of independence. Yves Benot, *Ideologies des indépendances africaines* (Paris, 1974), p. 66.

P.C.F. opposed the interference of United States through Marshall aid programme or through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Thorez saw no reason in antagonizing the Soviet Union. The Bureau Politique of the P.C.F. congratulated the Soviet Union and other popular democracies of Europe for their recognition to the democratic Republic of Vietnam since it believed that it was a great political act which respected liberty, national independence and legitimate aspirations of the people. See *Le Monde* (Paris), 29 November 1948; also *L'Humanité* (Paris), 12 November 1948.
The P.C.F. took keen interest in the political development of French Africa. Its leaders tried to introduce the communist ideology to Africans through various study groups. In 1946, the P.C.F. members attended the Bamako Conference and thus associated themselves with the birth of the R.D.A. Raymond Barbe, the communist theoretician, laid down the role of communist study groups _vis-a-vis_ R.D.A. Barbe was not organizing the African branch of Communist Party through R.D.A., he intended to "organize all classes in French Black Africa in a wide mass movement that would carry on a fight against local manifestation of imperialism". In 1948, Barbe and D'Arboussier went on tour of French West Africa and stressed Africa's solidarity with the revolutionary movements of the world and praised the struggle of the Vietminh and of the Malgache 'victims of imperialism'.

The second significant party was the Movement Republicain Populaire (M.R.P.) which had 150 seats in the French Assembly. It was primarily organized to wipe out communist influence from French politics. To promote the French national interest, it established a branch in the Ivory Coast and also collaborated with Union Voltaique of the Upper Volta.

Thirdly, there was the Section Francaise de l'Internationale Ouvriere (S.F.I.O.), a socialist party with 143 seats. S.F.I.O. was functioning and shaping well in Senegal by collaborating with the Movement Socialiste Africain (M.S.A.). Finally, there was the Union Democratique et Socialiste de la

28 Ibid., pp. 85, 86.
Resistance (U.D.S.R.) with 21 members.

While the French political parties were trying to penetrate the African colonies, African participation in the metropolitan bodies paved the way for a two-way traffic. In its early phase the R.D.A. collaborated with the French Communist Party (P.C.F.). The latter taught the R.D.A. leaders the techniques of propaganda and helped them to establish party branches from territorial and interterritorial level.

The reasons behind the collaboration between the R.D.A. and the P.C.F. were obvious. The French communists thought that without the liquidation of French empire they could not put an end to the capitalist system itself. Secondly, they regarded the African nationalists as natural allies of the French workers. As far as the Africans were concerned, their alliance with the communist party was based on pragmatic considerations. The R.D.A. was fighting French colonialism. It upheld the ideas of racial equality, autonomy and greater participation of indigenous population in the territorial administration of the colonies. The R.D.A. leaders needed the support of the P.C.F. to organize an effective movement.

29 The 1946 election to the French Parliament provided R.D.A. an opportunity to prove its strength. Eighteen R.D.A. men were elected. Out of them six were deputies of the National Assembly, five senators of the Council of Republic and seven councillors of the French Union.

30 Despite internal clashes regarding the collaboration with the French Communist Party (P.C.F.), Houphouet Boigny, an unchallenged Ivorian leader of the R.D.A., unhesitatingly welcomed the co-operation with the P.C.F. Reymond Barbe, a marxist theoretician and an eminent leader of the P.C.F. of the times, and Gabriel D'Arboussier were largely responsible for shaping the ideology of R.D.A.
which could popularise its ideas in West Africa. The proposals and resolutions of the R.D.A. received support from the P.C.F. Yet, it made it a point to distinguish itself from the communists. As Houphouet stated:

It is correct to say that we are connected with the Communist Party, but that does not mean that we are communist. Is it likely that I, Houphouet, a traditional chief, an African doctor, a big landowner, and a Catholic, should be a communist? But our connection with the Communist party is valuable to us, in that we have found in it a French parliamentary group that welcomed us in a friendly fashion, while others paid no attention to us. And with them (Communists) we have been able to carry out plans dear to us. Each time that we, the R.D.A., work towards a project, we can count on the 183 votes of the Communist Party. If in exchange we loan our votes to the Communist group, what is that to us? Whether France is governed by one group or another, it can disinterest itself from Africa. So we can see no reason why the representatives of the Ivory Coast should regret this connection. 31

On the other hand, Houphouet Boigny antagonized the French administration by joining hands with the P.C.F. The election of 1961 proved to be disastrous for the R.D.A.

