Chapter IV

FRANCE-IVORY COAST AND THE WEST AFRICAN STATES
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As we surveyed in the last chapter, the establishment of the Community paved the way for Franco-Ivorian entente. In the post 1958 period this entente took a concrete shape against the background of general development in West African politics. The Franco-Ivorian interests were not exactly identical, but they were complimentary enough to lay the foundation of a politico-economic and military co-operation. Keeping this in mind, we shall review the Franco-Ivorian responses to two major developments in West Africa viz the agreement of Ghana-Guinea Union of November 1958 and the formation of Mali Federation in April 1959. Both these developments induced the Ivory Coast to set up a counterweight in the form of the entente states including Niger, Dahomey and Upper Volta. We shall examine the evolution of Franco-Ivorian relations in the context of the entente states.

FRANCO-IVORIAN RESPONSES TO INTEGRATIONIST-FEDERALIST TRENDS

The birth of Guinea as a sovereign independent state represented a milestone in the history of French West Africa. We have already described in the preceding chapter how Guinea broke away from the Community. This break however created difficulties for Guinea. In the wake of French withdrawal Guinea looked for support from other quarters. A limited

measure of support came from Ghana and the Soviet Union. Ghana offered a loan of 10 million pounds, while the Soviet Union established trade relations with Guinea. Alexander Erlich and Christian R. Sonne, two economists, observed: "In Guinea the Soviet Block's penetration is reported to be greatest; the block amounted 9.3 per cent of Guinea's imports and 16.2 per cent of its exports in 1959, and 44.2 of its imports and 22.9 per cent of its exports in 1960." In addition the Soviet Union signed a long-term trade and payment agreement with Guinea with provisions for a credit of £ 600,000. Among the East European countries Yugoslavia offered a loan to Guinea worth 5 million dollars with 3 per cent interest in 1960 and 2 million dollars with 3 per cent interest in 1961.

At this time, there was some ideological affinity between the political leadership of Ghana and Guinea. In the first place, both these countries had thrown the yoke of colonialism and attained independent nationhood. Secondly, both shared an urge to launch anti-colonial struggle in Africa. They also believed in promoting African unity movement. It is this climate of shared ideology that brought about the Ghana-Guinea Union in

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1958. It aimed at promoting African unity. With the instrument of union, Ghana and Guinea endeavoured to introduce the trend of integration in Africa.

Sekou Toure and Nkrumah issued a joint statement regarding the objectives of the Union on 23 November 1958, which stated: "We affirm that the action which we are taking with a view to achieving a union of the West African States is not in any way designated to prejudice the present or the future relations between Ghana and the Commonwealth on the one hand, and the Republic of Guinea and the French Community on the other."

This affirmation on the part of Ghana and Guinea was significant in more than one way. Neither Ghana nor Guinea wanted to antagonize their relationship with the member States of the French Community or the British Commonwealth. Britain and France were leading the two organizations, the Commonwealth or Community respectively, but it must be noted that these organizations had also African members. Since Ghana and Guinea intended to promote African unity movement they refrained from antagonizing the neighbouring African states.

5 The preamble of the Guinean constitution stated that the Republic of Guinea would support the creation of a United States of Africa without any reservation. It also provided a clause through which Guinea could conclude the accords of association with other African states. See Philippe Decraene, "Independance et Regroupements Politiques en Afrique au Sud du Sahara", in P. Devillers, M. Colo mbes and George Balandier, eds, Independence et Relations Internationales - Que ques Etudes de Cas (Paris, 1960), p. 75.

France could not remain indifferent to the Union. As William Foltz had commented, "The formation of political union between Guinea and Ghana on November 21, 1958, appeared to many French politicians and to the French press as a blow directed specifically against France, possibly with the connivance of that all purpose villain, 'Le Foreign Office', of perfidious action."

The Ivory Coast too had grounds for concern. Its defence of the Loi-cadre reforms had helped it to emerge as a strong territorial unit in West Africa. Its sound economic position and the leadership of Houphouet Boigny gave it an opportunity to play an important role vis-a-vis its neighbours. For the Ivory Coast the emergence of the Ghana-Guinea meant a regrouping of the integrationist forces which represented, to quote Virginia Thompson, "one of the important setbacks to Houphouet's policies during the last few months of 1958".

The integrationist trend set by Ghana and Guinea was further encouraged with the negotiations for the establishment of federation between Upper Volta, Dahomey, Senegal and Soudan.


