Chapter III

THE COMMUNITY AND FRANCO-IVORIAN ACCORD
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We would start this chapter by first taking up the internal developments of France until the establishment of the Fifth Republic. This will allow us to examine, in the second section, the nature of Franco-Ivorian relations against the background of the Community established by the referendum of September 1958. Such an examination will also help us to identify the points of contrast in the Franco-Guinean and Franco-Ivorian relations. Finally, we would examine those circumstances which helped the Community to act as an important organization in France's former colonies in Africa.

FIFTH REPUBLIC AND THE COMMUNITY

Instability of governments was the most prominent feature of French political system under the Fourth Republic (1946-1958). The continuation of the Republic depended on the ephemeral coalitions of multiple party groups and factions. Pierre Avril, thus, observed:

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 soon proved to be inadequate, and although need for reform was generally recognized, the regime seemed incapable of reforming itself. 2


The problem of political stability became more complicated because of the war in Algeria. Possession of Algeria was vital for France in more than one sense. Algeria, as Edward A. Kolodziej in a recent study, has observed:

... was key communication link with North Africa, the Middle East, and Black Africa. Its Arab-Islamic culture, 130 years of contact with France, and extensive relations with Black Africa placed it in a potentially important interlocutary role among the three cultures. 3

There were one million people of European descent in Algeria who owned forty per cent of the land. European Algerians were French citizens for three to four generations. On the other hand, about 150,000 Algerian Muslims worked in France. Algerian oil fed the French industry. Algeria was regarded as a part of France.

The Algerian rebellion began in 1954. Mendes France Government at that time failed to handle the rebels. The socialist government under Guy Mollet (1956) capitulated to the pressure of Algerie Francaise, an ultra-rightist group. Front de la Liberation Nationale (F.L.N.) began to combat French colonialism under the leadership of Ferhat Abbas. By 1958, large areas in the countryside were controlled by the freedom fighters. Faced by growing resistance France

was compelled to send more than 50,000 troops in Algeria. According to Philip Williams and Martin Harrison, "The army entered the Algerian war in a 'never again' mood, which was sharpened by their fear that Algeria was the last military province where they could feel useful and respected, and that its loss would drive them back to an indifferent, uncomprehending, anti-militaristic homeland."

After 1957, the Bourges Maunoury Government was functioning under severe strain and opposition. Jacques Soustelle, an 'ex Governor of Algeria', attacked the policies of Bourges Maunoury as being too lenient in handling the rebels. He wanted France to establish a firm control over Algeria and integrate it with the Republic. On the other hand, the Gaullists were opposing the political system which proved vulnerable to internal and external pressures. The Communist Party of France also viewed the official policy towards Algeria with discontent. Its attitude towards Algeria was partially shaped by Algerian immigrant workers

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Dorothy Pickles, another observer, wrote: "By 1958, the rebellion showed no signs of being overcome. It was costing between £1 million and £2 million a day, keeping the bulk of the French army in Algeria creating problems for France in N.A.T.O., in the United Nations and in her relations with Morocco and Tunisia." See Dorothy Pickles, The Fifth Republic (London, 1971), p. 16.

8 See, Bertrand Schneider, La VameRepublique et L'Algerie, Documents et Confrontations (Paris, 1959), pp. 34-35.
in France. On 21 May 1957, Bourges Maunoury's radical government was defeated.

The process of the decline of the Fourth Republic attained an unbelievable speed in the beginning of 1958. After this, we need not give a chronology of events in 1958, but a reference to the 13 May should be made since it was to a great extent responsible for the downfall of Fourth Republic.

By 1958, the French army which represented a well organized unit, became convinced that the Fourth Republic was incapable of resolving the Algerian crisis. On 13 May 1958 the French army leaders joined hands with the army leaders of Algeria to overthrow the parliamentary system in France. Describing the events Alexander Werth observed, "The Algers Rebellion of 13 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 Algeria supported the rebellion, and it soon became apparent that the generals in France were fully in sympathy as well."

9 A considerable number of Algerian workers were supporting the P.C.F. when the government resorted to repressive measures to resolve Algerian crisis the Communists condemned it.