31 Quoted in Thompson and Adloff, n. 27, p. 87.

32 The position of R.D.A. was comparatively weaker in Senegal, Niger and Upper Volta. Leopold Sedar Senghor organized his own party called Independent d'Outre-Mer (I.O.M.). It represented a group of liberals and moderate parliamentarians. I.O.M. lacked a strong political organization and a wide base like the R.D.A. But it could, with the co-operation of French Government, win more seats than the R.D.A. in June 1951 elections of the French National Assembly. The Movement Socialiste Africain (M.S.A.), a socialist group was in alliance with the French S.F.I.Q. At this point it could be worthwhile to go through one table to assess the position of the R.D.A. in three elections vis-à-vis other interterritorial parties.

... contd. on next page
The table shows that the I.O.M. members were greater in number than the R.D.A. and M.S.A., in the first legislature.

The effect of the collaboration between the R.D.A. and the P.C.F. is evident in the figures of the second legislature. R.D.A. lost 2 seats. On the contrary the deputies of M.S.A.-S.F.I.O. and the I.O.M., were more in number and they participated actively in the functioning of the Assembly. Thus, the alliance with the P.C.F. neutralized the strength of the R.D.A. movement. Hence leaders like Houphouet and others took steps to break off ties with the P.C.F. On 19 October 1950, Houphouet Boigny issued a statement in French Parliament stating that all the elected representatives of the R.D.A. should keep in mind that

---

Table 1

**Propositions of Laws and Resolutions by African Deputies in the National Assembly**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of Deputies</th>
<th>Proposition of Resolutions</th>
<th>Proposition of Laws</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Legislature (1946)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.D.A.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist M.S.A.-S.F.I.O.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.O.M.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Legislature (1951)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.D.A.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.S.A.-S.F.I.O.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.O.M.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third Legislature (1956)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.D.A.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.S.A.-S.F.I.O.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.O.M.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the interest of Africa is supreme and that R.D.A. will cooperate with any French parliamentary group as long as it serves the African interests well.

Houphouet Boigny's stand was not accepted by all. Gabriel D'Arboussier, Secretary-General of the R.D.A., supported the co-operation of P.C.F. as an important condition for serving the interests of the African people. But D'Arboussier could not carry the party with him. The R.D.A. was not a party based on Marxist-Leninist ideology. Thus, after 1951 R.D.A. broke off formally with the P.C.F. The aims of the R.D.A. members were also contradictory at times. Such inherent contradictions in the R.D.A. left ample room for the French to play off one political group against another. This point was well described by Sekou Toure, a leader of the R.D.A. in Guinea. According to him, "RDA was revolutionary in that it was the first movement to be organized and had a structure opposed to the essence of colonialism", but, he asserted that, "the RDA carried also in itself, from its birth, its own condemnation, it was deliberately integrated into the French system".

33 Quoted in Benot, n. 25, p. 73.


35 At this time, Houphouet Boigny arrived at a secret understanding with Francois Mitterrand of the Union Democratique et Socialiste de la Resistance (U.D.S.R.), a centrist group. This contention had a basis in so far as the R.D.A. entered into an alliance with the U.D.S.R. after 1954. Benot, n. 25, p. 73.

