

development. Nazi Germany is a glaring example. The men of vision have to be "situated" if their vision is to be explained....⁸

That said, the book being reviewed is meant for students in metropolitan universities. But given that the various disciplines which claim to be African are still a "conceptual province" of the bourgeois world-view⁹... which is empiricist¹⁰..., the book is bound to find its way to the periphery as a stimulant to students of these countries to "catch up". It is therefore important to reiterate that the book is meant as a recipe on how to find one's way in the labyrinth of reinforcing the bourgeois way of life. Whether the periphery will be able to produce people who will excel in this remains to be seen. But it should be noted that intermediaries cannot be otherwise. This thought is historically determined.

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- 8 Notwithstanding their claims of independence, African studies remain conceptually a bourgeois province.
- 9 The historical part of this argument has been put forward by A.J. Temu and Bonaventure Swai, "Old and New Themes of African History Since the 1960s: The Case of Tanzanian Historiography," The Association of African Universities History Workshop, Lagos, 1977.
- 10 J. Depelchin has written a short but stimulating article on the merits and demerits of empiricism in history and the importance of the materialist approach. "Notes Towards the Production of a Materialist Pre-colonial Central African History", Dar es Salaam, August, 1977.

SEKOUTOURE'S GUINEA AND GUINEA: THE MOBILISATION OF A PEOPLE

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1. Ladipo Adamolekun, *Sekou Toure's Guinea: An Experiment in Nation Building*, London Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1976.
2. Claude Riviere, *Guinea: The Mobilization of a People*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1977.

There are many monographs, articles written about Guinea's socialist experimentation, but only a few provide fair accounts of that country's strengths and achievements, weaknesses and failures. This is so because the Guinean regime's opponents as well as those progressive writers sympathetic to a non-capitalist path of development tend to have emotional involvements at stake, which prevent them from analysing the Guinean experience with much scholarly detachment. Furthermore, the scarcity of available and reliable data makes the objectivity of such accounts precarious. Yet Jean Suret-Canale's *La Republique de Guinee* (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1970) still stands out as one of the most comprehensive evaluation and future outlook of independent Guinea, although the study appears dated today.

Adamolekun's *Sekou Toure's Guinea* and Riviere's *Guinea* are serious attempts to evaluate the claim of the Guinean leaders to transform their country from a traditional, colonized society into a modern, progressive, revolutionary society. These two authors use empirical conceptual framework: Adamolekun's study tests the conventional hypotheses of the concept of modernization and nation-building to demonstrate that the Guinean regime has successfully mobilized Guinean society politically (Adamolekun p. 154) and has made considerable progress in promoting the country's economic and political development, but yet has not done much in realizing the development potentials of the country. Riviere at times uses dialectics in analysing colonial modes of production, productive forces and relations, class concepts, and at other times uses the concept of social modification or mutation in analyzing the ethnic integration, the emancipation of women, the mobilization of youth and religion. At other times, he uses stereotyped anthropological characterization to conclude that the political system is not effective and that the economic prospects are bad (pp. 208-209).

Adamolekun's and Riviere's studies recognize as central to Guinea's nation building process such factors as an effectively mobilized people, a belief in the correctness and justness of the ideology of the Parti Democratique de Guinee (P.D.G.), the sole political party, and a charismatic

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and dynamic leader combining the skills of a trade unionist and a political organizer. As such this dichotomy of the leadership was an asset when the Guinean labour movement severed its ties with metropolitan trade unions accusing them of failing to meet the special historical requirements of the struggle for emancipation of colonial people and this led to a successful integration of the labour organizations in the progressive political party.

The supremacy of politics to which is subordinated the programme of economic and social development, is expressed in a quasi-inflexible socialist ideology built on democratic centralism. By democratic centralism, rank and file party members elect their leaders, discuss economic plans through the party channels, and participate in their execution. The two studies are aware of the shortcomings of the policy of democratic centralism like the fact that all disagreements cease once a decision is reached by the party central congress and the central committee must dutifully implement the decisions. The ideology of the P.D.G. is a form of socialism in which individual right may sometimes be in conflict with democratic centralism. The Guinean leaders find this ideology consistent with African tradition in which man is conceived as a part of society and not an isolated individual.

The Guinean leader's minimization of the class concept and implication that African society did not have a capitalist class may have been a conscious response to imperialist machinations under lining the vital need for playing down internal contradictions for the sake of national consolidation. This socialist ideology has developed general policy directives on decolonization of all aspects of economic activities by seeking to establish a socialist system through building a strong public sector, including state ownership in industry, government monopoly of trade, monetary and banking institutions and the reorganization and the creation of cooperatives and collective farms. Both studies take note in challenging French imperialism in the West African subregion although Riviere's study does not always analyse Guinea's relations with its Francophone neighbours within those strained Franco-Guinean relations between 1975 and 1978, particularly in view of the consistently pro-France stance of Guinea's neighbours. As a result, major internal contradictions developed, and presumable solutions such as Guinea's 1964 Loi-Cadre (enabling act, corresponding to the Arusha Declaration or Mwongozo in Tanzania) or the Cultural Revolution slogan of 1967 did not prove so effective because of lack of ideological understanding and co-operation on the part of Guinea's neighbours, such that smuggling, black market operations and currency fraud undermined the country's economy.

