

Our Correspondents report.....



Abidjan (Ivory Coast): President Yace on rural development

In common with the governments of many developing countries, that of the Ivory Coast has often expressed concern over the number of young men drifting away from their villages to join the floating lumpen-proletariat in the cities. It argues that the life of the farmer is a nobler and more profitable one than that of the clerks at present swelling the 150 corps of the Ivoirien civil service.

How much more persuasive the government's policy must be after a declaration by M. Philippe Yace (president of the National Assembly and secretary-general of the country's single party). Denouncing those responsible for ethnic riots in Abidjan, M. Yacé said:

"Certain unworthy Ivory Coast nationals were involved in the looting. They will .. be punished and sent to their villages. Furthermore, the government has decided to send unemployed Ivoiriens to their villages."

Accra (Ghana): The Traditionalisation of Modernity

Allegedly, the Speaker of the Sierra Leone Parliament once produced a copy of Professor David Apter's book, The Politics of Modernisation, so as to draw debate on related topics into line with proper theoretical definitions. Now, not content with getting in on the act, some of the modernisers are actually trying to rewrite the script. In Ghana, held to be a fairly straightforward case of secularisation and legal-rational advance, the following remarkable proposal was made to the Constituent Assembly (meeting to establish the forms of post-military government):

"Mr. B.D. Addai (Ashanti Farmers) said .. that Ghana should have a state stool", (e.g. throne) "to be occupied by a 'Ghanahene' as head of state, so that the country would become a monarchy. The Ghanahene .. should be a chief from one of the Houses of Chiefs, which - together with high places of learning, the Christian Council, and the Muslim Council - should elect him. Every Ghanaian citizen, he said, should be entitled to become heir to the Ghanahene, since everyone belonged to a royal family".

Fort Lamy (Chad): Development Decayed

In March 1968, West Africa reported:

"The United Nations Development Bank is to lend Chad \$84,000 to help build lodgings for international experts visiting the country."

Tananarive (Madagascar): "Le Plan Folklorique"

In January this year, two civil administrators, MM. Olivier Raparison (Malgache) and Edouard Chapuis (French) were put on trial, accused of producing and circulating a document entitled "Ten Years of the Republic."

Both men were employed at the Ministry of Finances, M. Chapuis as a member of the French technical assistance mission. Their offence first came to public notice through a long communiqué issued after a meeting of the Council of Ministers. The communiqué said:

"... after considering this document stuffed with lies, libels, and bad faith, the government has voiced its deep indignation, since the authors of this document have tried to slander the Malgache Republic by attacking systematically all the government's achievements, the government itself, and the ruling party".

The Ministers declared, rather confusingly, that the document was

"not the work of the Malgache opposition but rather of the capitalist opposition ... These jealous men are particularly aggressive towards businessmen who want to invest in Madagascar".

And they concluded trenchantly:

"One may easily judge the 'seriousness' of these detractors by the passion which they bring to defending the miniskirt in their document".

Local opinion was puzzled by the publicity given to this affair. A respected Catholic newspaper, Lumière, remarked:

"... it may be that the government needs a scapegoat and the authors of this document symbolise those whom it wishes to make responsible for the malaise which is evident in the country".

Nevertheless, a major political trial (the first since independence) was set on foot. The Francophone African weekly, Jeune Afrique, reported as follows:

"... the accused had to answer three charges: publication of false news, slander against the Malgache Republic, and 'acts or manoeuvres tending to endanger public security or to create major political disturbances' .. although it took place in a criminal court, the trial nevertheless had a political character and for this reason was followed by a large and highly involved public.

Pleading guilty, M. Edouard Chapuis pointed

out that the document in question (35 pages long) was intended as an honest account of the economic situation of Madagascar. He said: 'The Malgache development plan only exists in documents, official speeches, and chansons folkloriques. It was not my job, as a technical adviser, to give sketchy accounts of achievements in certain sectors, but to show what was going badly and could be improved on. I felt I was doing my duty in acting as I did, since my countless reports or memoranda have never arrived at their destination. I have been doing this kind of work for twenty-five years, including twelve in Madagascar. Why should I be wrong in what I said?' "

Then Maître Rajaonarivony, defence counsel, examined the role of the technical adviser in an under-developed country. Jeune Afrique's report continues:

" 'Should he play the neutral card, so as to cosset the feelings of the leaders, so as to stay as long as possible and amass the necessary CFA francs to build his villa on the Côte d'Azur?' For two hours Mé Rajaonarivony, quoting one after the other, passages from René Dumont's work on Madagascar in L'Afrique noire est mal partie, from René Gendarme on the Madagascar economy (the sale of whose work was forbidden for nearly a year), scrutinised 'the policy and attitudes of the Malgache leaders' which he blamed for the malaise".

The criminal court of Tananarive released M. Raparison for lack of evidence. M. Chapuis was sentenced to ten months imprisonment, which he is now serving.

Oxford (England): Sensational Scientific Breakthrough Bombshell

The Pergamon Press has announced an astonishing new development in social science analysis. It is contained in a book by Mr. William Isbister, entitled "Performance and Progress in Working Life - The ROGBY Method of assessing and reporting on people at work".

Whatever the name suggests, this ROGBY is not at all

Some furtive, shuffling nark of the boss class. Rather it is a System, as the blurb from Pergamon breathlessly reveals:

"The name ROGBY is derived from the colours Red, Orange, Green, Blue and Yellow, on the hypothesis that every individual is a 'confused mass of colour in varying proportions' stemming from inherited characteristics, and from environment and past experience. The future behaviour of the individual is therefore predictable".

Even Archimedes had a bath-towel.

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Sources: West Africa, March 9th, 1968, p. 294  
April 6th, 1968, p. 409  
February 8th, 1969, p. 162  
Jeune Afrique, January 27th, 1969, pp. 21-22  
February 10th, 1969, pp. 13-14  
Pergamon publicity.

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