36 Ibid., p. 66.


38 Ibid.
By 1956, R.D.A. leaders like Houphouet Boigny had started participating, effectively, in French politics. In French politics, the centrist forces were facing a very stiff opposition from the Communists on the left and the Poujadists on the right. As such they would have failed to remain in power without the support of African deputies. This situation placed the R.D.A. in a comfortable bargaining position. It made an alliance with the Union Democratique et Socialiste de la Resistance (U.D.S.R.) in the French Assembly. The chief negotiator or the major architect of U.D.S.R.-R.D.A. alliance from the French side was Francois Mitterand, who made this small centrist group play an effective role in French politics with the support of the R.D.A. Houphouet Boigny was consistent in proving his loyalties to the centrist governments. As a result, he was offered a ministerial portfolio in Mollet Government (January 1956 to May 1957). Hammadoun Dicko, a socialist leader from Soudan, served as an under secretary during the same time. When Bourges Maunoury became Prime Minister (May 1957 to September 1958), he appointed Soudanese under secretary called Modibo Keita. In Gaillard's regime (October 1957 to April 1958), there were three African 'under secretaries'. Hubert Maga of Dahomey was the last person to be appointed as an under secretary. Among these African leaders Houphouet Boigny of the Ivory Coast was the most powerful and popular leader. By offering him a ministerial post the French Government bolstered the position of the Ivory Coast vis-a-vis other African states.

Thus, in French politics African deputies began to play an increasingly important role. The government under Guy Mollet,
a coalition of the socialists, radicals and the U.D.S.R.-R.D.A.,
became a symbol of Franco-African co-operation. Besides Houphouet-Boigny, Sekou Toure of Guinea and Modibo Keita of Soudan were also participating in the French politics actively.

The situation in other French colonies seemed encouraging at that stage. Taking advantage of the situation, the R.D.A. 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 garde political party" and permit the union of "all ideological conceptions, all ethnic groups, all social levels, all territories around a programme of concrete and clearly defined proposals".

LOI-CADRE REFORMS

It was at this stage that France introduced a package reforms called Loi-cadre reforms. These reforms came against the background of certain important changes in the world. First, with the end of colonial rule, the newly liberated countries in Asia pledged their determination to put an end to colonialism elsewhere. In Indo-China, Dr Ho Chi Minh organized (1946-64) armed struggle against the French and managed the unceremonious exit of French influence from South East Asia. At the same time at Bandung Conference (1955), the leaders of the Afro-Asian nations extended 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 proved a turning point in the history of post-
war decolonization. The crisis began when France and Britain encouraged Israel to launch an attack on Egypt. The Anglo-
French conspiracy proved a disaster with France losing its control over the North African territories which were strategi-
cally located in the West Mediterranean area. Morgenthalau aptly summarized this period as follows:

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 and material resources; the war's continuation sapped public confidence in the utility of legal fiction which designated Algeria as part of French Republic. The failures of Anglo-
French intervention in Suez contributed to the decline of French power in North Africa. 40

France realized that its attitudes towards her West African colonies needed modification. This was stated by the Minister of Overseas France in the French National Assembly as follows:

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 regimes of their territories, has contributed to the growth of impatience of the people of French West and French Equatorial Africa. 41


On the one hand, since the R.D.A. deputies had voted in 42 favour of Mollet Government regarding the Algerian issue, the restlessness of the African population and the significance of the role of African deputies prompted the French colonialists to appease them — by passing the Loi-cadre reforms.

The passage of the Loi-cadre reforms in June 1956, changed the structure of relation between France and French West Africa. They provided, as observed by William Zartman, the institutional stimulus to the formation of eight new states.

The Loi-cadre reforms granted universal adult suffrage to the Africans. The distinction between citizens and subjects was no longer insisted upon. Also, the system of double college was abolished and French citizens were placed on the same footing with the Africans.

The reforms distinguished different spheres of governmental activities. The services were organized into two broad categories i.e., 'territorial' and 'state' services. Conditions of the territorial services were laid down by the respective territorial assemblies while the state services were left under metropolitan control. The cost of state services was met by the French national budget. Special arrangements were made to reserve 66 per cent of the vacancies in state services for the Africans. Of these vacancies special quotas were fixed for each territory.

42 R.D.A. was against the repressive methods used in Algeria but it never took anti-French stand since it was the part of French Government.

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

(A) External Affairs (diplomatic and consular, frontier control, external trade and exchange control, immigration, and 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 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 to 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).