10 The government was defeated on outline law in Algeria by 279 to 253 votes.

Within three weeks after 13 May the Pierre Pflimlin Government collapsed. A radical change in the political landscape became inevitable. This is to say, French people needed to replace a weak executive by a strong and stable one. For them, De Gaulle represented the only hope for he possessed extraordinary qualities of leadership and also great popularity both in France and its overseas territories. He came to power even before the beginning of the Fifth Republic.

De Gaulle had closely studied the developments in Africa. As early as 1946, that is before the establishment of the Fourth Republic, he had envisaged the establishment of a permanent link between the metropole and the colonies. He could not think of France without including African colonies with it. While highlighting the importance of grandeur for France, he wrote, "France is not really herself unless she is in first rank; that only vast enterprises are capable of counterbalancing the ferments of disintegration in her people. In short ... France cannot be France without grandeur."

Further, De Gaulle aspired to build France as a powerful unit against the hegemonic position of the United States. He felt that the African colonies could help France in attaining a position of an independent power centre in global politics. With this objective in mind, he took initiative in placing the new constitution for consideration of the Constituent Assembly. The new constitution tried to combine parliamentary and

13 Quoted in Kolodziej, n. 3, p. 27.
presidential system. The President was invested with enormous executive powers. Article 11 gave him a decisive power of referendum. That is to say, if he disagreed with the Assemblies he could put the issue before the people by superseding them. Article 16 gave him the power to proclaim emergency. He could do so if there was a serious threat to the functioning of institutions of the Republic. Article 16 virtually made him a dictator.

The constitution introduced a frontier of the Community in the relationship of France and its African colonies. J.A. Laponce, an expert on French Government and Politics, remarked:

In instituting the Community, De Gaulle gambled that the former colonies would realise that independence and 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. 15

The principles on which the Community was built were:

(a) Overseas territories which consented to join the Community would attain the status of self-governing member states without the right to send their representatives to the Parliament.

(b) It tried to combine federal and confederal

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principle by placing the elements of French preponderance on the top.

(c) Each territory was given the right to reject the constitution at the time of referendum and refrain from joining the Community.

(d) Member states were free to secede from the Community under the provisions laid down by Article 86 of the Constitution.

Article 78 of the Constitution divided powers of the Community into two major categories. The primary powers were retained by the Community without any restrictions. The important powers such as foreign affairs, defence, currency, economic and financial affairs, and policy of strategic raw materials were retained by the metropolitan power. The powers of secondary importance, including administration of justice, education, and telecommunications were entrusted to Community members.

The Community had four major organs: the President, the Executive Council, the Senate and the Arbitration Court. The President of the French Republic was ex-officio President of the Community. He could send personal representatives to any member state, act as chairman of the Executive Council, summon and dissolve sessions of the Community Senate, and submit economic and financial questions before Senate Community for advice. According to Laponce, powers of the President as regards the Community remained ambiguous over a

16 For example, constitutional provisions and organic laws on the Community were passed by the Parliament but the assemblies of the member states had no say in it.
fundamental question, i.e., the restrictions to which the 17
President was subjected while acting as head of the Community. Nevertheless, there was one provision which slightly checked the Presidential powers i.e., decisions of the President as to the regards appointments of the Africans/diplomatic positions and France's financial contribution to the economic development of a particular member state were required to be endorsed by the French Parliament.

The Executive Council was composed of the Prime Minister of France, heads of governments from African states, and ministers in charge of the Community affairs. The chief functions of the Council were:

(a) To inform the member states about French position on the international issues;

(b) to advise the Community on appointments and administrative structures to the President;

(c) to discuss proposals submitted to the Community by the President on his own initiative.

The Senate included delegates from the French Parliament and the legislatures of member states. Each senator from a member state represented 300,000 inhabitants. The Senate's term was five years with two sessions of at least two months per year. The Senate performed legislative functions of the Community. It advised the President on financial affairs at his request. Members of the Executive Council could also participate in the debates of the Senate.

17 Laponce, n. 15, p. 307.
The composition and the powers of the Arbitration Court were determined by an organic law. It consisted of seven judges. They were selected from the magistrates who served for ten years. Their tenure was six years. The Court could give ruling on disputes between members of the Community.

Chapter XII of the Constitution vested in France leadership of the Community. France could perpetuate its control over the African states by keeping hold on foreign affairs, defence, and economic and financial matters. In this matter, therefore, the Community greatly differed from the Commonwealth.