Philippe De Craene wrote two articles on the Union in Le Monde on 1 January 1959 and 20 January 1959. He hinted that there was close co-operation between the activities of Ghana-Guinea Union and the Federalist of Dakar and Bamako. See Le Monde, 1 and 20 January 1959.

The territorial assemblies of the four countries formally kept the option of forming the federation even if they were members of the French Community. By the beginning of January 1959, it was clear that these four states were likely to form a federation.

The issue of primary federation was influencing the relations between the various states of the Community. There are certain reasons which transformed the federal issue into a very complex phenomenon in West Africa. First, although the Loi-cadre reforms disintegrated the West African Federation they did not affect the character of the political parties seriously. R.D.A. retained its interterritorial character.

The birth of Parti du Regroupement Africain (P.R.A.) in July 1958 after the Cotonou Conference gave yet another example of the fact that interterritorial parties were part of the French West African political process. P.R.A. came up as a reaction against the autonomist forces led by Houphouet Boigny. Senghor, as stated earlier, stood for "creation of primary federation with equal representation of the territories and a central government responsible to the federal assembly". He intended to integrate it with the French Republic to form a confederation. He said "It is not that we want independence..."

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but we proclaim our right for it. Dijbo Bakary and Mamadi Abodoulaya of Niger had demanded for independence. Bakary was a federalist but he said 'Independence first and the rest will follow'. Thus, the interterritorial parties like the R.D.A. and the P.R.A. provided the platform to the staunch federalist, autonomist and even to those who stood for political independence, to mobilise people to their respective sides.

Secondly, the issue of Federation influenced the emerging political alliances in French West Africa. In some respects, the issue of Federation was both a dividing and uniting factor. It divided a major political party like the R.D.A. into two opposite camps. At the same time, it also inspired the protagonists of federal ideas to negotiate and come closer by ignoring their respective party loyalties. This can be well illustrated by one example. Within the R.D.A. Modibo Keita and his party - Union Soudanaise, a local branch of R.D.A. continued to advocate federal ideas. What is more, Doudou Thiam, a veteran Union Progressiste Senegalaise (U.P.S.) leader of P.R.A. suggested Modibo Keita's name for the Presidency of the French West Africa's Grand Council in January 1959 and Modibo Keita accepted it. Second example could be cited from the Dahomean politics.

11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 Union Progressiste Senegalaise was the most dominant party in Senegal with Senghor as its principal leader.
Finally, there were three major divisions among the member states of the Community on the issue of regional federations. France, the Ivory Coast and Niger stood for the anti-Federal ideas. The Senegal and Soudan were attempting to build a regional federation. The tussle between the two groups began for the last two, namely, Dahomey and Upper Volta since the latter states had not adopted a clear cut stand on that issue.

In the politics of Upper Volta, the two interterritorial parties were evenly divided. In the March 1957 elections the local section of P.R.A. gained 34 seats in the Assembly against 14 seats of the R.D.A. The P.R.A. section was supporting the Federal idea and the R.D.A. section the anti-Federal ideas. The leaders from the western region of Upper Volta expressed their desire to establish ties with adjacent Soudan. But the people of other regions were not as enthusiastic. For example, the Mossi, who composed the largest group in Upper Volta, were lukewarm in their support to the Mali Federation. Approximately 50,000 Mossi migrants from Upper Volta were working in the Bouke, Dimboko and Agbouile regions of the Ivory Coast during 1956. Economic dependence upon the Ivory Coast influenced their decision regarding the Mali Federation.


Again, in Upper Volta Government there was no unanimity on the Federal issue. The two left-wing ministers, one French and the other from Soudan, advocated the federal line. These two ministers were dismissed by the then Premier Maurice Yamengo. But Yamengo met a formidable rival in Morho Naba, who was a Mossi emperor and commanded significant support from his tribe. Morho Naba believed that "it would be quite dangerous to join the federation blindly". Besides Naba, there were two major groups opposing Yamengo. One was led by Joseph Ouedreango who was historically linked with Senghor's Senegal and the second group was composed of militant R.D.A. leaders from Bobo linked with the Soudanese leader, Modibo Keita. Yamengo did not adopt a clear cut stand. In order to consolidate his position at home, he kept on the one hand assuring de Gaulle and Houphouet Boigny about his anti-federal inclinations and on the other he accompanied the pro-Federalist Voltaic leaders in Bamako Conference to discuss the federal formula. He also attended the constituent Congress of the Mali Federation at Dakar in

16 Prior to their dismissal Yamengo made a hurried trip to Abidjan to consult Houphouet Boigny. How far Houphouet Boigny influenced Yamengo's decision is difficult to assess since Yamengo dismissed them on the ground that they were foreigners and he did not want foreigners in the Government.