---

The Loi-cadre established a "Council of Government" in each territory. It was headed by a Governor. The Council was composed of twelve members and all of them were elected by the territorial assembly. In a way it was a modification of Defferé project which suggested a formula for Togoland in which six members of the Council of Government were nominated and other six were elected. The Loi-cadre reforms went a step further and provided for elected representatives. The leader of the Council of Government was named 'Vice President'. There was no responsible government but the Council could resign if it felt that it had lost the confidence of the territorial assembly.

The Loi-cadre reforms replaced the excessively centralist set-up of administration under the federal structure. Local powers were transferred to the territories and the territorial assemblies became important bodies. Africans began to participate in local affairs. They regulated the administrative affairs and enjoyed legislative powers.

The state services were controlled by the High Commissioner who was a representative of the French Government and the territorial services were controlled by the Council of Government. Thus, there were three important centres of power in each territory: the Assembly, the Council of Government, and the High Commissioner. From 1956 onwards the Assembly looked after agriculture, forestry, fisheries, primary and secondary education, health, internal waterways, customary law, internal trade, saving banks, town planning, public liberties, tourism, etc. By instituting the Council the French introduced
parliamentary system in West Africa, while it continued to control the colonies through the office of the Governor.

In addition, the High Commissioner was nominated by the President of the French Republic. He became the representative of France overseas ("II releve directement de l'autorite du ministre de la France d'Outre Mer"). The High Commissioner was the head of state services. As such the Assembly communicated all the decisions to him for execution within thirty days. If he considered any decision of the Council exceeding its powers or prejudicing national defence, public order, security and civil liberty, he could report to the Minister for Colonies for annulment of the decision by a cabinet decree.

The High Commissioner was responsible for maintaining the solidarity of the constituent units. He also looked after the development of the Republic in social, economic and cultural spheres. It was his duty to co-ordinate territorial and state services. His functions as a head of the group were separately specified. These were: (a) economic and financial co-ordination with the group; (b) "direction of minimum inter-territorial services specified in the decree - for these services he was to have three more services - e.g. financial service, a service of economic co-ordination and one for problems of economic development"; (c) management of international conflict. It

46 Robinson, n. 44, p. 56.
47 Ibid., pp. 56-57.
was through the High Commissioner that the French Government protected French interests in the colonies.

The Loi-cadre reforms curtailed powers of the Grand Council. It was transformed into merely an advisory body. It made only recommendations regarding the co-ordination and unification of territorial legislations and fiscal regimes. Territorial assemblies could authorize it to legislate in particular matters.

At this point, it would be necessary to describe reactions to the Loi-cadre reforms. Guy de Lusignan, a political historian, remarked, "In fact the loi-cadre was outdated the day it came into effect, since the French government, under pressure from United Nations, had already gone so far as to concede full self government in Togo and Cameroun." Gonidec, an authority on law, held the view that the principle of decentralization weakened the strength of those movements in favour of unification and served to protect the French interests. That is why the French defended 'decentralization' doggedly. Maurice Duverger asserted that the Loi-cadre reforms undoubtedly paved the way for the creation of federation although no one would admit it. Kenneth Robinson, on the other hand, observed that the reforms might not result in responsible local ministries.

48A The Council was composed of forty members. Each French West African territory could send five members in it. It had executive powers before the reforms.


50 Le Monde, 12 February 1957.

51 Robinson, n. 44, See pp. 52 and 59-62.
Among the critics, Gonidec could predict the future more accurately. He thought that 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 unity of the French states. Gonidec predicted that the French West African states would in the future become separate units, distinct from France.

The Loi-cadre reforms also gave rise to two antagonistic philosophies among the African leaders. Leopold Sedar Senghor became an important champion of federalist cause, while Felix Houpouhet Boigny supported the anti-federalist stand. The Loi-cadre did not envisage any kind of primary federation and Senghor was very much disappointed. Through the Bloc Démocratique Sénégalaisé (B.D.S.) newspaper he reiterated his thesis of West African primary federation joined as a part of federal French Republic. Loi-cadre reforms did not give any power in real sense.

The trade unions in French West Africa were also very critical about Loi-cadre reforms. They believed that the reforms were a new pretext for the continuation of French rule.