According to Stewart Easton, an expert on colonialism in Africa, the analogy commonly used for Commonwealth was of a grown up family, whose members were free and independent, but who did not cut themselves off from parents and siblings. Members of the Community, on the other hand, were not fully independent. Even if the Community conferred the status of self government they did not enjoy the status of sovereign state as did the members of the British Commonwealth.

Secondly, the British Commonwealth nations did not have a common foreign policy. Thus, while such members as India, Ceylon, Malaya and Ghana were non-aligned, Britain, Pakistan,

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Australia, and New Zealand were members of the various military pacts and organisations. Since member states of the French Community were not sovereign independent nations, foreign policy of the Community was indistinguishable from the foreign policy of France.

However, by establishing the Community, France tried to avert in tropical Africa an outburst of freedom struggle on the Algerian lines. Secondly, it hoped to persuade the Algerians to stay within the Community. As, Maurice Schumann, 'ex' Finance Minister of France, asserted before the referendum that if the dream of the Community became a reality, Algerians might realise the emancipation could be achieved by eschewing violence and secession.

REFERENDUM OF 1958

In August 1958, De Gaulle embarked on a tour of Africa to explain the meaning of the Community to the African leaders. With the exception of Conakry (Guinea), he received enthusiastic welcome everywhere. In Brazzaville he declared: "A moment has come when we are going to change the nature of economic relationship between African territories and the metropole." In Dakar, he asserted that France was proposing

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Michel Debre, the then Premier had acknowledged in the National Assembly that running Community would place enormous financial and administrative responsibilities upon France. See, *Journal Officiel de la Republique Francaise*, Debats Parlementaires, Assemblee Nationale, 13 October 1959, p. 1737.

the Community in order that each territory could enjoy autonomy and yet share the domains of common jurisdiction. In Abidjan, while specifying the major goal of the Community, De Gaulle announced, "We are going to show to the world that the Franco-African Community stands for the betterment of human beings not only from the material point of view but intellectual and moral as well."

While commenting on De Gaulle's tour in Africa, Stewart Easton remarked:

There can be little doubt that President De Gaulle made and is making every effort to see that the Community is a 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.

De Gaulle's continuous emphasis on the material, intellectual and moral developments of a man under Franco-African Community created a feeling of brotherhood among the Africans and the French. Whether such high ideals were going to be translated into practice remained to be seen; nevertheless, what is interesting to note is that France was trying to establish relations not with sovereign independent states but with mere territories which still remained its colonies.

After De Gaulle's visit a referendum was held in French Africa on 28 September 1958. All the West African

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22 Ibid., p. 1135.
23 Ibid.
24 Stewart, n. 19, p. 344.
territories, excepting Guinea, voted "Yes" and joined the Community. The following chart demonstrates the result of the referendum in French Africa.

A. French West Africa

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<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>1,699,017</td>
<td>1,607,558</td>
<td>1,606,752</td>
<td>224</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dahomey</td>
<td>771,415</td>
<td>431,017</td>
<td>418,709</td>
<td>9,237</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>1,044,043</td>
<td>1,012,416</td>
<td>33,784</td>
<td>986,933</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper Volta</td>
<td>1,622,194</td>
<td>1,215,045</td>
<td>1,194,286</td>
<td>8,153</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>224,559</td>
<td>190,786</td>
<td>178,000</td>
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<td>Niger</td>
<td>1,149,328</td>
<td>415,746</td>
<td>316,251</td>
<td>88,921</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>974,675</td>
<td>804,399</td>
<td>780,465</td>
<td>21,565</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soudan</td>
<td>1,517,536</td>
<td>702,380</td>
<td>684,513</td>
<td>16,199</td>
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B. French Equatorial Africa

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<th>No</th>
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<tr>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>229,869</td>
<td>182,062</td>
<td>167,560</td>
<td>12,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moyen Congo</td>
<td>433,529</td>
<td>342,389</td>
<td>339,504</td>
<td>1,962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oubangui</td>
<td>610,894</td>
<td>488,060</td>
<td>478,667</td>
<td>5,731</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tchad</td>
<td>528,352</td>
<td>363,283</td>
<td>335,912</td>
<td>5,149</td>
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The chart thus shows the two extreme reactions to the Franco-African Community, with Ivory Coast representing one end

and Guinea the other. Houphouët Boigny was instrumental in mobilizing the Ivorian people in favour of the Community. He stoutly declared before the referendum that all the territories including Senegal will vote 'Yes' because politically Africans are not fools. Andre Blanchet, a well known French journalist, toured the African territories at this time and reviewed the situation realistically. He asserted that the Ivorians were enthusiastic about joining the Community to show their loyalties to France. He also noted that it was in the Ivory Coast that the metropolitan population was actively participating in politics.