17 Le Monde (Paris), 30 December 1968.
January 1959.

After January 1959, interference of the Ivory Coast in the internal affairs of the Upper Volta increased. A P.D.C.I. delegation went to Upper Volta to convince the major trading centres about the advantage of Abidjan as a commercial outlet for their commodities. The delegation also highlighted the importance of employment for the migrants from Upper Volta to the Ivory Coast. Houphouet Boigny himself pointed out to Yamego that Abidjan-Ouagadougou rail linked Upper Volta with the Ivory Coast, while Mali had no such links. He also tried to bring Morho Naba on his side. He appealed to him that Senegal and Soudan had reduced the importance of traditional chiefs in their respective countries and that if Upper Volta joined the Mali Federation, Morho Naba's position would also be jeopardized.

Thus, when Yamego was compelled to choose between Abidjan and Dakar he chose the former. Upper Volta under him

When the Voltaic delegation went to Dakar, France appointed a High Commissioner, namely Masson, in Ouagadougou without consulting the local population. Masson was the Secretary-General to the Governor of Guinea before the referendum of 28 September 1958. The Guinean politicians found him quite unfavourable to their aspirations. Maurice Yamego, the then premier, launched a protest against Masson to Paris.

On 28 January 1959 the Upper Volta Assembly approved the federal constitution of Mali but this approval did not compel Upper Volta to join the Mali Federation.


Ibid.
found it difficult to antagonize a geographically contiguous and economically prosperous state like the Ivory Coast.

While commenting on eventual refusal of Upper Volta to join Mali Federation, Immanuel Wallerstein remarked "aside from the political and economic pressure exerted on him [Yamego] by Houphouët and the French not to join Mali, Yamego was influenced by the belief that the Soudanese and the Sengalese would tend to support within Upper Volta those elements who were opposed to Yamego, and that participation in Mali would lead to his eventual loss of power in Upper Volta."

France and the Ivory Coast also succeeded in preventing Dahomey from joining the federation. The local section of P.R.A., Parti Progressiste Dahomeenée (P.P.D.), was in a majority in the territorial assembly of Dahomey (35 out of 60 seats). But the leadership of the ruling party was divided into two camps. One was led by Sourou Migan Apithy and the other by younger intellectuals like Dr. Emile Zinsou and Alexandre Adande. Apithy had resigned from the P.R.A. due to disagreement on the issue of Dahomey's membership of the Mali Federation. He thought the Federation overrigid and concluded that it would inhibit Dahomey's economic development. Nevertheless, he did not support the anti-federalist group. Instead, under his leadership, the young wing of P.P.D. adopted a resolution.

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21 Immanuel Wallerstein, "How Seven States were Born in Former French West Africa", Africa Report, vol. 6, no. 3, March 1961, p. 7.

proposing 'the creation of a United State of Benin, grouping together the Cameroun, Nigeria, Dahomey, Togo and Ghana'. The second group led by Emile Zinsou and Alexandre Adande supported close association with Senghor.

The opposition in Dahomey was represented by the Union Democratique Dahomeennee (U.D.D.), a local branch of the R.D.A. Justin Ahomadegbe was its leader. Commenting on the rise of Ahomadegbe's leadership, Dov Ronen had observed that "His rise to national leadership was the result of two additional factors, his close friendship with and the support he received from the politically powerful Houphouet Boigny of the Ivory Coast, a former schoolmate at the Medical School at Dakar; and his alliance with the trade union leaders of Cotonou-based Dahomean labour organizations, the most powerful of which was the 'Union Generale des Travailleurs d'Afrique Noire (U.G.T.A.N.).'

23 See France Dahomey (Paris), 16 October 1958.

Ahomadegbe was elected as a Mayor of Abomey in 1952 and by 1956 he had gathered enough support to place himself in the territorial assembly of Dahomey. In the territorial assembly the U.D.D. had only seven members. Nevertheless, Ahomadegbe was a significant political figure because he had a firm control over Cotonou-based labour organizations including the Union Generale du Travailleurs d'Afrique Noire (U.G.T.A.N.).