---

52 Gonidec, n. 49, pp. 82-83.

53 Senghor bitterly opposed the Loi-cadre reforms in the French National Assembly. He asserted that France wanted to balkanize African territories. By introducing the policy of divide and rule France only wanted to perpetuate its regime. In the French National Assembly he wittily remarked that the African governments were given 'toys and lolli-pops'. France, Assemblee Nationale, Debats Parlementaires (Journal Officiel, Paris) 1 February 1957, p. 484.
The Union Générale des Travailleurs d'Afrique Noire (U.G.T.A.N.) which controlled over eighty per cent of the African organized labour, condemned 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".

The anti-federalist thinking was led by Houphouet Boigny. Immediately after the passage of Loi-cadre reforms he gave a speech in Lille and expressed his views regarding the future of Franco-African relations. He observed:

I would like to remove an ambiguity. The powers obtained by the government are not exceptional. Properly speaking it will not act through ordinances but through texts which having been put forward to the Assembly of the French Union and the parliament will have to get the formal or the tacit approbation of the latter within four months. 55

Thus, he was conscious of the fact that the reforms did not give significant powers but he also thought that they encouraged further democratization of the French administration.

While defending the anti-federal thinking Houphouet remarked:

Federal administration may from now onwards seem like heavy burdens. The development of local institutions is no longer compatible with long hierarchic circuits which, starting from Niamey or Fort Lamy, extend up to Paris, having passed through Dakar and Brazzaville. There is a need of a simplification. The superimposition of tutelage which had been created within the framework of a purely administrative set up have to be suppressed. 56

54 *Afrique Nouvelle* (Dakar), 20 March 1956.
56 Ibid.
These two statements clearly demonstrated pro-French stance of the Ivorian leaders. They believed that the federal level was harmful for the Ivorian economy. Such separatist thinking was also partly encouraged by the French administration. A governor of the Ivory Coast said in a 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 return to this country all the incomes she collects from customs. 57

The economic advantages of the Loi-cadre reforms tempted Ivory Coast to support French policy. Ivory Coast had significant surplus reserves. In 1937 it had a surplus of 73 million Francs\(^{(C.F.A.)}\). In 1942, 60 million and in 1945, 211 million. She contributed a significant amount to the federal budget. According to Wallerstein, the Ivory Coast provided about one third of the portion of the total customs revenue for the eight territories which until 1956 constituted the Federation of West Africa. This proved quite costly for the Ivory Coast. Had Ivory Coast supported the federalist thinking, its surplus resources would have been transferred to the poor countries in French West Africa.

Thus, introducing the Loi-cadre reforms France created two rival camps among the Africans. The rivalry was not only between Senghor and Houphouet Boigny, but it also sprang up

57 Quoted in Zolberg, n. 16, p. 178.
58 Djoro, n. 12, p. 7.
59 Wallerstein, n. 13, p. 12.
within the R.D.A. Some leaders like Sekou Toure openly started attacking Houphouet Boigny. The radical wing of the R.D.A. went to the extent of opposing Houphouet's participation in the French cabinet. They denounced the use of West African troops in North Africa; ridiculed the Loi-cadre, and disapproved the Europeans whom Houphouet had put up as candidates of the R.D.A. Sekou Toure asserted that the Loi-cadre reforms would eventually destroy federation and leave each territorial unit isolated.

However, the circumstances placed both France and the Ivory Coast in a situation where their interests coincided. By opposing the federal line Houphouet harmed the anti-colonial movement to a certain degree, but whether he harmed the interests of the Ivory Coast or not remained a matter of debate. As Zolberg observed, "Paradoxically, the Ivory Coast provided the incentive both for the creation of the most important federation-wide movement RDA and the eventual destruction of the federation itself."

ELECTIONS OF MARCH 1957 AND BAMAKO CONFERENCE

A year after the Loi-cadre reforms elections were held for new territorial assemblies. The election diverted the attention of Africans from major goals of 'political independence' to endless debates on the relative merit and

60 Thompson and Adloff, n. 27, p. 95.


62 Zolberg, n. 16, p. 92.
devoid of the Loi-cadre reforms. In his speeches Houphouet Boigny nursed the 'mystic' of Franco-African co-operation. He asserted that "the elections which were going to take place are allowing the overseas population for the first time to assume the real powers of administration of their affairs". He highlighted the theme of interdependence in the modern world.