On the other hand, Sekou Toure made it clear that if the French Government ignored the legitimate aspirations of the Africans, Guinea would refuse to join the Community and declare itself an independent nation. He said that Guinea would vote 'Yes' if its demand of independence and juridical equality with France were recognized. In reply to the proposal, De Gaulle said:

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. She can have it on September 28 by voting 'No' to the proposal and I guarantee 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 and can follow any course it likes.

26 Le Monde, 30 August 1958.
27 Ibid., 28 and 29 September 1958.
28 Ibid., 31 August 1958.
29 Guinee 'Etat Pilote' Tribune Libre (Paris, 1959), the beginning page.
Being a trade unionist Sekou Toure's opinions carried weight with the workers' organizations such as Union Generale des Travailleurs d'Afrique Noire (U.G.T.A.N.). In addition, he built Parti Democratique de Guinee (P.D.G.) and consolidated its mass base. Sekou Toure believed that a strong and united federation of West Africa could serve two purposes, i.e., managing the exit of colonialism and consolidating the African Unity movement. Hence he criticised the Constitution of the Fifth Republic because it did not do away with the shortcomings of the Loi-cadre reforms. To him the French Community was nothing but a rebaptized French Union with changed etiquettes. He said, "We shall vote 'NO' to inequality and irresponsibility."

In other words, Sekou Toure advocated that African states and France must enjoy equal status. France could not subscribe to the view at this period. As Gray Cowan had noted "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 larger metropolitan France."

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30 In 1953, he launched a 67 day strike against the colonial administration and compelled it to grant the demands of workers. The administration allowed the workers to work for forty hours per week. When Sekou Toure was in R.D.A. he had condemned moderates for succumbing to the pressures of the French Government.

31 Bernard Charles, Les relations Franco-Guineennes Association Francaise de Science Politiques (Paris), Table Ronde, 1 March 1959, p. 4.

In short, the efforts of French Government to persuade Guinea to join the Community failed.

Thus, Guinea became a sovereign independent nation.

To a certain extent the Guinean independence threatened the French economic interests in West Africa. According to 1956 estimates French investment in Guinea amounted to roughly two and a half billion C.F.A. Francs and public investment amounted to roughly 26 billion C.F.A. Francs.

Against this background certain immediate consequences flowed from Guinea's refusal to join the Community. France refused to offer de jure recognition to Guinea. Further,

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33 The French territorial administrators were accused of applying pressure at every point for an affirmative vote. On 14 September 1958 Sekou Touré pointed out that a huge amount of money was spent by the French Government to influence the elections. He advised the P.D.G. militants to vote 'No' but accept money which was offered by the French Government.

In spite of this Sekou Touré had shown his willingness to clarify certain doubts before joining the Community. He declared in August 1958 "It is just that we wish to state our reservations clearly, and clarify the conditions of our entry into the community. Our aim is not to divorce, but a lasting marriage without concealment of anything." See Easton, n. 19, p. 340.

34 Charles, n. 31, p. 5.

France was exploiting mineral resources of Guinea. The multinational firm at Fria was a collective endeavour of Pechinay Ugine of France with 26.5 per cent capital, British Aluminium Ltd. with 10 per cent capital, Olin Mathieson, an American Company with 48.5 per cent and a Swiss Company with 10 per cent capital. Another significant firm was Alugui with a capital of 26 billion C.F.A. Francs (French capital 32 per cent, Canada Aluminium 20 per cent, Italian and German capital 10 per cent respectively.) See Jean Ehrhard, Communauté Ou Sécession (Paris, 1959), p. 78.
De Gaulle announced that if the United States recognized Guinea France would withdraw from N.A.T.O. When Japan and Iraq sponsored a resolution for admission of Guinea in the United Nations on 13 December 1958, France abstained from voting. An immediate repatriation of French functionaries was ordered and some 3,000 French returned home. Guinea ceased to receive financial aid from Fonds d'Investissement et social pour le développement économique/d'Outre Mer (FIDES). France refused to balance the Guinean budget although it decided to take no precipitate action regarding the earlier deficit totalling one billion C.F.A. Francs. The French army in Guinea also withdrew.