The Dahomean attitude toward the Federation was eventually shaped by some important events in West Africa. In 1958, there occurred anti-alien riots in the Ivory Coast which resulted in the expulsion of 18,000 Africans, of which over 12,000 were Dahomeans. Dahomey was economically in a bad shape and the influx of people from foreign land shattered its economy. Dov Ronen observed, "Dahomeans returning after post-independence expulsion from these countries, most of whom were civil servants, became a heavy burden on the economy instead of an asset for its growth". The expulsion of Dahomeans provided the Government an evidence of its relative dependence upon the Ivory Coast. Secondly, Dahomey lacked a viable deep water port. The political leaders from the North were supporting the plan of building a deep water port for finding an access to the major commercial route. Both France and the Ivory Coast reportedly pressurized Dahomey, as well as Upper Volta, by promising to sponsor a deep water port in Cotonou if Dahomey remained outside the Federation. Apithy bowed to these pressures and refused to join the Dahomean delegation to Dakar. He initiated a dialogue with the R.D.A. leaders and the northern parties in which he highlighted the importance of co-operation with France. On 29 January 1959 he resigned from the P.R.A. and formed a common front with the

26 Ibid., p. 106.
27 Ibid.
28 See Foltz, n. 7, p. 110. Also see Dov Ronen, n. 25, p. 118.
northern parties and the R.D.A. He declared that he was in favour of developing cordial ties with the Benin region. In February 1959 Dahomey officially refused to join the Mali Federation.

The refusal of the Upper Volta and Dahomey to join the Mali Federation was thus an achievement of Houphouet's diplomacy. Houphouet's staunch opposition to any supranational organization in West Africa earned him further sympathy and tacit support from France. French opposition to federalism as well as efforts to boost up Houphouet vis-a-vis his opponents such as Keita and Senghor became a logical extension of the same strategy.

In Senegal and Soudan, however, the opponents of Mali Federation were totally ineffective. Union Soudanaise of Soudan and Union Progressiste Senegalaise of Senegal captured all the seats in their respective territorial assemblies (30 and 60). Immediately after the establishment of the Federation Houphouet Boigny stated "I neither believe in durability nor in efficacy of Mali."

EMERGENCE AND THE DECLINE OF THE MALI FEDERATION

The Mali Federation of Senegal and Soudan concretised the dreams of the federalists like Senghor and Modibo Keita.


Politically the Federation established a unicameral federal assembly. The assembly was composed of deputies of the legislative assemblies from Soudan and Senegal. Each state could send 12 deputies. The assembly looked after the legislative branch of the Government. The President, elected by the majority of the assembly members, was the chief of the Federal Government. He appointed a Council of Ministers, including the Prime Minister, to be made responsible to the assembly. According to Article 55 and 48, the judiciary was independent of the executive and the legislature. The Federal Court looked after the judicial branch.

The Federation thus began to operate with Modibo Keita as chief of the Government and Senghor as President of the Assembly. Its leaders demanded juridical recognition from France. A federal party namely, Parti de la Federation Africain (P.F.A.) came into being which included members from U.S. (Soudan) and U.P.S. (Senegal), the dominant parties of Soudan and Senegal respectively. In July 1959 a P.F.A. Conference took place in Dakar to discuss the question of independence. Both the Senegalese and Soudanese leaders agreed that the Federation should negotiate with France for converting the Community into a multi-national confederation composed of independent states.

Houphouet Boigny did not want France to give recognition to Mali. But due to the pressure from the Malian leaders France relaxed its rigidly anti-federal stand by September 32 Paris-Dakar (Paris), 25 March 1959.
1959. According to Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Houphouet-Mali battle reached its climax at the St. Louis meeting of the Prime Ministers of the Community in September 1959. The French, by this time, had decided that their early opposition to Mali was a political error and had decided to play card of Senghor."

Further France was engaged at this time with the Algerian question. Since Soudan shared a long frontier with Algeria, France might not have desired to face yet another source of tension beyond the Algerian borders. Secondly, since the leaders of the federal movement, Keita and Senghor, had often expressed their desire to remain inside the Community, France did not wish to antagonize them. Thirdly, the departure of Guinea from the French Community had made France aware of the manner in which an African country could opt out from the French orbit. France was going to avoid the repetition of such an experience. Finally, French business interests in Dakar had no reason to fear the federation.

The emergence of Mali Federation thus induced certain modifications in the structure of Franco-African relations. Some provisions of the Constitution of the Fifth Republic were amended, particularly Article 86, to make even independence compatible with the membership of the Community. As a consequence, when on 22 September 1959 Senegal and Soudan made a

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33 Wallerstein, n. 21, p.15
34 The business community was never attacked by the federalists during the formative stage of the Federation.
formal request for the transfer of sovereign power from the Community to the Federation, De Gaulle himself made it clear that France would not stand in their way; on the contrary, would give economic support to the Federation.