Senghor represented another point of view. He demanded that the territories of Black Africa must enjoy the status which was enjoyed by Togo by virtue of the decree of August 1956. He attacked the policy of dividing the federation.

Eventually, the R.D.A. emerged as the strongest party in the elections. It got absolute majority in four territorial assemblies, e.g. Guinea, Ivory Coast, Soudan and Upper Volta. Out of 474 seats it captured 243 seats. It also scored a landslide victory in Soudan. The local unit of the R.D.A. namely, Union Soudanaise, won sixty out of seventy seats. On the other hand, the Convention Africaine (C.A.) won fifty four seats out of which forty seven were from Senegal. The Movement Socialists Africain (M.S.A.) won sixty two seats. Niger was M.S.A.'s stronghold where it got 40 out of 60 seats.

---

63 Le Monde, 10 May 1957.
64 Ibid., 3 April 1957.
65 Ibid.
66 Togo was granted the status of autonomous republic. A Togolese citizenship was established. Togolese Prime Minister could become member of the French Parliament and had the right to dissolve the Togolese Assembly. Togo also got the financial support from FIDES.
The following chart shows the position of the R.D.A. in different African territories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R.D.A. Territory</th>
<th>Name of the Unit</th>
<th>Total Seats</th>
<th>R.D.A.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soudan</td>
<td>Union Soudanaise</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>Parti Democratique de Guinee</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>Parti Democratique de la Cote D'Ivoire</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dahomey</td>
<td>Parti Republicain</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Volta</td>
<td>Le Parti Democratique Unifie</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Le Monde, 4 April 1957.

After the elections, important leaders of the R.D.A. headed Council of Government in Ivory Coast, Guinea, Soudan, and Upper Volta. Gabriel D'Arboussier, an eminent R.D.A. leader, became President of the Grand Council of French West Africa, while Houphouet Boigny again became President of the R.D.A.

The March 1957 elections widened differences within the R.D.A. In order to resolve these differences a conference was held at Bamako in September 1957. It was attended by representatives of the African parties, as also by representatives of the non-indigenous population. In Bamako Europeans and 67 well known personalities like Auguste Denise (Ivory Coast), Sekou Toure (Guinea), Ouezzin Coulibaly (Upper Volta), Mamehou Dia (Senegal), Jean Marie Kone (Soudan), Leon M'ba (Gabon) and Gabriel Lissette (Toad). Besides that the representatives of the Algerian trade unions (L'Union des syndicate des Travailleurs algeriens USTA) and that of Federation des etudians d'Afrique noire en France (FEANF) also attended the Conference.

67
Africans mingled harmoniously. Various heads of the newly formed Councils of Government attended the Conference.

Among the French leaders, Mendes Frances, Edgar-Faure and Francois Mitterend attended the Conference. Guy Mollet, Antoine Pimay and Roger Douchet were invited but failed to attend the meeting. The Communists were deliberately ignored, because collaboration between the R.D.A. and P.C.F. had proved futile. Secondly, the R.D.A.-U.D.S.R. coalition had made R.D.A. a part of the French Government which was opposed by the Communist Party. The Socialist governments under Mollet or Gaillard were anti-communist. Hence, by inviting the Communist leaders, R.D.A. would have jeopardized its position in government. La Depeche, a well known journal in France was fiercely attacking a faction of the R.D.A. led by Sekou Toure. It alleged that a faction of R.D.A. was dominated by the Communists. It also observed that Sekou Toure was racist and anti-French and was controlled from Moscow.

At the Conference, delegates discussed (a) the nature of the R.D.A.; (b) character of the Federal Executive;

---

68 R.D.A. had embraced all kinds of social groups in its fold. For example in Guinea it was collaborating with the U.G.T.A.N. (a trade union movement in Africa) while in the Ivory Coast it was in alliance with chieftains and kings. The presence of the King of Ivory Coast could not escape the eyes of curious observers. What is more, the religious chief of Fonta-Djalon, also attended the Conference. See Andre Blanchet, L'Itinéraire Des Parti Africains Depuis Bamako (Paris, 1968), p. 37.