Initially, France, therefore, put many obstacles in Guinea's path, so as to make the latter realize the importance of cooperation with France.

On the other hand, with Guinea's 'No' French dependence on the Ivory Coast increased. France found in Houphouet Boigny a devoted friend to rally support for the Community. On Ivory Coast's part the Community symbolized the triumph of "Houphouetism". Under Community all the African states attained the status of self-governing autonomous republics.

35 Guinea received approximately 15.6 billion C.F.A. Francs under FIDES between 1947 to 1957.

36 While explaining the Guinean stand Sekou Toure made it clear that Guinea did not intend to break off all ties with France. He had gone to Paris to negotiate but even the secretary general of the Community refused to receive him. De Gaulle and Debre refused to enter into a dialogue with him. See Geoffrey Fraser, "Nouveaux regards Sur L'Afrique Occidentale", L'Année Politique et Économique (Paris), December 1960, p. 530.
The Community, by definition, presupposed the negation of any kind of federation in line with Houphouet's thesis for separate evolution of each territory.

THE COMMUNITY, FRANCE AND AFRICANS

Having analysed the contrasting attitudes of Guinea and the Ivory Coast, we may now proceed to give a general account of the importance of Community to France on the one hand and the gains of the African states from the Community on the other. Certain obvious economic factors need to be taken into account for such a discussion. In the first place, by the middle of 1950s, France was importing a wide variety of agrarian products i.e. cocoa, coffee, tobacco, cotton and raw materials like zinc, manganese, wood, phosphates and petrol from Africa. In 1957, France imported raw materials worth 540 billion C.F.A. Francs. The advantages of such imports were twofold. First, France had established a franc zone which could be used to pay for African products. This also helped France to check the drastic drain in its foreign reserves. Secondly, the African countries provided a market for French manufactured products. In 1957, these countries bought French goods worth 655 billion C.F.A. francs.


38 Gilbert Mathieu, an economist, observed that the African countries only absorbed 1.7 per cent of the French export. This percentage was really not very significant. Nevertheless African countries did provide an outlet to certain economic activities. Ibid.
Further, French products enjoyed a protective market in Africa. Thus, to give some examples, French automobiles enjoyed 25 per cent tariff reduction, wines and tissues of cotton 20 per cent and the products of mechanical industries enjoyed 5 to 10 per cent reduction.

Finally, the French settlers continued to hold key positions in industrial and administrative services of these African countries. Some of them controlled the distribution of local products as also the sale of imported French products. The settler population remitted a substantial portion of their income to the mother country. Thus, around 296 million and 273 million Francs were repatriated in 1956 and 1957 respectively. Before the Community, France faced a deficit

39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.

The following chart gives us an idea about the French settlers in the colonies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of inhabitants</th>
<th>Africans</th>
<th>Europeans</th>
<th>Density per K.M.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>2,220,000</td>
<td>48,600</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soudan</td>
<td>3,700,000</td>
<td>7,400</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Volta</td>
<td>3,450,000</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dahomey</td>
<td>1,710,000</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>2,482,000</td>
<td>9,500</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French West Africa including Guinea</td>
<td>19,162,000</td>
<td>88,200</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of roughly 150 to 200 million dollars for three consecutive years. Though the establishment of the Community did not improve the balance of payments position immediately, it did contribute to the stabilization of the French economy.

France also got certain political advantages. After attaining the status of self-governing member states of the Community, the African states failed to wipe out the colonial institutions. According to A. Mableau and J. Mayriat, they accepted the heritage of France's colonial institutions.41 Further, the Constitution of the Fifth Republic considerably influenced the constitutions of the African states. They adopted the institutions of traditional French type with supreme executive power resting in a cabinet responsible to an assembly elected by adult suffrage. The Community also enhanced the stature of France in the world and placed it in a better bargaining position in relation with U.S.A., U.S.S.R. and other European countries.