Senegal and Soudan drew certain economic benefits from the Federation. In 1959, Senegal's nascent industrial sector sold between 30 and 35 per cent of its products, amounting to approximately 8.5 billion C.F.A. Francs to Soudan. Senegal and Soudan co-operated in building Dakar-Niger railway project from Dakar to Bamako. It provided employment for about eight hundred Soudanese in Senegal and did about 1.5 billion worth of international haulage. As far as the Soudanese were concerned, participation in the Federation brought them substantial rebates from the federal Government. In 1959, these amounted to roughly 2.2 billion C.F.A. Francs.

Despite these economic benefits the Mali Federation proved short-lived. The influence of French civilization on Senegal proved far stronger than federal links with Soudan. Since 1907, a black deputy from Senegal sat in the French Parliament. Besides such renowned institutions as Ecole de Medicine and Ecole William Ponty, entirely modelled on French pattern, had worked for years to train up the Senegalese elite. Soudan in comparison was less influenced by French education and civilization. Its major population received very little formal education.

35 Foltz, n. 7, p. 156.
36 Ibid.
Politically, Senegal and Soudan differed in their attitudes towards the Federation. The leaders of Soudan wanted a strong federal government while the Senegalese championed the cause of autonomy within the Federation. The Soudanese wanted to concentrate supreme political power in one single individual, while Senegalese encouraged a joint executive with a collective responsibility. Also, disputes arose regarding membership of the Union Soudanaise (U.S.) and the Union Progressiste Senegaleise (U.P.S.). The Soudanese admitted only resident Senegalese to the U.S., while the Senegalese were reluctant to include Soudanese party workers in different committees of the U.P.S. Thus, summing up the Federation, Georges Balandier wrote: "Mali federation between Senegal and Soudan has given an illustration of brief existence; the historical heritage was not gathered with equal piety by each partner and the divergence of interests was very strong due to two opposite doctrines of social and economic development."


39 In the economic field the countries failed to collaborate. There was no economic agency which could co-ordinate the activities of the two countries. Senegal was importing rice worth 20,000 tons from Soudan which was 15 to 20 per cent costlier than the rice imported from the South East Asia. This was not a big sacrifice for the economy of Senegal but it did not strengthen the argument for federation. Moreover, Senegal was relatively richer state. In 1959 its G.D.P. was 142.34 million C.F.A. Francs against 66.50 million of Soudan. Senegalese population in 1958 was estimated at 2,967,000 while Soudan had 3,920,000 inhabitants. Thus, the union was not between equals. Colin Legum and John Drysdale, Africa Contemporary Record, 1968-69 (London, 1969), pp. 536-6 and 585-6.

After the break-up of the Federation, Senghor admitted that he had committed a mistake. He stated: "We had been naive enough to believe that the federation was possible in 1959 between disunited states of 1957. We have underestimated the forces of territorialism and micro-nationalism in Africa. African unity is not for tomorrow nor even under the form of the United States of Africa for which I fought." He added: "Let us have the courage to recognise that President Houphouet Boigny was more right than us as regards the issue of federation."

THE FORMATION OF ENTENTE STATES

The entire episode of the Mali Federation brought certain advantages to France and the Ivory Coast. Its failure gave boost to Houphouet's conviction that supra-territorial governments could not solve the fundamental economic and political problems of the African countries. The Ivory Coast, as Marcel Merle put it, was not fundamentally opposed to any regrouping of the African states, but it was principally hostile to all forms of territorial groupings which prevented

43 Mali succeeded in attaining independence from France in 1960. Houphouet Boigny did not give an immediate reaction to the break-up of Mali Federation or Malian independence. On the contrary he kept on emphasizing the need of economic co-operation between Individual African states and France. Le Monde, 5 and 7 June 1960.
individual territories from directly associating with the Franco-African Community. The snapping of mutually profitable ties between France and the African countries under the French sponsored Community, could become, in Boigny's view, a suicidal act.

To countercheck the federalist movement, Houphouet began a sustained effort to regroup the neighbouring African states such as Niger, Dahomey and Upper Volta on issues of common concern. The first to join Houphouet's design was Niger which witnessed a struggle for political leadership between two important leaders, Hamani Diori and Djibo Bakary. Till 1958, Bakary was the President of the Council of Government and leader of the Sawaba Party which had the backing of Ghana and Guinea. Hamani Diori was leading Parti Progressiste Nigerienne (P.P.N.) which stood for the Franco-African Community. The aim of the Ivory Coast was to eliminate the Sawaba Party and prepare grounds for Diori's victory in the referendum of 1958. In the end, Diori's party obtained 54 of the 60 seats


46 Hamani, another Sawaba leader had gone to the extent of demanding an outright independence from France. Briefly, Sawaba leadership was posing a direct threat to the interests of France and the Ivory Coast.
in the assembly. Thus, the internal politics of Niger illustrates a connection between its domestic politics and external connections. Having formed Government, Diori pursued his anti-federal ideology by inviting France to suppress the opposition.