69 Quoted in ibid., p. 37.
(c) initiation of profitable dialogue with the interterritorial parties; and (d) the future of Franco-African relations. Covering these issues, Houphouet Boigny declared that R.D.A. was not a political party but an authentic expression of composite masses heading towards emancipation. Sekou Toure gave emphasis on the consolidation of R.D.A. by patching up differences among its leaders. He assumed that "there are forces in the world and in Africa who do not wish the union of Africans and who desire that there should be schism in the RDA". Modibo Keita also appealed for a resolution of the internal schism in R.D.A. A majority of the R.D.A. leaders agreed that they did not want R.D.A. to become merely an extension of the metropolitan parties.

The question of federal executive for French West Africa became a bone of contention among the delegates. Houphouet Boigny launched a massive campaign against it. One can suggest that in taking such a stand he had two interests in mind. First, he held the conviction that if Ivory Coast was allowed to develop independently it would become the most prosperous territory in French West Africa. Secondly, realising the magnitude of dependence on France, he might have desired to get additional economic benefits or technological aid for the benefit of the Ivory Coast.

70 Ibid., p. 46.
71 Ibid., p. 52.
72 Gabon was another state which took anti-federal stand. It was one of the richest territories in the French Equatorial Africa. It was rich in natural resources like uranium, manganese, coal and petrol. Leon M'ba of Gabon found it advantageous to side with Houphouet Boigny.
On the other hand, Sekou Toure and his associates proclaimed that French West Africa needed a federal executive. He introduced a resolution in the Federal Assembly of Guinea advocating a federal executive for French West Africa which was passed in July 1957.

The R.D.A. leaders also initiated a dialogue with the two interterritorial parties, namely Movement Socialiste Africain (M.S.A.) and the Convention Africain (C.A.). They sought to find an area of agreement between the three parties. They suggested that in each territory the minority party should take the title of the majority party. Each section would be called, ultimately, a territorial section of the R.D.A. This view was unacceptable to the other two groups. The negotiations between Sekou Toure (R.D.A.), Ya Dumbia (M.S.A.) and Abdoulayely (C.A.) failed to secure these objectives.

The economic programme of R.D.A. was presented at Bamako by Gabriel Lisette, President of the inter-parliamentary group, on the following lines:

(1) to transform underdeveloped economies into modern economies;
(2) to liquidate the 'Colonial Pact';
(3) to take steps, progressively, for the integration of African economies;
(4) to develop production;
(5) liberation of African masses from the perpetual exploitation of the colonial rule.

The Conference also recommended a programme for Africanization and socialization of commercial sector. The salient features of the political resolution were as follows:

(1) It declared the R.D.A.'s commitment to the struggle for political, economic, social and cultural emancipation of Africans.

(2) It declared that the sovereignty was vested in people and independence was inalienable right of the people.

(3) It supported the participation of elected African representatives in the functioning of the French Republic.

(4) It accepted Loi-cadre as an irreversible step in the democratization of the existing federal organs.

(5) It stood for the establishment of a Franco-African community on a democratic base.

Whether Bamako Conference failed in its objectives or it was successful is a matter for interpretation, but the gathering at Bamako left noticeable imprint on the history of Black Africa. On the other hand, Bamako aggravated the rift among the African leaders. The African parties failed to bring out a precise common programme for joint action. Houphouet Boigny, however, believed that conference expressed firm attachment to the Franco-African community. He described the result of the conference as a victory of his own thesis. In an interview with a group of journalists, he said, "Haven't you seen, even

---

person no less than Sekou Toure affirms it and theoretically rules out the idea of engaging black Africa in the movement of independence."

Houphouet's summing up demonstrated his desire to build Ivory Coast with the help of France. He urged that other African states should also follow the same path and build the edifice of the Franco-African community.

75 *Le Monde*, 4 October 1957.