France also retained extensive contacts with the African countries. French language was uniformly used; French citizens were offered teaching assignments in Africa and French culture was popularised through mass communication media. On the other hand, economic considerations largely influenced the Africans to stay in the Community. Prior to


42 Laponce, n. 15, p. 304.
1956, surplus resources of the richer territories in West Africa were transferred to the poorer territories in order to balance the budget of the entire federation. After the Loi-cadre reforms the poorer countries could not rely on the traditional support of the rich countries. Thus, countries like Niger, Dahomey, Upper Volta and Soudan became more and more dependent on France. In general, all the territories of French West Africa were dependent on French Capital Grants for development expenditure. The post-war development plans were accompanied by relatively larger investment of public capital which came in the form of grants from France. Between 1947 and 1956 public capital investment in French West Africa totalled 170 billion C.F.A. Francs. Of this 70 per cent came from the French treasury.

The second advantage of the Community was that French markets continued to protect African goods. While highlighting this, Elliot J. Berg observed:

To the dependence on France for development funds and (unwilling) dependence on Frenchman for trained personnel must be added a third aspect of FWA's (French West Africa) dependence on France, and a major characteristic of its development pattern; its close trade integration with highly protected franc zone. Much more than the British or Belgium territories in Africa, the French areas have developed within the protective wall of the metropolitan country. Most FWA imports (over 70 per cent in recent years) come from France, and about the same proportion of its exports are sold there. 44


Thirdly, due to unsound economic conditions, most African countries were unable to establish diplomatic representation on an extensive scale. Also, it was difficult to find technically competent personnel to manage governmental activities. As a result, they depended on France for the supply of expatriate staff.

Twelve autonomous member states began to function with France after the referendum. The post of a minister councillor was extremely important in the Community set up. Four minister councillors were appointed for one year term. They used to attend the cabinet meetings when the crucial issues regarding the Community were discussed. The four councillors for the first term were Houphouet Boigny (Ivory Coast), Senghor (Senegal), Gabriel Lisette (Tchad) and Philiber Tsiranana (Madagascar). Thus, among the French West African territories Senegal and Ivory Coast enjoyed a privileged position vis-à-vis other states since Senghor and Houphouet Boigny had an access to the cabinet meetings by virtue of their position as minister councillors.

Some important decisions were taken by the Community during its short life span. In one of the important meetings at Paris, in June 1959, the principle of free movement of goods within the Community was established. The meeting also


46 The names of the self governing states were: Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Upper Volta, Mauritania, Niger, Gabon, Congo, Central African Republic, Tchad, Madagascar, Soudan and Senegal.
recognized the right of each state or group of states to set up its own tariffs vis-a-vis foreign states within the framework of general economic policy. Another meeting at Tananarive gave the member states the right to send their representatives in such organizations as United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). It gave the Africans a feeling that they too could ventilate their aspirations and anxieties in international forums.

Another important step was the abolition of discrimination on the basis of race and religion. This step introduced a new frontier in Franco-African relations. All citizens of the Community enjoyed equal political rights. A Frenchman in the Ivory Coast remained subject to French civil code but was not considered a foreigner; he too could vote and stand for elections. Likewise, an Ivorian citizen could be an electoral candidate in France or appointed in the French civil service. Could such policy be called a modified version of the policy of assimilation? One can state that even in the late 1950s France endeavoured to carry on the tradition of very close links with the African countries.

In particular French relations with the Ivory Coast were considerably strengthened within the framework of the Community. Houphouet Boigny defended Franco-African co-operation before the world. As chief of the French

47 Laponce, n. 15, p. 304.
delegation in the General Assembly of the United Nations, he explained the concept and goals of the Franco-African Community to the Americans. He asserted that Africa had opted for the Community on the basis of both reason and sentiment. He said, "Interdependence is the basis of relationships between nations in the modern world. Franco-African Community is based on fraternal solidarity. The formation of United States of Africa is difficult to realise and African states have to sort out their problems within the Community." He was opposed to the Guinean path of development to avoid communist infiltration into Africa. He highlighted the merits of economic liberalism during his short stay in the United States and Canada.

Houphouet also drew a sharp distinction between the British Commonwealth and the Community. He asserted that the Commonwealth was essentially an economic organization while the scope of the French Community was much wider. He expressed the hope that the Community might become one day a great multinational state.

Thus, Houphouet Boigny became the principal spokesman of the Community in the United Nations. His speeches made

49 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
the Ivory Coast a conspicuous ally of France in African affairs. On the eve of formal independence in 1960, Franco-Ivorian interdependence thus became apparent to the rest of the world.