Guinea's central planning is based on political priorities and group participation in drafting and execution of projects. Adamolekun and Riviere studies blame Guinea's weaknesses on market conditions, high costs and inadequate production, deficient supply of raw materials to local manufactures, low levels of agricultural production due to the failure of cooperatives, mechanized collective farms, currency depreciation, shortage of foreign

exchange for import materials, faulty system of financing trade and functioning of state enterprises, (except the Chinese-sponsored National Enterprise for Tobacco and Matches (ENTA) and the flourishing of black market and smuggling.

Both studies mention that notable progress has been made in the social and educational fields and also in the industrial sphere. Education dispensed by centres of Revolutionary Education (CER) tended to teach modern agricultural methods but also to promote the transformation of rural social attitudes that the cooperatives failed to achieve. Both studies describe the post-independence Comptoirs (National Trading Agencies) and state enterprises as unprofitable. It is not evident whether Adamolekun and Riviere realize that the creation of the Comptoirs was consistent with the decolonization guidelines of Guinea's first three-year development plan and its emphasis on rural development. These Comptoirs were thus allowed to subsidize each crop and to sponsor the distribution of imported consumer goods. Thus they operated at a loss because of the contradictory and intricate, but genuine and laudable, price policy of the Guinean government motivated by considerations of equity and fair distribution of the available resources, stabilization of producer prices, the protection of consumers from drastic changes in the cost of living, the expansion of government revenue and the containment of inflation.

Adamolekun writes accurately about successful political mobilization and socio-cultural changes brought by party structure and ideology (p. 154) exemplified by a high level of political consciousness of the average Guinean (p. 155) and the creation of a national identity (chapter 5). Yet his conclusions are those of a typical bookish social scientist when he states that the Guinean regime has made considerable progress in promoting the country's economic development but that it has not done much in realizing the development potentials of the country because of what he considers to be the lack of specialists in various field of knowledge and techniques (paraphrase of Lenin).

Riviere's study rightly acknowledges Guinea's land tenure system which gives the power of allocating vacated land to local committees rather than traditional rulers and whereby the law applies only to the land subject to modern tenure system rather than interfering with traditional holdings. Although all lands were nationalized, only the uncultivated lands were vacated and distributed to those wanting to develop them, while those lands supported by a claim were reconfirmed by registry. This practice lessened speculation on land. Riviere gave low grades to Guinea's cooperative and collective farming system because of structural deficiencies and their failure to increase production. Riviere interestingly regards the plot in Guinea's "as a barrier to the upward mobility of a segment of the elite who were trying to become bourgeois" (i.e. bureaucrats, traders, military officers and retired civil servants and intellectuals) (p. 126). Yet it is not clear to this reviewer why Riviere's study identifies these speculating bureaucrats and trader-

profiteers as modern forces hindered by the ruling elite. Because of the intricate and complex price policy, the outpacing of supply by suppressed demand and the existing officially low prices for marketed commodities, traders' struggle to accumulate profits has encouraged the smuggling of Guinea's goods to neighbouring countries of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast and Senegal for foreign currency regarded more valuable than the non-convertible Guinean currency. The trading profession has attracted so many people, because it appeared more lucrative particularly on the black market, and has thus contributed to hiking up prices as more people participate in it and as costs of living increase. The Loi-Cadre revoked the licenced status of many traders and set strict public sector control over trading activities, by restricting private trade. Yet illicit activities, currency fraud and illegal exchange continue despite the application of the principle of permanent revolution and cultural revolution since 1967 to get rid of the remnants of colonialism and combat class struggle. Reviere's label of the vicious circle of under-development (p. 204) characteristic of static analysis, does not seem to be consistent with his early dynamic and dialectical analysis of Guinea's colonial legacy in chapters 1,2 and 3. Nor does it take into consideration Guinea's colonial pragmatic considerations in foreign affairs, investment policy despite radical decolonization measures. For example the USA, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China all hold significant positions in Guinea. Foreign governments' and transnational corporations' share of the stake in bauxite and iron mining is the evidence of the government's share of the stake in bauxite and iron mining is the evidence of the government's encouragement of foreign investment which does not apparently conflict with Guinea's socialist orientation.

Adamolekun and Riviere see a small degree of neo-colonialism in Guinea, but Adamolekun implies that Guinea is the least neo-colonial of other African states while Riviere implies that it is most decolonized. They also note that there is an elite-mass gap, but much less than in other West African countries. Their contention that Guinea is a neo-colonial state can be justified by the fact that Guinea, like any other African state, considers foreign investment as the motor of growth and development. But the existence of a solid alliance of the domestic bureaucratic bourgeoisie with the international bourgeoisie, i.e. the fundamental structure of the neo-colonial economy, would be a debatable issue in the Guinea case.

While Adamolekun's and Riviere's studies illustrate the fact that Guinea is experiencing economic difficulties, both are convinced that the country has a lot of potential mineral endowments which offer good prospects for development and that Guinea was the first African country to embark upon a total decolonization policy to test the formula of state control. Both studies are worthwhile additions to literature on the nature of Guinea's non-capitalist path of development. More is to be expected on Guinea from both authors as a follow-up to their speculations on alternative courses of action.