In 1960, Houphouet Boigny utilized Diori's good offices to win over Dahomey on the side of the entente. Since Dahomey had close ties with Niger, with its trade route rung through Niger via Cotonou port and a large number of Dahomeans employed in the Niger Civil Service, Diori's personal intervention played an important role in winning Dahomey over to the side of entente.

While commenting on the advent of Diori in Niger, Saleh Kebzabo, an Africanist, remarked that the accession of Diori to power was a result of subtle game on the part of French administration which was at the helm of all the vital affairs till the last hour of French colonization. Saleh Kebzabo, "Niger - Pourquoi Diori est-il Tombe"? Jeune Afrique (Paris), no. 694, 27 April 1974, p. 30.

J. Suret Canale, an economist and a well known Africanist, also supported this very point. He wrote that when Bakary Djibo appealed the voters to vote 'No' the Governor took the entire administration in his hands and imposed "yes", when the famous referendum regarding the joining of Community was held in the French territories. J. Suret Canale, "Les Relations Internationerles de la Republique de Guinie", in K. Ingham, ed., Foreign Relations of African States (London, 1975), p. 282.

This dependence on France was determined by certain material factors. First, Niger constituted one of the most backward economies of West Africa. Frequency of natural calamities had placed the Niger's economy on a fragile footing. It could not antagonize wealthy neighbours like Ivory Coast and metropolitan powers. In turn, France and the Ivory Coast were assuring peaceful perpetuation of Diori's regime by eradicating the anti-Diori factions.

It must be noted that Diori and Maga had their schooling in Ecole William Ponty of Dakar and their old friendship considerably influenced Maga's ultimate decision.
After this it was not a difficult task to persuade Upper Volta to join the Council of Entente. We have already described the economic dependence of Upper Volta on the Ivory Coast. Roughly, 45,000 Voltaic nationals migrated every year to work on plantations of Ghana and the Ivory Coast. Besides that it exported 45 per cent of its goods to the Ivory Coast. In order to consolidate these economic links, the Ivory Coast signed a protocol with Upper Volta on 7 April 1959. The two countries decided to form a customs union in which duties collected on imports and exports at Abidjan would be equitably distributed between the partners. A common court of appeal was established to judge disputes that might arise in this connection. For the management of Abidjan port and Abidjan-Ouagadougou railroad two commissions were set up. They were composed of equal members from both the countries. The Ivory Coast also signed various accords of co-operation with Niger on 7 April 1959 and succeeded in establishing a customs union with Niger. According to the treaty, the Ivory Coast and Niger were to co-ordinate the transport and communication system.

50 Upper Volta largely exported cows which could not be commercialized in the world market. Alain Faujas, "La politique extérieure de la Haute Volta", Revue Française d'Etudes Politiques Africaines, no. 83, November 1972, p. 60.


The regroupement of Niger, Upper Volta, and Dahomey under the entente reflected another diplomatic success of Houphouet. He used the relative dependence of these countries to restructure a parallel group within the French Community to challenge the federalist forces in West Africa. The momentum of this regroupment reached its peak when the Ivory Coast signed a protocol regarding the erection of the customs union for the free circulation of commercial goods in the West African territories. It was at this stage that Houphouet elaborated the concept of entente. He said:

It would be getting together of the premiers of each state, assisted by such of their ministers who deal with the affairs common to all members and the presidents and the vice presidents of their legislative assemblies. The Council of 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 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 the reserve bank that could serve for example, to guarantee the loans to each state for some project of concern to it.

Houphouet's concept of entente thus made one thing clear: while asking for closer economic and technical co-operation

53 It must be noted here that in all the entente countries the local R.D.A. branches were in power which facilitated the dialogue between these states.

54 Notes et Études Documentaires (Paris), no 3989-90, 21 May 1973, p. 11.

among the member states, he never envisaged the establishment of a supra-national body.

FRANCE AND ENTENTE STATES

Acting as chief representative of the entente states, Houphouet Boigny went to Paris in January 1961. By this time Africa had undergone a remarkable transformation. The number of independent states had vastly increased. The liberation war of Algeria had, on the other hand, gained a momentum. The activities of the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union had begun creating new tensions for the West. For France, in particular, the year had proved bad with the break of diplomatic ties with Nigeria after the French nuclear testing in Sahara. From the point of view of France therefore, closer co-operation with the African states had become vitally essential. Hence Houphouet's visit to Paris came at a critical moment. For, if Houphouet Boigny was going to bolster the Ivorian prestige in African affairs, France too was interested in utilizing the former for attaining certain policy goals.

56 On 5 January 1961 the Nigerian Government ordered the French ambassador and his staff to leave Nigeria within forty-eight hours. T.O.S. Benson, the Nigerian Minister of Information, announced that French aircraft and ships are not to be permitted to use Nigerian airfields and ports. The Minister said the Government reserved the right to take sterner measures against France "should she persist in her nefarious acts". Africa Digest (London), vol. VIII, no. 4, 20 January 1961, p. 166.
At the end of the visit, the Ivory Coast signed a treaty of co-operation with France, which provided for:

(a) economic aid from France through Fond de l'Aide et Coopération (F.A.C.) and Caisse Centrale and the investment of France in the Ivory Coast;

(b) supply of technical personnel as well as material equipment to develop Ivorian defence.

(c) Franco-Ivorian co-operation in judicial field;

(d) modelling the Ivorian education system on French educational system. France agreed to help to establish the Abidjan University;

(e) to help to the 'Air Afrique with the French company, Societe Pour le Developement du Transport Aerien en Afrique, advancing 30 per cent of the capital;

(f) cultural exchange between the two countries and scholarships for African students to study in France;

(g) naval co-operation.

France also agreed to help the entente states to set up the national armies. The military accords envisaged Franco-

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58 There were 60 Frenchmen in judicial branch in 1961.

59 Notes et Études Documentaires, La Documentation Française, no. 3980, 21 May 1973, p. 10.

60 Only Upper Volta declined to participate in French security scheme and prevented France from stationing troops on its soil.
African military collaboration on the following lines:

(1) initial transfer by France of men and units of troops (Troops d'outre mer) plus a basic grant of hardware, vehicles and fixed installations to the national authorities;

(2) French assistance in the development of military training as well as continued supply with free and favourable terms of military equipments;

(3) direct military aid in the internal and external defence of African territories at their request.

The French bond with the entente states became stronger the repercussions of defence as a result of these agreements. Later, in 1964 when treaties were felt after 1960, the French Foreign Minister Alain Peyrefitte declared in February 1964 that French troops had intervened ten times to help the independent African Governments.

Gabon offered a unique example of French military intervention. When Jean Hilaire Aubame staged a coup d'etat against the pro-French Government of Leon M'ba, the French troops intervened to defend his regime. All the entente states refrained from denouncing France. On the contrary, the Ivory Coast,

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62 In addition France retained access to the key strategic installations in Senegal, Chad, Madagascar and Djibouti. It had also a military air base at Port Bouet a suburb of Abidjan. Ibid.

Upper Volta and Niger defended French action. Maurice Yamego of Upper Volta said that "Papa De Gaulle has done his duty."

With French support, the Ivory Coast also tried to promote economic and technical co-operation among the entente states. It provided, for instance, the sum of 4 billion C.F.A. Francs in the solidarity fund of entente states. As against this, only 84 million C.F.A. Francs came from Niger, Upper Volta and Dahomey from 1958 to 1966. The Solidarity Fund became a trump card in Houphouet's hand. He regulated the development projects in the entente countries, acted as a channel of communication between France and the rest.

Although the Ivory Coast largely succeeded in clubbing Upper Volta, Niger and Dahomey... it was not quite easy to keep the entente club moving. Niger and Upper Volta became suspicious of Houphouet's intentions when the entente formation began to operate. They felt that Houphouet intended to control the distribution of France's financial aid in such a way as to "reduce Upper Volta, Niger and Dahomey to the status of Ivorian Provinces".

64 Afrique Nouvelle (Dakar), 28 February - 5 March 1963.
65 Ronen, n. 25, p. 172.
66 Gilbert Comte, a political journalist, wrote that it was Houphouet Boigny who demanded the financial assistance from France for the entente states for five years. Gilbert Comte, "La Nouvelle Cote D'Ivoire et les autres de l'entente", Europe France Outre Mer, December 1960, p. 165.
67 Thompson, n. 22, pp. 49-50. See the tables, pp. 103-104.
Further, the Ivory Coast and Upper Volta had differences over the allocation of customs revenues in 1961. Yamego felt that he was getting much less than his country's just share. He instituted tariff barriers against the Ivory Coast, refused to sign the French defence agreements and asked France to withdraw its troops from Upper Volta. A further complication was created by Ghana's attempt to exploit discontent in Upper Volta. Upper Volta exported meat to Ghana and supplied roughly 50,000 workers per year to Ghana. In 1961 Ghana signed the Paga agreement with Upper Volta which abolished tariff barriers between the two countries. It also offered a loan of 1,500 million C.F.A. Francs to Upper Volta. But Ghana could not succeed in dragging Upper Volta out of entente. With its economic dependence upon Ivory Coast and France, Upper Volta could not afford to antagonize them. In fact, Yamego approved French nuclear testing in Sahara. Also the fact that Upper Volta remained a member of entente can be attributed to the diplomacy of the Ivorian leader.

There were also tensions among the entente states. In December 1963 Niger dismissed Dahomean civil servants and seized the Lete island in the Niger river. Diori justified his action by claiming that three persons from Niger were killed at Porto Novo. Diori's offensive policies drove the Dahomeans from Niger. This led France and the Ivory Coast


69 The number is variously estimated from 3 to 16 thousand. What is more, the Dahomeans started helping Sawaba party of Niger which was opposing Diori regime in October 1964.
to intervene in the dispute. In the beginning Apithy and Ahomadegbe did not respond, but in 1965 Houphouët managed to intervene in the dispute. In the beginning Apithy and Ahomadegbe did not respond, but in 1965 Houphouët managed to intervene in the dispute. In the beginning Apithy and Ahomadegbe did not respond, but in 1965 Houphouët managed to mediate between the parties. He succeeded in revising the contract under which the two countries were managing the Cotonou port and the railways.

In perspective, France and the Ivory Coast were able to build up a continuing association. The following tables throw light on Franco-Ivorian entente in the West African affairs.

### Table 1

**French Aid to Entente States for Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>35841</td>
<td>39306</td>
<td>51034</td>
<td>21737</td>
<td>48223</td>
<td>32131</td>
<td>25746</td>
<td>26701</td>
<td>320560</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dahomey</td>
<td>15119</td>
<td>11644</td>
<td>35599</td>
<td>19703</td>
<td>16447</td>
<td>23505</td>
<td>22616</td>
<td>15404</td>
<td>271334</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper Volta</td>
<td>23142</td>
<td>19018</td>
<td>19626</td>
<td>17056</td>
<td>21186</td>
<td>24020</td>
<td>26092</td>
<td>22551</td>
<td>212692</td>
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<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
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<td>27206</td>
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<td>30644</td>
<td>22773</td>
<td>31884</td>
<td>33113</td>
<td>30957</td>
<td>243889</td>
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</table>

**Source:** Michel Chaumont, "l'Afrique et La France", *(Jeune Afrique, Numero Speciale Afrique, 1970, p. 91)*.

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70 Dahomey was making efforts to form Benin Union with Nigeria during 1964-65. As stated earlier leaders like Apithy were already in favour of such a union even before Dahomey had attained independence.
Table 2
French Aid for Research and Social and Cultural Activities 1959-68

(In million francs CFA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>8309</td>
<td>9416</td>
<td>20696</td>
<td>11737</td>
<td>9228</td>
<td>11130</td>
<td>16861</td>
<td>20000</td>
<td>121544</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dahomey</td>
<td>1435</td>
<td>1786</td>
<td>2924</td>
<td>1615</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>1446</td>
<td>2300</td>
<td>15737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Volta</td>
<td>2077</td>
<td>1478</td>
<td>5146</td>
<td>3814</td>
<td>3918</td>
<td>3865</td>
<td>6340</td>
<td>6106</td>
<td>36597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>1734</td>
<td>2568</td>
<td>4576</td>
<td>2292</td>
<td>3890</td>
<td>3266</td>
<td>2571</td>
<td>3980</td>
<td>27946</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ibid., p. 89

Table 3
French Technical Personnel

<table>
<thead>
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<th>State</th>
<th>Technical Assistance</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ivory Coast</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>1,169</td>
<td>1,709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dahomey</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Volta</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Secretariat d'etat aux Affaires Etrangeres charge de la Cooperation, Nemento Statistique, September 1967.
These tables demonstrate the nature of Franco-Ivorian entente. The size of French technical personnel as well as aid was bigger in the Ivory Coast than in the other entente states. This helped the Ivory Coast to make rapid advance in the economic field (see Chapter VI). At the same time Franco-Ivorian co-operation remained a force to meet various issues and problems faced by the West African states.